



**CARING HOMES
FOR ORPHAN CHILDREN**

HOMeward BOUND

The Caring Homes for Orphan Children
Newsletter



Vol. 1, Issue 1. January 2004. Page 1 of 4

Prayers Answered; Dreams Surpassed

We would like to share the letter of one of our adoptive families. We thought the experiences and the strength of this family would be useful for you.



Austin and Kira

It is not until I am asked about our adoption experiences that my wife and I give any thought about our children actually being adopted let alone come from Russia. As was again the case when CHOC asked if we would be interested in writing for this newsletter.

In June 1997 we returned home from Russia with a special little boy. This was our first international adoption experience. We named him Austin and he was 13 months old. From the moment we met him we fell immediately in love with him and Austin became the center of our universe. My wife and I very quickly forgot about all our prior unsuccessful attempts at invitro, the sums of money required for the adoption and all the bureaucratic paperwork which lead to being united with Austin.

Upon setting off on our first international adoption journey, my wife and I were feeling all the same

emotions, which other couples in similar situations must go through. We were feeling apprehensive, unsure, at times scared, excited, joyful, worried, etc... We also wanted details about the child, excessive amounts of information about his health, detailed information on and the some type of guaranteed success for the large amount of money we were spending. In the end we did not get much of any of that. What we did get was our dreams surpassed and our prayers answered for a beautiful and adorable little soul. Many times the question has been posed to me regarding the financial expense on the adoption and did we not find that to be a lot of money. My response is simple: The average person does not think twice about spending a similar amount for the purchase of a vehicle.

During our first adoption experience we learned that almost everything was not in our control, that the most important factor was having a good agency working for you and almost all was up to fate. Sure there were things that could be planned and information gotten but in the end the entire process, timing, experiences and end result was being orchestrated by powers above. Trust, patience and an open mind kept the journey enjoyable and smooth.

Aside from the adoption experience itself, there were the added factors of living temporarily in a foreign land and contending with a completely different culture. We were exposed to many awakening experiences, which at times tugged at the old heart. Providing for a newly adopted child in a land lacking many necessities, which we are accustomed to, and also having a language barrier complicated matters even more. But once again, trust and an open mind made all smooth.

For our first adoption, we were in and out of Moscow within 7 days. The court went smoothly, we toured around and enjoyed our short stay in Russia thoroughly. We became close with our Russian host family and most importantly we came home with a perfect little angel. Of course, we endured less than desirable living conditions, were exposed to much poverty and homelessness, and had to place our complete trust in others for everything. But all that only added to our wonderful international adoption experience.

"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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We found also that every adopted child has a unique and special history to tell. Austin is certainly one of them. Austin was abandoned at birth. He spent the first thirteen months of his somewhat neglected and fairly isolated in the orphanage because of limited staff. Almost immediately, upon receiving him, Austin's docile and expressionless mannerism changed. He began to smile, to clap, to play... it was for certain a sight to behold and experience.

Our good fortune was so apparent to us that we were very apprehensive to push our luck and go for a second. But, having always wanted two children we decided to once again put our fate to the test. My wife and I could never have dreamed an equally successful journey being possible but in May of 2000 we were once again blessed with a second little Angel, this time a girl of 14 months who we named Kira. Our destination this time around was a city by the name of Yekaterinburg, which has a population of about 1.5 million people and is located in the Ural Mountains, east of Moscow.... considerably east of Moscow ... almost on the Siberian border.

This journey was unlike the first however because we had to spend over 3 weeks in Russia, away from our son back here in Canada (and missing him dearly of course), having to endure many disappointments due to court imposed waiting periods and being delayed due to even more bureaucracy. In addition, our newly adopted little girl was in desperate need of medicated creams (which could not be obtained where we were) to treat a rash. Despite all this, we had a successful journey because of the end result... a beautiful, little girl who far exceeded anything we dreamed possible. Kira now shares that center of the universe with her big brother.

Like Austin, Kira also came with her past and like Austin's, Kira's was also very thought provoking to say the least. This little girl had been abandoned in a city park when she was approximately 6 months old. From there, she was brought to an orphanage where she received much care, attention and affection. My wife and I were very much taken aback by such information; however, we also realized that this was part of the fate and destiny for Kira.

My wife and I have many numerous fond memories of both our trips. We experienced many things which others only dream of having. We cherished and still cherish each moment we have with Austin and Kira.

To this day we continue to be used as references by our agency for other couples contemplating such an international adoption venture. So I continue to field questions on items which now I look upon as unimportant. Keeping it all in perspective is extremely advisable.

For our second venture we knew what to expect, what not to expect, what frame of mind to be in and what expectations not to have. My advice to any couple considering to adopt internationally is secure the services of a trustworthy and competent agency. This must be done through referral and reference checks. In both our ventures we had gone with CHOC. Put simply, if CHOC did not exist we would not have the wonderful children we have.

Secondly, have faith and trust in the agency, in fate itself and in the powers on high because most (if not all) is beyond your control and in most cases it's also beyond your agency's control. You will come to experience many situations (many wonderful ones) which all require you to be open minded, patient and trusting.

