



**CARING HOMES
FOR ORPHAN CHILDREN**

HOMeward BOUND

The Caring Homes for Orphan Children

Newsletter

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Welcome to Canada - summer and fall of '09:

Justin from Moscow Region
Dmitriy from Moscow Region
Eric from Moscow Region
Nickolas from Moscow Region
Andrey from Moscow City
Nadia from Moscow Region
Nikolas from Bashkortostan
Gabriel From Bashkortostan
Marko from Moscow Region
Aleksander from Moscow Region



In the year 2009, CHOC has received referrals from Russia for 21 of its families:

- 3 of these families are getting ready to travel and meet proposed children
- 3 of these families have already returned from their first trip and are awaiting invitation to court
- 2 of these families have gone through court and are currently with their children in Russia, completing necessary steps prior to their return to Canada
- 12 of these families are home in Canada, together with their sons or daughters

- Of these 21 children, 16 are boys and 4 are girls

Currently at CHOC:

- 8 families are registered in various regions in Russia and are waiting for referrals
- 2 families have been issued Ministerial approvals and are preparing documents to register in a region in Russia
- 6 families are awaiting homestudy review and approval by their respective provincial Ministries
- 2 families are completing their homestudies with private adoption practitioners
- Some families are contemplating second adoption!



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Sometimes the wait for THAT phone call can seem interminable. Just when you think that you have everything figured out, think again. As you will read from this family's story, an adoption journey is all but predictable!

-Erin

From Dream to Reality... My Journey to Aleksander By: **Silvana Orsini**

It is still surreal that I am actually writing this article. Throughout the two and half years it took to finalize the adoption of my son Aleksander, the CHOC newsletter articles were always a source of hope and gave me the courage and patience to move forward. It is an honor to be asked to share my adoption experience.

My adoption journey began in January 2007, in the midst of huge changes in Russian adoption, with the most pressing issue being agency license accreditations. At that time many agencies worldwide were eagerly awaiting license renewals in order to have permission to continue facilitating adoptions in Russia. As I entered the CHOC office for the first time, I was excited yet very nervous. I was met with a warm welcome and a realistic perspective of what this journey would entail. I appreciated the honest prediction of what was to come, the paperwork, the requirements, and possible hurdles to expect.

Although at the time CHOC's license was about to expire, I still began preparing all necessary documents, and hired an Adoption Practitioner to complete my home study. There were many unknowns at that time, I was hoping for a quick license renewal so my paperwork could be sent to Russia, and my adoption would proceed as

planned. Little did I know it would be a long eleven months for the renewal to occur. In the meantime, it was decided that my paperwork would be prepared to be sent to the Nizhiny Novgorod region once CHOC received accreditation.

I spent months researching any information I could find on Nizhiny Novgorod. I joined adoption groups, and made contact with other people who had adopted from that region. I knew all about the hotels, the flights, the train schedules, the must see tourist sites. It became my obsession to learn everything I could about Nizhiny Novgorod, so that not only would I be prepared to travel there, but one day, I would be able to tell my child all I could about his/her place of birth.



Once CHOC received their accreditation in November 2007, it took a few months to renew many



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documents that had expired, and finally my dossier was sent to Nizhiny Novgorod. I was so excited, and couldn't wait to get "the call" that I had been waiting for. I kept waiting, and waiting and waiting. In the meantime I unfortunately was noticing a pattern of other pre-adoptive parents registered in the same regionno referrals seemed to be coming from there. By the time a year had passed, I was starting to lose heart.



A few weeks later as I was in my classroom working with my students, I was called from the office and the secretary asked if I knew someone named Erin from CHOC and if I would take a call from her. I screamed, "YES! Of course!!" This was it! My heart was pounding in my chest, and I was shaking from head to toe. I remember before I lifted the receiver of the

phone, I decided that I should sit down, take a breath, and enjoy this moment. This was "the call", and I wanted to remember this moment for the rest of my life. I had no idea what information was waiting for me on the other end of the line. Erin was so wonderful and sensitive on that day, especially when she informed me that she had some information, but it wasn't information I had been waiting for.

