



**CARING HOMES  
FOR ORPHAN CHILDREN**

# HOMeward BOUND

The Caring Homes for Orphan Children

*Newsletter*



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## *Our Adoption Story – Giving a Little Boy a Family*

*Shared by David and Joan R.*

*We feel very privileged to have four healthy children. Three are biological and one adopted, all blended together to make our family.*

*We have always been open to adoption because both of us have adopted siblings. We never really thought seriously about it for our own family, because we already had three children, until one day in June 2003 while reading an article on adoption. We got a very strong feeling and urgent desire to adopt a child and Russia seemed to be the place. Perhaps it was because over in the vast, faraway country of Russia there was a little boy who was asking the CHOC representative for “a mama and a papa” and we were to be that. It truly is a miracle how this little boy became part of our family. It was just like finding a missing puzzle piece.*

*We started our adoption journey in August 2003 with our homestudy. After much paper work we finally saw the first photo of our little boy and we knew right away that he was “our son”. We just had to bring him home and after many ups and downs and 20 long months, we travelled to Kudymkar, Russia. Kudymkar is in Western Siberia near to the Ural Mountains (about a 3.5 hour plane ride from Moscow to Perm and then a 2 hour car ride). We were one of the last families*

*to be part of the one trip process. This suited us perfectly because we were leaving our other three children at home and we wanted to be away the shortest time possible. We left April 25, 2005 and returned home May 7, 2005 with our little boy Aaron, who had just turned 3 years old.*



*We will never forget our first meeting. He came into the room cautiously and we were introduced to him in Russian as his “Mama and Papa”. We bonded immediately! Within the first hour he sat on our knee, played with us and called us “Mama and Papa”. Over the next seven days we showed him photos of his new siblings, house, toys, bedroom, and dog as we spent time together and got to know each other. By the time we left he was telling the social worker in Russian, when he looked at the photos, that this was his house, his toys and his brother and sisters and he knew their names. When we got off the airplane in Canada and were reunited with the rest of our family, Aaron took the hand of his big sisters and brother and off he went as if it had*

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*always been. A beautiful sight to behold! He marched into our family and has never looked back. We feel that showing him the family photos really helped with his bonding to his 3 new siblings. Heather the oldest was 14, Peter 12, and Katelyn 10, when Aaron arrived. Needless to say his older sisters and brother fell head over heels in love with him too. We included our children in our adoption process so even before we ever started, we talked the idea over with them to get their feelings. Keeping siblings involved in the process is very important. As a result the three older children welcomed Aaron with open hearts and really adore their little brother.*



*We left the gender and age of our child open. We had already experienced having a newborn, so we were leaning towards a little older child. We discovered that a three year old was just perfect for our family. He was able to keep up with the activities of the older children. When*

*Aaron came he could already dress and feed himself, brush his own teeth and was totally toilet trained. He embraced his new country with excitement and eagerness to learn everything, including a new language. He could only speak Russian when he came and we had only learned a few words but never was he frustrated with the language barrier. We spoke English to him and he spoke Russian to us and with the use of hand movements we communicated just fine. It was so amazing to see how quickly the English words came. In his first week at home he sang "Twinkle Little Star" from listening to a cassette tape. In a month he was speaking in short phrases, counting to 10 and learning his colours and by three months he could sing his ABC's and at about this time he changed to speaking only in English. We will never forget him telling us (just four months after coming into our family) one night before he went to sleep, "I love my family". It was so sweet and this just made it all so worthwhile.*

*As far as Aaron's adjustment, we had anticipated some problems such as sleeping in his own room and adjusting to all the stimulation in his new country. We were quick to learn that our little boy was very adaptable. We arrived home at midnight, his first night, and we took him around, showed him where everyone slept and his room and bed. He got ready for bed like everyone else and hopped into bed and slept 12 hours just like he continued to do. He got up in the morning as if he had lived here forever. He liked to kiss and hug everyone at bedtime and if someone didn't come he called for each by name. He is*