Thirdly, let go of all your preconceived notions of how a system should work, of warranties, of guarantees, of having assurances and being completely satisfied in every which way. This is a little human being we are talking about.... not a free pizza should it arrive in 41 minutes. Yes, this is tough to do and the first time around we had struggled with it also. But having gone through the process twice we learned that it's a must in order to retain your sanity. More important is to keep in perspective your ultimate goal - uniting with your child! In addition you'll be in a foreign land, with a different culture, with many different attitudes and in a society with their own set of distinct problems.

Finally.... enjoy and cherish! Take pleasure in what you are going through. Enjoy the reunion with that



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little soul and cherish everything and anything that presents itself (positive or negative) while in your child's birth country. It may not be a resort you are living in, but this is where your little angel was born and this is where she would have grown up. Not to mention that this is the wonderful place that blessed you with that special little being you now call a daughter or son.

My wife and I were ecstatic when we adopted Austin and our family has changed for the better (exponentially) with the welcoming of Kira into it. Words cannot even begin to come even close to capturing our happiness, pleasure, enjoyment and satisfaction. Kira is simply a gift from above which we could not have thought possible after receiving a similar gift in the form of Austin.

Kira is bright, smart, beautiful, adorable, cuddly, playful, always smiling and is very healthy... but most of all she brings even more sunshine into our lives. Her rash turned out to be minor in nature and with some proper creams eliminated the rash altogether.

Austin also is an adorable, healthy, bright, very talented and intelligent little boy who is simply infatuated with his new little sister. He enjoys all that a 7 year old does nowadays but he especially loves ice hockey, swimming, playing, art and being outdoors.

Welcome home baby Scott-Maxim!

We are at Choc are very happy to welcome to his new home baby Scott-Maxim, who came to Canada with his parents in December!



January Birthdays



Happy Birthday to:

Joseph G. on your 14th birthday on January 8th
Victoria H. on your 9th birthday on January 10th
Zev M. on your 10th birthday on January 11th
Darya H. on your 5th birthday on January 12

Mark M. on your 10th birthday on January 24th
Julia H. on your 9th birthday on January 24th
Arielle F. on your 6th birthday on January 25th
Marina M. on your 8th birthday on January 10th
Nadya K on your 4th birthday on January 29th
Katie T. on your 4th birthday on January 31st
Nicholas M on your 13th birthday on January 1st
Juliana G on your 6th birthday on January 1st
Kseniya D. on your 14th birthday on January 5th
Venera R. on your 1st birthday on January 5th
Jody M. on your 6th birthday on January 6th
Liam C. on your 6th birthday on January 22nd
Alexander B. on your 2nd birthday on January 22nd

Sorry if we missed yours! ☺

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan. 31, 2004, Toronto -- "How to Adopt / Getting Started in Adoption", seminar for Ontarians: make plans to adopt, locally or internationally. 10 am. Held twice monthly, 100 Old Orchard Grove at Ridley Blvd. Pat Fenton, Adoption Council of Ontario, Adoption Resource Centre, 416-482-0021, aco@adoption.ca, www.adoption.on.ca

February 7, 2004, Ottawa – Adoption Seminar

“How to make the adoption and how to begin the adoption process. Decision and adoption process. Private, public and international adoptions. Gather information on agencies.”

940 Rex Ave. ((basement). Parking lot is just north of Queensway on Maitland).

Presented by Adoption Practitioner - Mary Adele Blair, MSW, RSW. \$10 per family at the door. Please make reservations (613) 825-2332 or adeleblair@comnet.ca

Feb. 10, 2004, Thornhill, Ont. -- Information Evening for pre-adoption. 8:00 pm. Ask questions about the process from parents who adopted from Russia, Georgia, Romania, Hungary and Ukraine. By FACE: A Support Group for Families Adopting from Eastern Europe. Lisa, face.adopt@sympatico.ca

Feb. 14, 2004, London, Ont. – "The Adoption Option, Adopting Internationally": all-day training session for adoptive parents, by four adoption practitioners in the London area. 8:30-4:30. Windermere Manor, 200 Collip Circle, Univ. of Western Ontario campus. Hotel attached for weekend stays. Program covers: Pre/post Placement Process; Risks and Rewards; Loss as a Common Theme; Adjustment - Attachment and Bonding; Adoption as a lifelong process - helping your child adjust and thrive, the mixed-race family and growing up adopted; Adoption Stories - panel of adoptees and adoptive parents. \$250/couple, \$125/single includes lunch, coffee, snacks and resource materials. Good training for adoptive applicants as part of their adoption preparation. Organized by Elly Freund-Bell, Linda McKnight, Kim Gray and Rosanne Ryan. Elly Freund-Bell, 26 Repton Ave., London, 519-675-0362, fax 675-0362, danny.bell@sympatico.ca

Feb. 28, 2004, Toronto -- "How to Adopt / Getting Started in Adoption", seminar for Ontarians adopting locally or internationally. 10 am. Held twice monthly, Church of Saint Timothy, 100 Old Orchard Grove at Ridley Blvd. Pat Fenton, Adoption Council of Ontario, Adoption Resource Centre, 416-482-0021, aco@adoption.ca, www.adoption.on.ca

