



**CARING HOMES
FOR ORPHAN CHILDREN**

HOMeward BOUND

The Caring Homes for Orphan Children

Newsletter



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The Monch family makes their adventure sound flawless. However, we all know that it is their sweet disposition that glosses over the many glitches that they encountered on the way to their long awaited meeting with their destined daughter.

Trip One to Moscow

By: Valerie and David Monch

“Welcome to Moscow...” the pilot said over the audio system.

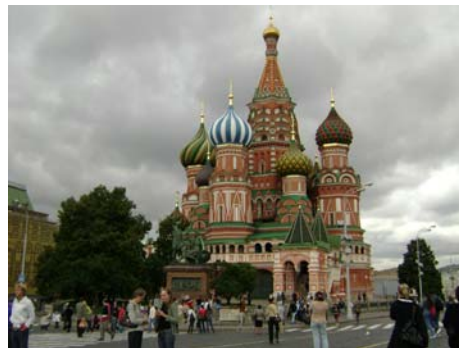
We had arrived. After 12 months of paperwork, meetings and anticipation, we had entered the city where our international adoption journey would truly begin.

We were nervous, excited and a little tired by the time we exited the aircraft. We had flown all night with a short stop in London, England. We found the airport in Moscow to be smaller than we had expected and making our way through Passport Control and baggage pick up took us less than 30 minutes!

We were met on the other side of the arrival gate by our CHOC representatives who immediately took charge of all the logistics. We went directly to the apartment that we had booked for our first week in Moscow. It was a nice, bright, tidy space that had a wonderful view. Our translator knew the area well and helped us find several amenities including the wonderfully close, 24-hour grocery store, located in the main level of our building.

Our first full day in Russia was Monday and it was the day we would visit the Ministry of Education. This was also the day that we would see the profile of the child they had selected for us for the first time. We were adopting from Moscow Region which meant we had no previous information on the child before traveling.

When we entered the building, we were not surprised to see other prospective adoptive parents waiting in the same fourth floor hallway. Monday is the day in Moscow Region for international adoption meetings. We were the first couple called into the office of the Ministry representative. She took the time to review the adoption process and then asked us to share something about ourselves and our family. We answered and smiled – trying to relay so much to her, without being able to speak her language.



We were then presented a simple, black and white page with the details of a little girl who was 13 months old. There was one photo on this page. She was sitting in a stroller with a big smile on her face. The Ministry official reviewed the history and medical information outlined in the profile and awaited our response. This was a healthy little girl who had some of the typical delays we were prepared to see, and nothing else. We looked at each other and nodded. We would accept this referral!

Upon departing the Ministry of Education, we immediately traveled to her orphanage which was about one hour from the city centre. When we arrived we were registered as visitors and taken upstairs to the



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orphanage director's office. The orphanage struck us as very quiet, considering there were so many children residing in it. This would continue to amaze us throughout our time there. The orphanage doctor reviewed this little girl's medical records (in greater detail) and was quite forthright. She answered all of our prepared questions before having to ask them. Then they brought in the baby. She was a delight! She was bright, happy and active. She was wearing pink and white. We held her and took photos of her. She wasn't shy but curious and charming. This would be a day we would remember forever.

On Tuesday, our designated medical practitioner joined us at the orphanage and examined the baby as well as her medical file. We spent the afternoon with this caring and warm doctor who spoke both Russian and English. She helped us to make our final decision to formalize our plans to adopt this little girl. We had crossed the final milestone for this trip. Tuesday was a great night! We called home and shared the wonderful news!

For the next three days, we traveled to the orphanage to visit her. We took many photos as we got to know her. Our translator was very helpful and was with us every day in case we had questions or wanted to communicate with the orphanage staff. On Thursday, we visited the notary's office to officially register our intention to adopt. At that time they requested a name for our child. We named her Sophia Irina Coco Monch - an international name for a little girl whom we hope, we can show the world to.

Moscow is an amazing city that never seems to get dark. After returning from the orphanage each day, we would tour the city by foot. We wanted to get to know Sophia's birthplace so we could share this with her when the time was right.