Erin gently informed me of something I think I knew was coming all along. She was realistic in telling me that Nizhiny Novgorod had not sent any referrals to waiting parents in a very long time. I of course had the option of continue to wait in that region, but how long I would have to continue the waiting game would be unknown. Erin suggested I change regions and consider increasing my age parameters. If I agreed to do so, I was told there was a little boy I would be able to meet, in as early as a month from that day. The room was spinning for me at that moment, and I think for the first time in my life I was speechless.

The new region was called The Republic of Bashkortostan, and I would have to travel to its capital city called Ufa, a two hour flight south of Moscow. The little boy was 2 years old, but would be 3 by the time I would meet him. The city where the baby home was located is 2 hours from the city, and there is virtually no tourism there, so I would have to stay with a host family. So much new information to consider and I could barely breathe. I asked Erin to give me some time to process all that she was saying, and in the meantime to send me as much information as she could about this little boy. I rushed to the school library and I searched for a map of Russia, and could not find Ufa anywhere on the map. That is when the flood of tears began. I knew everything that there was to know about Nizhiny Novgorod, and I couldn't even find Ufa on the map! I was so overwhelmed to say the least, and I had no idea what I should do.



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By the time I made it home, a lot of the information Erin gave me had time to settle in my brain. I checked my email, and waiting for me was a photo of the most beautiful boy I had ever seen. He had blue eyes and a little grin on his face that seemed to be saying, "I am the one you have been waiting for." My mom was standing with me, and I asked her what she thought I should do, and she simply answered, "Go and get your son".

From that moment on, everything seems like a blur. It took some time to change over all the paperwork, and some requirements for the new region were different and needed to be addressed. I travelled to Ufa via Moscow with my sister in February 2009. After the two hour drive on a very bumpy and icy road we made it to a city called Sterlitamak, and I was introduced to Aleksander the boy with the grin, on his third birthday. On that day, we both were given a gift. I handed Aleksander a stuffed puppy that represented all the love and comfort his new family would give him, and he gave me the gift I had waited so long for, a child to love as my own.

I returned to Ufa in late May to appear in court and finalize Aleksander's adoption. While in Russia I had the opportunity to meet so many people in the adoption sector who love and care for the children in the baby homes. They along with our wonderful host family became an important part of our journey, and I cherish all the memories we shared. Aleksander has been home just short of six months. He grows and changes everyday. It feels in so many ways that he has been a part of our lives forever. Thank you to Erin and all the CHOC associates both here in Canada and in Russia for helping turn my dream into reality.



Introducing St. Petersburg!

CHOC has finalized all of the necessary steps in order to begin the facilitation of adoptions from St. Petersburg, Russia. It is now officially a region that can be considered by families when first choosing where to register their dossiers. The process of adoption in St. Petes is similar to Nizhiny Novgorod in that prior to the first trip to Russia, families are able to receive a referral that is accompanied by a short summary of a child's health, and sometimes even a picture.



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Adoption Tax Expense - 2009

- Don't forget to include the adoption expenses for your tax return
- Adoption period starts from the time when a file is opened with your provincial Ministry, and ends when adoption is finalized and you receive full custody of your child.
- This year, the maximum amount that adoptive families are eligible to expense is \$10,643CND as per section 313, schedule 1.

Adoption Loan

Adoption is an expensive process that often requires careful financial planning. The National Bank of Canada (NBC) issues international adoption loans to qualified applicants of up to \$20,000 with a low interest rate. A great feature of this "package for parents" is that the interest cost can be reduced when the loan is used in portions, and applied only on sums that are actually used. NBC is flexible with accommodating client's needs, making it possible to qualify for a loan larger than the indicated amount. Yet another great feature is that additional payments can be made without penalty.

For more information, please visit:

http://www.nbc.ca/bnc/cda/content/0,2662,div.Jd-2_lang.Jd-1_navCode-13374,00.html

Bill C-37: New Citizenship Act does NOT apply to CHOC families.

*As you know from our previous newsletter, a change in Canada's citizenship law has been implemented, according to which, children adopted internationally by Canadian families are now considered "first generation born abroad", and if they in turn adopt internationally or give birth outside of Canada, their children will not qualify to receive Canadian Citizenship.

* It is important to note however, that this regulation does not apply to internationally adopted children who come to Canada as permanent residents, and only then obtain citizenship. Bill C-37 applies to those internationally adopted children whose parents applied for citizenship right away, instead of going through the sponsorship route first.

