



**CARING HOMES
FOR ORPHAN CHILDREN**

HOMeward BOUND

The Caring Homes for Orphan Children

Newsletter



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

Bringing Scott Home

In this issue we would like to share with all of you an adoption experience of one of our most recent adoptive families.



In the fall of 2002, my husband and I came to the realization that the “adoption route” was how God intended us to create our family. As fate would have it, right around that time we saw an advertisement for an information session on Russian adoption. The day of the session was a cold and snowy day in November 2002. We drove through the snowstorm thinking that we were probably wasting our time, and doubtful that the session could actually provide us with any real hope.

Much to our surprise the information session was wonderful. Within minutes our suspicions and doubt turned into respect for the agency, hope for our dream of a family and happiness for the adoptive couples who shared their experiences during the session. At the workshop we were told that the Russian adoption process takes about a year. We were too afraid to believe it could really happen, but we started the process in December 2002 and in

December 2003 we brought home our son, Scott.

The adoption process takes a lot out of you—but every single minute is worth it! The process will be whatever you decide it to be—it can be a long, painful and frustrating experience or it can be a year long “life adventure” full of hard work, surprises, challenges and new experiences. We decided on Day One to choose the “life adventure” approach and as a result we look back on the whole process with fond memories.

We started our home study in December 2002 and finished it in August 2003. In September 2003, Caring Homes assembled our dossier (including the home study), translated it, and sent it off to Russia. In mid-October 2003 we “got the call”—Caring Homes had a proposal for us! Our proposal consisted of six pictures of the most beautiful little baby boy we had ever seen, and some medical information. Even though there was no doubt in our minds that we wanted to go to Russia to meet this little angel, we reviewed the medical report and pictures with a Toronto-based doctor as well as with our own pediatrician.

On October 31, we were on a plane to Moscow. At the Moscow airport, the first people we saw in the arrivals area were our translator and facilitator. We were in Moscow for 10 days on that first trip. Each day our translator and facilitator guided us every step of the way, and every night my husband and I happily explored Moscow. We visited our little boy at the Baby Home every day. It was a wonderful experience to watch how each day he became more and more comfortable and content with us—and how we fell in love with him a little bit more every day!

“Caring Homes for Orphan Children” is a trade name of Tzivos Hashem Canada, Inc., an intercountry adoption agency
3727 Chesswood Drive, Toronto ON M3J 2P6 Canada. Tel (416) 630-2472 e-mail: caringhomes@hotmail.com

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



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We left Moscow on November 7... and waited for the court date to be arranged. Although we didn't want to leave him, we were comforted in knowing that the Baby Home was safe, clean and warm---and the caregivers were very loving. Thankfully, we only had to wait three weeks to get our court date. During those three weeks we happily decorated the nursery for our son, kept Wal-Mart's baby department in business, and dreamed about bringing him home.



We received a call from Caring Homes in early December telling us that we had to be in Moscow within 3 days. We knew we were going to have very little notice, so thankfully we were already packed and organized when we got the call. So on December 5 we were once again on a flight to Moscow, filled with hope and excitement.

We spent two weeks in Moscow during Trip #2. The two weeks are a bit of a blur now, but it was wonderful. After the court hearing we went to the Baby Home to bring our son "home" to the hotel—it was a very special day. Even though we still had a lot of paperwork to do in Moscow after court day, it didn't matter because he was with us.

On December 18, 2003 we arrived home in Ottawa with our ten-month-old son. Since we brought Scott home he has gained five pounds,

his personality has flourished and he has charmed every person he has met. Oh yes, and mommy and daddy have fallen hopelessly in love with him.

Scott is a happy, social, healthy, and beautiful little boy with big brown eyes, thick brown curls and a two-tooth smile that never stops. We feel so incredibly blessed to have the opportunity to be his parents—we hope and pray we can be the parents he deserves.

One of the surprise highlights of our trips was the fact that prior to leaving home we set up a "Hotmail" account and ensured we took two "designated contact" e-mail addresses with us (ie. my sister and my sister-in-law). Almost every day while in Moscow we popped into the business centre in our hotel and sent an update home to our two contacts (who then passed them on to the rest of the family and a few close friends). When we returned home from our first trip we realized how much fun we had writing the updates every day—it gave us a chance to vent any frustrations as well as a chance to share our progress and excitement. When we got home we were very surprised at the number of friends and family who said they were so thrilled to have received the e-mails. They said getting the e-mails made them feel like they were right there with us as we worked towards bringing Scott home! Of course we saved all the e-mail updates and they are now a special part of Scott's Baby Book.