We were thrilled that Sophia remembered us from day to day. She smiled and held out her arms to be held by us! Her little personality continued to shine. The orphanage had a playroom with a small piano tucked in the corner. David played for her as she sat on his lap and watched in amazement. She tried to imitate his hands and even kissed the keys! She explored the room and we played together. Sophia loves to be held so we turned down the stroller offered to us on Friday, and kept her close in our arms.

We became acquainted, with Sophia's primary caregiver at the orphanage during the week, with the help of our translator. She seemed to be very happy that Sophia had a family who wished to adopt her and promised to take photos of her, while we awaited our next trip. Although it was very difficult to leave Sophia and return home to Canada, we knew her caregiver was keeping a close eye on her and would show her our little family photo album.

Trip One was complete and now we anticipate the trip that will bring her home.



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MAJOR UPDATES FROM RUSSIA in 2008:

- * Once again Russia has introduced another wrinkle (and over the past 2 decades we have seen many) in the international adoption process. In the face of declining population, the Russian political powers that be, have introduced some serious monetary incentives to encourage their citizens to take Russia's orphans under their wings through a heavily subsidized foster parenting program. This has caused (what we hope may prove to be a temporary) slow down in international adoptions, basically extending the process by what we estimate to be an extra 4 to 6 months for the near foreseeable future.
- * The process is made substantially quicker when parents request referrals for a child of either gender, as opposed to specifying only a girl. This is because Russian citizens are adopting/fostering mostly girls themselves.
- * It appears that the 10 day appeal period is no longer being waved and so the second (court) trip has been lengthened (although parents may decide to split this trip into 2). Please also refer to our information kit for a detailed outline of process.

Your Stories for an Adoption Book:

* I have stumbled across a post in one of the adoption chats that might be of interest to some of you. An author is looking for personal adoption stories for a book that she is writing. She herself is an adoptive mother. Below is her request:

Hello all,

I've not been very active on this list for quite some time, but I adopted my daughter in 2002 and my son in 2005.

I'm a fiction writer, but I'm working on my first non-fiction project, a book regarding adoption. In order to get the ball rolling I am looking for stories about "The Decision" to adopt. How did it happen for you/your family. I'm hoping to hear about the process of coming to a decision. I am looking for stories from all types of adoptions International, Domestic, Foster to Adopt etc. so feel free to share this with any and all who would be interested in contributing.

The finished book will have other sections, but I'm tackling only this first section right now.

Please email me at Julesell1015 @ Yahoo.com with any questions or with your story. Unfortunately, I am not able to compensate financially, but I am hoping to be able to provide a free copy of the finished product upon publication if your story is included in the book.

I'll also need contact information for fact checking purposes such as address, phone etc.

Thank you!

Julie Sellers

Mom to Sophie b. 6/20/01 a. 2/28/02
and Max b 5/20/2004 a. 1/21/08

Need Stories - X-Posted.

Posted by: "julesell1015", julesell1015@yahoo.com
Posted on Wednesday, September 3, 2008



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Handy Pre & Post Adoption Tips:

- * *Adoption specialists suggest keeping the walls of your child's room similar in colour to their institutional settings for the first while. According to them, it is difficult for a child to assimilate to an absolutely new environment right away, and keeping the walls a similar colour will create a familiar (to the orphanage) setting.*
- * *Assemble a small photo album of your family to leave with the child between the 1st and 2nd trips. With the help of caregivers, the child will be able to view the photos of his/her parents and other family members while the adoption gets finalized.*
- * *Decorate your luggage with colourful bands and stickers in order to be able to recognize it with more ease at the Russian airport.*
- * *Narrow down your list of potential names for the child. You will need to decide on a child's name during your first trip to Russia and indicate it on an application that will be submitted to court.*
- * *Purchase some toys that you will be able to leave as a gift. This gift will serve as a reminder of you.*
- * *You may usually bring cheerios for the children, with which they can make edible necklaces; however it is best to consult the orphanage's director if it's okay first.*
- * *You may also bring a disposable camera and leave it at the child's orphanage for the caregivers to take pictures of the child during your trip. You will then be able to take this camera home with you on your return.*



Adoption Council of Canada
Conseil d'adoption du Canada

AdoptionCanada LISTSERV: This list is for all Canadians touched by adoption. It's a place for discussion among adoptees, birth parents, adoptive parents, prospective adopters, Canadian adoption advocates, support group members, agencies, adoption councils, provincial coordinators and professionals working in adoption.

