



**CARING HOMES
FOR ORPHAN CHILDREN**

HOMeward BOUND

The Caring Homes for Orphan Children

Newsletter



Vol. 2, Issue 4. April 2004. Page 1 of 3

Welcome home - our first family from Omsk!

As many of you probably know we have recently opened our new program in Omsk, Russia. Our first adopting parents there have kindly offered to share their experience.

We've been home about three weeks with 14-month old Maxim. Since we were the first Canadians to adopt in Omsk I thought that sharing a small bit of our experiences might help those who adopt after us. Let's start with the most important date of our entire experience...judgement day in court in Omsk, Siberia.

The judge finally returned to the courtroom about 15 minutes after leaving to write her decision about our petition to adopt Maxim, and our request to waive the 10-day waiting period after the court decision. Although we had been repeatedly reassured that the court session was just a formality, I was still feeling nervous. The proceedings during the last hour did not feel like a routine administrative formality; this was a real court, with a real judge who was seriously reviewing all of the documentation. More than a year's worth of planning, emotion, time, and money hinged on the judge's decision, which we would shortly hear. Also, we had not counted on being the first Canadians to adopt in Omsk and the adoption process is not one where I wanted to be a trailblazer but it had simply turned out that way.

Finally we heard the court interpreter simultaneously translate the judge's decision as she was reading it aloud for the court record:

... "The petition for adoption is granted and the 10-day waiting period is waived."

My legs felt momentarily weak as I turned to hug and kiss my wife and breathed a huge sigh of relief. I hadn't realized just how stressed out I was about the court session until that moment.

A few seconds later we were thanking Alexander, the CHOC representative in Omsk, who is also the lawyer who handled all the documentation and represented us in court.

We hurried back to our hotel, grabbed clothes for Maxim and went to the orphanage to pick him up. It was quite an emotional experience to remove his orphanage clothes, dress him in "our" clothes, and then walk out of the orphanage with him in my arms.



Both my wife and I were expecting bureaucratic hassles in Russia but they never materialized. The organizational work by the Russian representatives of Tzivos Hashem/CHOC both in Omsk and Moscow was excellent. All the necessary meetings at the various government offices were all pre-arranged and I can't recall one of those meetings where we waited for more than 5 minutes although I've been told that is not normally the case.

"Caring Homes for Orphan Children" is a trade name of Tzivos Hashem Canada, Inc., an intercountry adoption agency
3727 Chesswood Drive, Toronto ON M3J 2P6 Canada. Tel (416) 630-2472 e-mail: caringhomes@hotmail.com

Moshiach is on his way. Make the world a beautiful place with acts of goodness and kindness.



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Based on our experience in Omsk I would highly recommend it. We were very impressed with Orphanage #2 in Omsk where Maxim was living, but we're no experts.

Dr. Eric Downing is a Canadian physician living in Russia and we contracted his services to examine Maxim during our first trip. Dr. Downing makes his living doing such examinations at orphanages all over Russia. He had not been to our orphanage before, but he was of the opinion it was among the best he had seen in terms of the facilities, the hygiene, and the quality of child-care. That's not to say that the orphanage wasn't short of manpower as well as the financial resources to provide the standard of care that promotes optimal child development.

We've been home almost a month now and the time in Russia during that second trip seems to have passed so quickly. Maxim is wonderful, cute, smiling, gregarious, babbling, beginning to walk, has a voracious appetite, and has quickly bonded closely to both of us (although he definitely looks for his Mommy when he wants to eat...which is most of the time). It almost seems trivial to simply say "thank you" to Tzivos Hashem for delivering their services as promised but I don't know what else to say.



April Birthdays!

Happy Birthday to:

Sierra R. on your 6th birthday on April 6th
Marika C. on your 8th birthday on April 11th
Andrew L. on your 10th birthday on April 14th
Alexy A. on your 13th birthday on April 15th
Dylan S. on your 5th birthday on April 16th
Joseph G. on your 10th birthday on April 17th
Alex P. on your 3rd birthday on April 20th
Rhetton K. on your 4th birthday on April 23rd
Sophia V. on your 4th birthday on April 23rd
Sofya P. on your 4th birthday on April 24th
Lauren M. on your 4th birthday on April 25th
Austin P. on your 8th birthday on April 27th
Natasha B. on your 2nd birthday on April 28th
Jacob K. on your 11th birthday on April 29th
Ethan M. on your 7th birthday on April 30th