If you decide to go through the Russian Adoption process, be prepared financially. It costs a lot of money—and once you start the process, be prepared to start paying out fees--fees for notarization, fees for translation, fees for Citizenship and Immigration, fees for the home study, fees for your passport, fees for police checks, fees for your medical reports... Make sure you understand how much it is

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going to cost from start to finish, do whatever you need to do to set the money aside, then sit back, and go through the process. There will be a hundred other much more important things to deal with, and the last thing you need as you go through the process is to worry about money (even though we all do.)

If you decide to go through the Russian Adoption process, make sure you start the process with the right attitude. There WILL be delays, there WILL be surprises, there WILL be moments of panic and there WILL be times when you think, “what the h--- did we get ourselves into?”— but there will also be joy, hilarious situations, wonderful people, excitement, tears, hugs and gratitude. Before you start, it might help if you remember the following:

- You must be patient;
- You must trust your gut feel;
- You must keep your sense of humor;
- You must respect the Russian culture;
- You must expect the unexpected; and,
- You must **keep your eye on the ball** (i.e. go with the flow!!! --You're going to bring home YOUR child at the end of all this—nothing else matters.)

Caring Homes helped make our dreams come true—and we'll be forever grateful for that.



March Birthdays



Happy Birthday to:

Yael A. on your 2nd birthday on March 1st
 Anastasija F. on your 6th birthday on March 5th
 Tanya W. on your 13th birthday on March 9th
 Montana K. on your 5th birthday on March 11th
 Spencer W. on your 5th birthday on March 12th
 Alexandria M. on your 13th birthday on
 March 15th
 Alexander V. on your 8th birthday on
 March 21st
 Artem H. on your 2nd birthday on March 23rd
 Minisa K. on your 2nd birthday on March 24th
 Casey M. on your 8th birthday on March 30th
 Jared E. on your 7th birthday on March 30th
 Jonathan B. on your 6th birthday on March 31st

Sorry if we missed yours! ☺

BREAKING NEWS

Check out our new website at

www.chocadoption.com

We are welcome for any comments and ideas.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Mar. 27, 2004, Toronto -- "How to Adopt / Getting Started in Adoption", seminar for Ontarians adopting locally or internationally. 10 am. 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

Mar. 28, 2004, Toronto -- Families in Adoption Support Group celebrates 20 years! 2-4 pm. Rosedale United Church, 159 Roxborough St. East (east from Mount Pleasant Road). Informal discussion, info sharing, updates, questions and issues relating to adoptive parenting. Children welcome! Register by e-mail or phone. Pat Fenton, 416-964-0042.

April 3-4, 2004, Toronto -- Ontario Adoption Resource Exchange (A.R.E.) weekend. Conference on Saturday; waiting children presentations on Sunday. Metro Toronto Convention Centre, North Building (Front St), www.mtccc.com.

April 17, 2004, London, Ont. -- Adoption Council of Ontario "How to Adopt/Getting Started in Adoption" seminar. Westmount Public Library, 3200 Wonderland Rd S (south of Southdale). 1-3:30 pm. Informal round table including parents who have adopted and adoption professionals. Discuss adoption options domestically and internationally, procedures, costs, homestudy, network of support, resources, finding a child. \$50. Leanne Beattie, 519-640-7749 (day), 519-652-7615 (evg), creativelifebooks@rogers.com or ACO, 416-482-0021, aco@adoption.ca, www.adoption.on.ca

Apr. 18-22, 2004, Cobourg, Ont. -- 5-day training with Dan Hughes, author of Building the Bonds of Attachment and Facilitating

Developmental Attachment. 25 registrants. Sandra Webb, Focus on Family, 180 Tremaine St., Cobourg ON K9A 2Z3, (905) 377-1912, jimsan@eagle.ca

April 25 and June 13, 2004, Toronto -- "Adoption 1-2-3: Creating Your Family" seminar. Location TBA. Learn the basics of international and domestic adoption from experienced adoptive parents and an adoption practitioner. \$220/couple, \$110/single. Marie Artt, M.S.W., R.S.W. 416-469-2424, or 905-655-3894. Adoption123@sympatico.ca

May 29, 2004 London, Ont --The Adoption Option – The educational seminar for potential adoptive families in understanding adoption issues and preparing for the joys, adjustments and challenges of international adoption. Register by e-mail or phone (519) 675-0362, danny.bell@sympatico.ca

June 5, 2004, Toronto -- One-day International Adoption Seminar. Full day in-depth educational seminar - prepares parents for an effective transition for them and their child and also assists in learning to cope with potential adjustment difficulties that they and their child may experience. Examples of course topics: Preparing for adoption and travel - emotional considerations, dealing with family and friends, positive adoption language; meeting your child; adjustments, medical issues & child development; attachment & bonding; talking about adoption with your child. \$275 + GST (\$294.25) per couple/ \$185 + GST (\$197.25) single participant - includes breakfast & lunch. Contact Sofie Stergianis to register (416) 483-0003, sofie@ica.net



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