What does adoption mean to you? How does it impact you? What can we learn from each other? How can we work together to improve the system? This listserv is sponsored by The Adoption Council of Canada.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AdoptionCanada/>

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From the Adoption Council of Canada:

"Employment Insurance Benefit for Adoptive Parents"

(August 14, 2008). The ACC is currently helping challenge the Government of Canada to recognize that adoptive parents, while perhaps not giving birth to a child, have significant parallel issues that are equivalent to those of the parent who has had a child by way of birth.

Here is the issue: Currently, 35 weeks of EI benefits for parental leave are accessible to adoptive parents however; the 15 weeks designated to the maternity benefit plan is not available to those who become parents through adoption rather than birth.

Additional information is also available via the Adoption Council of Canada website. Please see:

www.adopting.ca, click under "News and Events", and follow the link to "Employment Insurance Benefit".

www.chocadoption.com will be undergoing major updates soon, and will soon include:

- A video of the adoption process
- A detailed Breakdown of the current adoption process in Russia
- CHOC's updated Information Kit
- New testimonials

.....and more!!!

Precious Baby Doll Company

We have heard many positive comments about a "Russian Baby Doll" from parents who purchased it as a gift to their adopted children from Russia. We find this doll to be very cute and original as it reminds children of their heritage. The doll is dressed in Russian ethnic clothes, and can be purchased with a book of foundation knowledge about the country of origin.

For more details please visit the company's official website at :

https://www.2900.sslldomain.com/preciousbabydolls/order/store/comersus_viewItem.asp?idProduct=5



Katya Irina

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Upcoming Events from adoption counsel of Ontario, adoption.ca

**September 25, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.
Adoption Forum in Mississauga, Ontario
(location: CDRCP).** The goal of the forum is to figure out how to best support people in the Regions of Peel and Halton who have been touched by adoption. Adoption, from all perspectives, is a unique experience, and we would like to provide an opportunity for members of the adoption community to come together, meet each other, discuss common concerns and learn how to best support needs. We hope that this forum is just the beginning of an ongoing discussion that will lead to better supports for people who have been touched by adoption. We know that you are busy, but we would love for you to attend. If you have additional questions, please email Lexi Dece-Cassidy (an adoptive parent and ACC Board Member) at lexi@cdrpc.com. Please also see the [event flyer](#).

October 24 – 26, 2008: THE FORGET ME NOT FAMILY SOCIETY IS HOSTING A WORKSHOP "REUNIONS & EXPECTATIONS.... and what to do about them". The Forget Me Not Family Society is pleased to announce that we are bringing Joe Soll back to New Westminster for another fabulous weekend, October 24 - 26, 2008. This workshop is entitled "Reunions and Expectations.....and what to do about them". During this weekend adoptees, adoptive parents, and birth/natural parents are invited to come and learn how to recognize and deal with the expectations that come about when reunions take place. Additional information is available [here](#) and by contacting Marnie Tetz: marnietetz@shaw.ca

**October 25 and October 26, 2008:
Adoption Resource Exchange** -- The Fall Adoption Resource Exchange (ARE) will be held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre on October 25th and October 26th 2008.

Additional details will be made available via the AdoptOntario website in early September:
www.adoptontario.ca

**November 20, 2008, Calgary, Alberta –
Understanding and Helping the Challenged
Child.** An evening presentation for adoptive parents, foster parents, professionals and interested members of the community. 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. at the University of Calgary. Registration deadline is November 13, 2008 and additional information is available by clicking [here](#) or by contacting Frances Seyer at 403-297-2603.