Sorry if we missed yours! ☺

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 25 and June 13, 2004, Toronto -- "Adoption 1-2-3: Creating Your Family" seminar. Location TBA. Learn the basics of international and domestic adoption from experienced adoptive parents and an adoption practitioner. \$220/couple, \$110/single. Marie Artt, M.S.W., R.S.W. 416-469-2424, or 905-655-3894. Adoption123@sympatico.ca

April 29, 2004, Saskatoon -- "Damaged Angels". With Bonnie Buxton, author of *Damaged Angels: a Mother Discovers the Terrible Cost of Alcohol in Pregnancy*. Hosted by Adoption Support Centre of Saskatchewan, and Saskatchewan Fetal





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Alcohol Support Network. ASCS, 203 - 510
Cynthia St. Saskatoon SK S7L 7K7, 306-665-7272,
1-866-869-2727, adoption.support@sasktel.net,
www3.sk.sympatico.ca/adoption

Apr. 30, May 1, 2, 2004, Toronto -- Jane Brown Playshops. FCC Toronto, in partnership with Children's Bridge, Family Outreach and Open Arms, offers playshops for adopted children, led by Jane Brown, social worker and educator. Through multi-sensory games with props, children 5-13 talk, learn and discuss their feelings about being adopted. A talk for parents only is on Friday night. Register by April 23. FCC Toronto, www.fctoronto.org

May 1, 2004, Windsor, Ont. -- Adoption Day - International Focus. Seminar covers Russia, Ukraine, South Africa, Haiti, Albania, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Yugoslavia. 9:30-4:30 p.m. Lunch on your own. Holiday Inn Select Windsor, 1855 Huron Church Road (off 401, E.C.Row, or Ambassador Bridge). Speakers from agencies: Mission of Tears Adoption, Adoptionworx (Canada), Loving Heart International Adoption. Learn about the procedures, the children, medical and developmental factors. Meet adoptive families and their children. Space limited, register by April 16. \$20. Arlene Klie (Seminar Chair), 307-1428 Ouellette Ave., Windsor ON N8X 1K4, 519-253-1164, aklie@on.aibn.com

May 23, 2004, Montreal -- International Infertility Counselors Organization (IICO): Postgraduate Course "Global Perspectives on Infertility Counseling", Jean Haase, Janet Takefman, co-chairs. Included in the IICO course is "Infertility Counseling and the Proposed Canadian Legislation on Assisted Human Reproduction", Francine Manseau, Senior Policy Analyst for Health Canada. Meeting at the International Federation of Fertility Societies (IFFS) 18th World Congress, May 23-28, 2004. IICO is a Special Interest Group of IFFS, formed to "foster the affiliation of infertility counseling organization from around the world and to encourage and support international cooperation and education in the field of reproductive health psychology". Must

register for the IFFS Congress, and pay US\$150 course fee. Info/register: www.IFFS2004.com

May 29, 2004 London, Ont --The Adoption Option – The educational seminar for potential adoptive families in understanding adoption issues and preparing for the joys, adjustments and challenges of international adoption. Register by e-mail or phone (519) 675-0362, danny.bell@sympatico.ca

June 5, 2004, Toronto -- One-day International Adoption Seminar. Full day in-depth educational seminar - prepares parents for an effective transition for them and their child and also assists in learning to cope with potential adjustment difficulties that they and their child may experience. Examples of course topics: Preparing for adoption and travel - emotional considerations, dealing with family and friends, positive adoption language; meeting your child; adjustments, medical issues & child development; attachment & bonding; talking about adoption with your child. \$275 + GST (\$294.25) per couple/ \$185 + GST (\$197.25) single participant - includes breakfast & lunch. Contact Sofie Stergianis to register (416) 483-0003, sofie@ica.net

**INFERTILITY NETWORK
in conjunction with
TZIVOS HASHEM CANADA
present a seminar
"ADOPTING FROM RUSSIA"**

**On Sunday June 6th, 2004, at
Michener Institute, 222 Saint Patrick St, Toronto.**

**Please register at 416-691-3611, fax 416-690-8015,
Email: Info@InfertilityNetwork.org**

**Fee:\$15/person,\$25/couple
Payable by cheque, money order, VISA, MasterCard.**

Space is limited. Please register in advance.

We are looking forward to see you there!

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