



**CARING HOMES
FOR ORPHAN CHILDREN**

HOMeward BOUND

The Caring Homes for Orphan Children

Newsletter



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Where has the time gone?

It was December 21st 1994 when we were united with our two daughters SVETA and OLGA. They were ages 7 and 3. Heather and I had gone down the same path that many adoptive parents do; that is the unsuccessful fertility route. It wasn't long after we decided to commit to ARNIE and, at that time, "Caring Homes for Russian Children" that we were presented with photographs of SVETA and OLGA. Our confidence in ARNIE was based solely on gut. For at that time he had not yet completed a successful adoption in Ontario. With very little personal background on the children and even less on their parents, other than they were both dead, we took a leap of faith and we were justly rewarded.

Everything went pretty much as ARNIE had laid out for us. I realize that today's process can involve multiple trips to Russia with stays of 1 to 3 weeks. We were in and out of Russia in one week! The magical part of our trip, other than the obvious, was that we were scheduled home on Christmas Day. Needless to say our Christmas's have been extra special ever since.

Our girls were given new names that retained their original first names. They are now known as Alexandra Sveta Andre ORR and Hilary Olga Lyn ORR, or Alex and Hilly. Both girls were embraced by our community of Uxbridge as well as our families. Although both girls met the mandated "medical condition" requirement to be eligible of international adoption out of Russia, neither one of them have had anything more than a common cold since they arrived. Both girls are as Canadian as they come with Alex working at TIM HORTONS and Hilary playing HOCKEY.

Alex is in her last year of high school and tonight was sending out applications for college and Hilary is about to enter high school next year.

We have always kept an open dialogue with the girls about where they came from and those discussions are few and far between now. Both girls have a great appreciation for what we are able to provide for them and they have a special understanding of how special they are to us.



As I'm sure all of you understand this process could not be done alone. There are many people who are key to making it come together, our case is no different. I would like to acknowledge a few of them. ARNIE and HENRY for their passion to do what they do best and that is make families happen. Dr. KOGEN, IRENA, SERGIE, HELENA, SASHA and his family, all of which made the Russian connection a virtually uneventful one. The ROWE family for their

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



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unselfish willingness to share their experience of being the 1st family ARNIE completed.

As we look back on our adventure it is filled with many occasions to share our good fortune with others. It is a story that still warms the hearts of all that hear it, and for others it is the confidence builder to go ahead and do it themselves.



This will be our 10th year as a family and we just thought we would share our joy with all of you, as we all take the time to reflect on our good fortune over the holiday season.

Neil, Heather, Alex and Hilary

THE RECENT ADOPTION NEWS from RUSSIA

To all concerned with international adoption from Russia.

As many of you may already be aware, Russia is once again in the midst of restructuring their approval process for international adoption.

Thank goodness, CHOC's accreditation is valid till summer of 2005 and on this account we have no concerns at present.

However, it appears that until Russia has set up a new committee to review accreditation of the agencies, the federal bank is reluctant to issue releases, and so it may take several weeks until they are back in full swing.

Regardless, given the season, this actually may not affect timing in any significant way, since things generally slow down over the "holiday season" anyway.

So, altogether we feel there is not much to worry about at present, and we here continue "at full steam ahead".



***All of us at CHOC
would like to
wish you
all the
Happy Holidays!***

***Hope your holidays are fulla fun with
your family and loved ones!***





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Upcoming Events

Jan. 11, 2005, Toronto -- ACO "How to Adopt" seminar. Your options in public, private or international adoption. 7:30-10 pm. Church of Saint Timothy, 100 Old Orchard Grove at Ridley Blvd. \$85/family includes resource package, one-year ACO membership, refreshments. Pre-register: Pat Fenton, Adoption Council of Ontario, Adoption Resource Centre, 416-482-0021, aco@adoption.ca, www.adoption.on.ca/HowToAdopt.html

Jan. 14, 2005, Toronto -- Evaluating Children With Trauma-Attachment Disorders seminar. 8.30 am-4.30 pm. Ramada Plaza Hotel, 1677 Wilson Ave. \$150; after Dec. 18 \$190. Dr. Arthur Becker-Weidman, Center for Family Development, Williamsville NY, 716-810-0790, Aweidman@concentric.net, www.center4familydevelop.com

Jan. 19-Feb. 23, 2005, Toronto -- ADHD Parent Support and Education Series. Moms

on a Mission (M.O.M.), a social worker/writer and a teacher, both adoptive parents, lead six Wednesday evenings for parents of exquisitely sensitive, super impulsive, wildly reactive kids, often but not only ADHD. 7-9:30 pm at Youthinc, North York Civic Centre. \$100, \$120/couple. Marlene Webber, 416-762-9814, www.momsonamission.ca

Jan. 22, 2005, Toronto -- One-day International Adoption Seminar. Prepare for adoption; medical issues; attachment; talking about adoption with your child; mixed race adoptions. Includes videos, presentations, hand-outs, breakfast and lunch. \$315/couple;

195/single+tax. Sofie Stergianis, International Adoption Centre, 416-483-0003, sofie@ica.net

Feb. 24-26, 2005, Victoria B.C. -- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder - Equality of Access: Rights and the Right Thing To Do conference. Victoria Conference Centre. FASD 2005 conference, University of British Columbia Interprofessional Continuing Education. UBC, www.interprofessional.ubc.ca

March 12, 2005, Toronto -- One-day International Adoption Seminar. Prepare for adoption; medical issues; attachment; talking about adoption with your child; mixed race adoptions. Includes videos, presentations, hand-outs, breakfast and lunch. \$315/couple; \$195/single+tax. Sofie Stergianis, International Adoption Centre, 416-483-0003, sofie@ica.net

April 9, 2005 London, Ont --The Adoption Option – Educational seminar for families exploring adoption and interested in learning and preparing for the joys, adjustments and challenges of international adoption. Topics include attachment and bonding and becoming an interracial family. Register by e-mail or phone (519) 675-0362, danny.bell@sympatico.ca

December Birthdays!

Elena H. on your 14th birthday on December 9th

Emily C. on your 6th birthday on December 11th

Adam M. on your 6th birthday on December 12th

Eric L. on your 8th birthday on December 20th

Joseph and Victoria N. on your 7th birthdays on December 25th

Rachel S. on your 7th birthday on December 25th

Jonathan C. on your 3rd birthday on December 27th

Nicholas C. on your 1st birthday on December 31st



Sorry if we missed yours! ☺