* In order to ensure that your child does not become affected by the new citizenship law, it is important to first apply for sponsorship, obtain landed immigrant status upon child's arrival to Canada, and only then apply for citizenship.

* On average, it takes approximately four months to obtain citizenship for an adopted child from the time of application submission to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).



This is a step worth taking in order to ensure that your Grandchildren's citizenship rights not be refused, should they be born outside of Canada. We know this is a long time from now, but gotta start planning early!



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Some Interesting Facts from the OMCYS, ACC, and CIC :

- *Last year, MCYS approved approximately 850 homestudies for both domestic and international adoptions*
- *This year (up until October), only 450 homestudies were approved. There has been a noticeable decline in families applying to adopt*
- *Before the bankruptcy of Imagine Adoption, it took the Ontario Ministry less than two months to approve a new homestudy package. Now, it takes over four months.*
- *According to statistics from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, in the year 2008:*
 - *There were 90 completed international adoptions from Russia*
 - *Russia is placed 8th in the chronological order of countries from which most international adoptions were completed by Canadians.*
 - *China remains the leading country for Canadian adoptions, followed by U.S., Ethiopia, Haiti, Philippines, South Korea, Vietnam, and Russia.*
 - *In 2008, 1,908 children from abroad found their forever families in Canada.*
- *The policy that limits Ontarians to adopt a child under 3 years of age is no longer in force. Although there are now no restrictions on a child's age that can be requested, it remains the private adoption practitioner's responsibility to determine a family's preparedness to adopt a child of an age that they apply for.*

Adoption Disclosure Laws in Russia

In Russia, adoption is considered "closed". This means that once a child is legally adopted, his or hers birth family loses all legal rights for that child. At no time and under no circumstance will the child be able to access any records of his/her biological family, and similarly, the birth family will not be able to access any information on the child. The only way to retrieve any details is by hiring a private investigator.

"The love between parents and children is so much deeper than blood"

"A child is the slowest flower in the world, opening petal by petal, revealing the developing personality within"

"Not flesh of my flesh, nor bone or my bone, but still miraculously my own.

Never forget for a single minute, you didn't grow under my heart – but in it"

"Adoption is when a child grew up in its mommy's heart instead of her tummy"

"Adoptive mom? I am mom. I need no other label or prefix"

"By choice we have become a family, first in our hearts, and finally in breath and being. Great expectations are good; great experiences are better".

"Biology is the least that makes someone a mother or father"



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Lets Talk Adoption...

Discussing adoption with your adopted child may be a sensitive topic. The Adoption Council of Ontario provides some useful tips on ways to present this topic to your child:

1. Begin early
2. Be aware of your own feelings during the adoption story
3. Use positive adoption language
4. Answer the questions your child asks
5. Include information about your child's actual birth if you have this
6. Don't wait for your child to raise the subject
7. Once is not enough
8. Paint a positive picture of your child's birth parent
9. Acknowledge and accept your child's feelings
10. Prepare a life book of photos and the adoption story
11. Check your child's understanding from time to time
12. Reach out to others

A more detailed description of each of the above mentioned steps may be found in the "articles" section of the adoption council of Ontario website.

http://admin.powersitefactory.com/Sites/adoption/PDF/talking_with_your_children_about_adoption_.pdf

According to OMCYS, "adoption is a service for the child. First priority is to meet the child's, not the family's needs, even though the applicants are the paying clients".

Russian 101

Although your child will no doubt pick up the English language very quickly, here are some basic words in Russian that may ease your transition period during the initial months:

Yes - Da	Boy - Mal'chik	Dog - Sobaka
No - Net	Girl - Devochka	To draw - Risovat'
Thank you - Spasibo	Hi - Privet	Pencil - Karandash
You are welcome - Na zdorov'ye	Bye - Poka	To eat - Kushat'
Give me - Dai	What - Chto	To drink - Pit'
Take - Na	To sleep - Spat'	Grandpa - dedushka
Come here - Idi syuda	Let's go - Idyom	Grandma - babushka
I love you - Ya tebya lyublyu	Ok - Horosho	To go for a walk - gulyat
Mom - mama	Plane - Samolyot	Quite - Tiho
Dad - papa	Cat - kot	Stop - Hvatit



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Upcoming Events from adoption counsel of Ontario, adoption.ca

