



**CARING HOMES
FOR ORPHAN CHILDREN**

HOMeward BOUND

The Caring Homes for Orphan Children

Newsletter



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Russia and the Federal Data Bank

A new Russian law has come into effect as of January 10, 2005. This law increases, from 3 to 6 months, the length of time that children must remain in the Russian Federal Data Bank before they can be available to international adoption. This results in Russian children being available for international adoption only from the age of 8 ½ months and onward.

The purpose of the additional timeframe is to ensure that Russian families receive priority in the adoption process, allowing them time to obtain information about Russian orphans before it is released to foreign citizens.

According to Irina O'Rear, a Russian attorney working in the field of international adoption, the Duma (Russian Parliament) took this step because of perceived "criminal activity" in the "hiding" of children from Russian citizens; that is, information about children was "secretly" being provided to foreigners, which goes against the established principle of Russian citizens being given priority in the adoption of Russian orphans.

The new law affects all children who have lost parental care; whether they are currently on the database, or are yet to be placed there.

The law also affects international adoptions currently underway, that is, even adoptive couples who have already received a referral seem to be affected. The only exception / leniency that we have seen is the Russian Supreme Court's direction to the Regional Courts: that parents who have already met with children should be able to proceed.

How this will affect the overall adoption process and timeframe, is 2-fold: firstly, it is possible that no new proposals will be

forthcoming for a couple of months, until children presently on the data base have fulfilled their 6 month period.

Secondly, the process will likely increase the earliest possible age of an internationally adopted child to 8 ½ months, as follows:

1) Officials and other persons who have information about children left without parental care must inform Local Bodies of Trusteeship and Guardianship.

2) The Local Body must, within THREE DAYS after receiving such information, conduct a study of the child's living conditions.

3) The Local Body must then, WITHIN A MONTH, take all measures to place the child with a Russian family residing in Russia. If this is not possible, the Local Body must transmit the child's information to the appropriate Regional Body of Executive Power (Regional Database).

4) The Regional Body, WITHIN A MONTH of receiving information about the child, must organize his (her) placement in the family of citizens living within the Russian Federation. In the absence of such possibility, the information must be forwarded to the Federal Databank.

5) Only after the expiration of SIX MONTHS following the date when information has been received by the Federal Databank, may children be placed for adoption with either; citizens of the Russian Federation continuously residing outside the Russian Federation, or with foreign citizens or stateless persons who are not the relatives of these children.

If we count the months, we can see that the earliest a Russian child can be adopted by foreign citizens is



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from EIGHT-AND-A-HALF MONTHS OLD and onward.

We will keep you updated with any available news in the next issues of our newsletter.

CHOC \$US fees increase

Those of you who follow international currency trends will have noticed that U.S. dollars have taken a bit of a beating over the past few years. CHOC's foreign program costs are paid in U.S. funds, and these costs have been affected not only by the decrease in the value of American currency, but also by increased costs in general in the Russian Federation. For these reasons, effective January 2005, CHOC will be increasing the \$US portion of its fees by \$1,000 (approximately 10%). Clients already registered with CHOC will not be affected.

South Asia Tsunami and its impact on Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services fees

Immediately following last month's disaster in South Asia, many ideas were discussed within the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services as to how best Ontario might offer aid to the many children's needs arising from this tragedy.

One of the ideas that came to fruition, with a beneficial impact on all international adoptions, was The Honourable Dr. Marie Bountrogianni, Minister of Children and Youth Services, decision to cancel the case-processing fee for all international adoption applications that are

subject to the *Intercountry Adoption Act*. (***It used to cost \$925CAD for the Ministry to review an international home study***).

To quote the Minister: "As part of the review of our adoption strategy we recognize that these fees may be creating an obstacle for families who would like to adopt internationally. The Ministry has made the decision to eliminate the case-processing fee."

Effective January 13, 2005, the above fee will no longer be required from international adoption applicants. Adoption applications which are currently under review by the Ministry will have their case-processing fees returned to the agency. Applications will continue to get processed in the same manner and time frame as prior to the fee cancellation.

Ministry approval for CHOC's Bulgaria program

Following months of negotiations in both Canada and Bulgaria, CHOC has finally obtained its Ontario licence to expand its international adoption program into Bulgaria. Any clients interested in pursuing an international adoption, under the Hague Convention, in Bulgaria, will be happily accommodated. Please contact Anna at CHOC, 416-630-2472, info@chocadoption.com

Upcoming Events

Feb. 14, 2005, TELEVISION -- "Return to Sender". On "The Passionate Eye", CBC-TV, 9 pm. Repeated Wednesday on CBC Newsworld at 10 ET/PT. www.cbc.ca/passionateeye. Canadian couple adopt Romanian girl, send her back to Romania without legally ending the adoption. 13 years later,



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unable to attend school or get proper health care, Alexandra travels to Canada and the U.S. to clear up her status, and find the man who is still legally her father.

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

Mar. 4, 2005, Saskatoon -- Explosive Child Conference on the noncompliant child. One-day event hosted by Ehrlo Community Services, a non-profit organization. Radisson Hotel. 9 am - 4 pm (lunch included). Dr. Ross Greene, clinical psychologist and author of *The Explosive Child*. The seminar will help therapists, teachers and parents of an explosive, oppositional child to better understand the nature of his/her difficulties and learn about the CPS approach to intervention. Before Feb. 4, \$125 + tax. Linda Meyer 306-751-2412, l.meyer@ehrlo.com, www.ehrlo.com/explosivechild

Apr. 9, 2005, Toronto -- One-day International Adoption Seminar. Prepare for adoption; medical issues; attachment; talking about adoption with your child; mixed race adoptions. Videos, presentations, hand-outs, breakfast, lunch. \$195/single; \$315/couple; +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

April 15-16, 2005, Toronto -- Expanding Horizons for the Early Years conference. Holiday Inn on King St. For professionals, administrators, researchers, policymakers. Infant Mental Health Promotion Project, www.sickkids.ca/imp. Ontario Association for Infant Development, www.oaid.ca

January Birthday!

Nicholas M. on your 14th birthday on January 1st
Juliana G. on your 7th birthday on January 1st
Daniel O. on your 2nd birthday on January 2nd
Kseniya D. on your 15th birthday on January 5th
Bailey N. on your 2nd birthday on January 5th
Jenna M. on your 7th birthdays on January 6th
Joseph G. on your 15th birthday on January 8th
Victoria H. on your 12th birthday on January 10th
Marina M. on your 9th birthday on January 10th
Alexander M. on your 11th birthday on January 11th
Darya H. on your 6th birthday on January 12th
Lauren M. on your 5th birthday on January 12th
Marina G. on your 1st birthday on January 20th
Liam C. on your 7th birthday on January 22nd
Alexander G. on your 3rd birthday on January 22nd
Julia H. on your 10th birthdays on January 24th
Mark M. on your 11th birthdays on January 24th
Ariella F. on your 7th birthday on January 25th
Nadya K. on your 5th birthday on January 29th
Katie T. on your 5th birthday on January 31st



Sorry if we missed yours! ☺

"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.