**November 21, 2008, Calgary, Alberta –
Understanding and Helping the Traumatized
Child.** All day presentation (9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) at the MacEwan Student Centre of the University of Calgary. Early registration deadline is October 30, 2008 and the final deadline is November 14, 2008. Click [here](#) to learn more about this cutting edge seminar geared towards social workers, psychologists, therapists, counsellors, educators, nurses, mental health workers, foster and adoptive parents as well as parents and caregivers of children with challenges.

2009

**March 11 to March 14, 2009, Victoria, BC. --
The 3rd International Conference on Fetal
Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Integrating
Research, Policy, and Promising Practice
Around the World: A Catalyst for Change.** Sponsored by UBC Interprofessional Continuing Education. Contact via email and view additional details online ipinfo@interchange.ubc.ca, www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/FASD09.htm

**NACAC CONFERENCE: August 12 to August 15,
2009, Columbus, Ohio.** -- . Don't miss the 35th annual conference of the North American Council on Adoptable Children in Columbus, Ohio from August 12 to 15, 2009! (Pre-conference sessions August 12; full conference August 13 to 15.) Please see the NACAC website for additional information:
www.nacac.org/conference/conference.html

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Upcoming events from FamilyHelper.net

Oct. 18, 2008, Toronto -- Seminar on Talking to Children about Adoption. Learn ways to empower children (adoptees) to answer questions about adoption. As well, learn how to respond to the questions of children of family and friends, including neighbours and classmates. 1:30-4:30 pm. \$70. [Sofie Stergianis](#), Adoption Resources, 416-483-0003, www.adoptededucation.ca

Regular Meetings from FamilyHelper.net

Toronto -- Families in Adoption. Last Sunday of the month, Jan., Mar, May, Sept., Nov.; picnic in July. Support group meeting for local and international adopters. Informal discussions for pre-adoptive and adoptive parents. Activity programs for children (infant through school age). Rosedale United Church, 159 Roxborough Dr., east of Mt. Pleasant. [Pat Fenton](#), 416-964-0042

Sudbury ON -- Sudbury Adoption Support Group. Second Wednesday, except July and August. 111 Elm St., 7-9pm. Must be 18 to join. [Esther](#), 705-969-7252.

Winnipeg -- MAPS (Manitoba Adoptive Parents Support). Second Wednesday. South Winnipeg Family Information Centre, Lower Level, 800 Point Rd. For meeting times call MAPS co-coordinator [Sue Brook](#), 204-231-3014

Toronto -- FACE Support Group. Last Wednesday. Families of Adopted Children from Eastern Europe meet at family homes. Information, speakers and social events with our children. [Louise LaRocca](#), 416-484-4588.

Toronto, London, Alliston -- "How to Adopt" seminars. Twice a month. Dates and locations at

www.adoptontario.ca/news.aspx. Adoptive parents and professionals discuss options, costs, homestudies for local or international adoption. \$85/family.

In Toronto: Church of Saint Timothy, 100 Old Orchard Grove

In London: Westmount Public Library, 3200 Wonderland Rd. S.

In Alliston: Gibson Centre for Community Arts, 63 Tupper St. W.

[Patricia Convery](#), Adoption Council of Ontario, 416-482-0021, www.adoption.on.ca

Ottawa -- Waiting Parents Group. First Thursday of the month (except July, Aug.). For singles and couples at all stages of adoption. [Kate MacLellan](#), Open Door Society of Ottawa, 613-749-6315.

Timmins ON -- Sharing Post Adoption Issues. Third Tuesday. For all in the adoption constellation. [Lark Ritchie](#), 705-235-8121 x7515.

Fredericton NB -- Parent Chat. An informal, welcoming support group for parents of adopted children at any stage of the process. [Susann McFadzen](#), 457-1866

For more locations of support groups please go to <http://familyhelper.net/events.html>

For more useful information, upcoming events and/or upcoming PRIDE training please go to Adopt Ontario's website: <http://www.adoptontario.ca/home.aspx>