NACAC CONFERENCE: August 4 to August 7, 2010, Hartford, Connecticut. -- . Don't miss the 36th annual conference of the North American Council on Adoptable Children in Hartford from August 4th-7th, 2010! (Pre-conference sessions on August 4th) Please visit the NACAC website for additional information:
<http://www.nacac.org/conference/conference.html>

Upcoming Events

“Creating a Secure Base for All” workshop: An author of “Building the bonds of attachment”, “Attachment focused family therapy”, and “Attachment focused therapy”, Dr. Dan Hughes presents on how trauma, loss, and attachment effect child’s development. \$135/family
In Hamilton: Monday February 22 9am-4:30pm at Carmen’s Banquet Centre on Stone Church rd. For more detailed on this event, please call 905-528-0353 or e-mail office@shalemnetwork.org

Regular Meetings from FamilyHelper.net

Belleville ON -- Adoption Support Group. Second Thursday. 363 Dundas St. W., through Hastings CAS. Marie Ann Lammers, 613-398-7509

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

Toronto -- "On Our Own" Single Parenting Group. Fourth Thursday. For those who choose single parenthood through adoption or donor gametes. Infertility treatments; adoption process; life of a child with one parent. **Infertility Support Program.** 6-8 pm, 8th floor,

Women's Health Centre, 790 Bay St. (at College). **Jan Silverman**, 416-351-3721

Brampton ON -- Parents Voice on Adoption. Second Tuesday. Adoptive families discuss raising children 0-6. 6:30-8:30 pm; dinner, refreshments. Ontario Early Years Centre, #105, 57 Mill St. N. **Noreen Hornsby**, Early Years Manager, **CDRCP**,

Burlington ON -- Belonging. Last Monday. Compass Point Bible Church, 2501 Eaglesfield Dr. For adoptive parents. **Janice McDonald**, Burlington, 905-332-9469

Burlington ON -- Parent Support Group. Third Tuesday. 7-9 pm. Meet other adoptive parents. **Lynn Mighton**, Children's Bridge.

London ON -- Coffee Talk. Second Wednesday. Share adoption and parenting ideas with parents of children adopted from abroad. 7:30 pm, Symposium Café, 620 Richmond St. **Kim Jones**, 519-652-9574

Sudbury ON -- Sudbury Adoption Support Group. Second Wednesday, except July and August. 111 Elm St., 7-9pm. Must be 18 to join. **Esther**, 705-969-7152

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, Ottawa, Kingston, Alliston -- "How to Adopt" seminars. Twice a month. Dates, locations at **ACO**. Adoptive parents and professionals discuss options, costs, homestudies for local or international adoption. \$85/family.
Patricia Convery, Adoption Council of Ontario, 416-482-0021
www.adoption.on.ca

“Caring Homes for Orphan Children” is a trade name of Tzivos Hashem Canada, Inc., an intercountry adoption agency
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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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***Kitchener ON* -- Adoptive Parents Talk.**

Fourth Monday. Informal get-togethers for all adoptive parents. Discuss the challenges of adopting and parenting adopted children. 7 pm, 2nd floor, Zehr's Laurentian Power Centre, 750 Ottawa St., S., Kitchener. [Stephanie Morgan](#), Post Adoption Coordinator, 519-622-8373

***Ottawa* -- Ottawa Parent Group.** Monthly on a Wednesday, Sept.-May. Informal group for adoptive parents, 7-9 pm, Children's Bridge Office, 1400 Clyde Ave., #221. [Cathy Murphy](#), 613-226-2112

***Ottawa* -- Waiting Parents Group.**

Last Thursday of the month. 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.

***British Columbia* --** Adoptive Families Assn. of BC gives monthly meeting dates and times for [B.C. support groups](#), including [AFABC support groups](#).

***Fredericton NB* -- Parent Chat.**

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

***Saint John NB* -- Saint John Adoptive Parents**

Assn. Second Tuesday (exc. July/Aug.), at 7 pm, Grace Presbyterian Church, 101 Coburg St. For pre- and post-adoption support; domestic/international adoption. [Jenn Gerrits](#), 506-659-2499

***Moncton NB* -- Adoptive Moms Support Group.**

Third Thursday. Informal, drop-in support group for moms of adopted children, and moms-to-be. 7-9 pm. [Jennifer O'Leary](#), 506-853-7268



*Who saves one life is as if they had saved the whole world.
Season's Greetings from all of us at CHOC*