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*a very affectionate and caring little boy and loves to cuddle. He learns many things by listening and watching the older children.*

*Aaron had a little difficulty grasping the idea that he now had things that belonged to him. When people brought him gifts, celebrating his arrival, he would try and give them back when they were leaving. He was so used to sharing everything in the orphanage that he couldn't believe that these things were actually his. Still he is very good at sharing. Two years later, he loves the idea that he has his own things and carefully lays up his special treasures in his bedroom.*

*During the first few weeks upon arrival to Canada we kept Aaron's life relatively simple. We spent time together as a family and didn't go too far or do too much. During this time we really bonded together as a family. Everything was so new and different that he was thrilled with just a few toys. We feel that it was good not to over stimulate him because these children are used to so little and just the same routines day after day. Keeping a routine and being consistent helped in his transition. Over time new things were introduced such as the computer, Game Boy and Play Station which he now really loves. We give a lot of credit to our big kids in making Aaron's adjustment so smooth because of the way they welcomed him into our family with love and care.*

*Now Aaron is in Junior Kindergarten and enjoying it to the fullest. He is a bright little boy and so eager to learn. He is one of the smallest in his class even though he has grown five inches and gained seven pounds since he came. He is small and mighty and thankfully very healthy. You would never know looking at him with his classmates that Canada wasn't his first home and English his first language. It was nice to have Aaron home a year before school because he was very settled and comfortable in his new family before being separated to go off to school.*



*During his first year we did swimming lessons, attended the Early Years program, Story Hour at the library, started skating and went with Mom to the school to volunteer for different things. All these things helped him to learn about the wonders of his big, new world. He also learned to ride a two-wheeler*



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*bike, enabling him to really travel places. He loves to skate and swim and likes to play with other children but plays well by himself too. It will soon be two years since Aaron became part of our family. Sometimes we forget that he wasn't always here. He continues to be an obedient little boy requiring no more discipline than a firm word or a short time out. He has brought so much joy and satisfaction into our family. We often say "look what we would have missed if we had never ventured out on this adoption journey". It is a journey of faith and you have to keep your eye on the goal of bring home your chosen child. Even though it may be a long, trying journey we can tell you one thing, "it is SO WORTHWHILE". It is very rewarding to know that you are giving a home to a child that has no home and opening to them a world of love and hope with a bright future. More than this,*

*these little children have so much to give and teach us about trust, love, courage and appreciating the simple things in life.*

*We thank our God in Heaven for His guidance in directing us to the right child for our family. We are also very grateful to the CHOC staff and for Marcy Lemon-Lawrence our adoption practitioner for preparing us and guiding us through the paper chase to get us to Kudymkar and back successfully and safely. Everything went perfectly during our time in Russia because of being in the expert care of CHOC's representatives there. CHOC has an adoption process that works and Aaron is proof of that. Aaron has added such a new dimension to our family and we are so thankful every day that we ever became members of this special group of people called "adoptive parents".*

*We have proven that however parenthood comes to you, it's a MIRACLE!*



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*CHOC is happy to invite everyone  
to our*

## **ANNUAL REUNION!**

**DATE:**

*Sunday, June 10th, 2007*

**PLACE:**

*Bruce's Mill Conversation park*

**TIME:**

*11:00 - 14:00(+)*

**SITE:**

*Mill view*

**PARK ADMISSION FEE:**

*Adults - \$5CAD, Seniors (60+)- \$4CAD, children (15 and under) free*

**PARK WEBSITE:**

*[http://www.trea.on.ca/parks\\_and\\_culture/locations/bruce\\_mill/visitorinfo/](http://www.trea.on.ca/parks_and_culture/locations/bruce_mill/visitorinfo/)*

*If you would like to purchase entrance tickets in advance, please mail your cheque payable to CHOC, 3727 Chesswood Drive, Toronto ON M3J 2P6 Canada*

*For more info please contact CHOC by phone - 416-630-2472  
or email - [info@chocadoption.com](mailto:info@chocadoption.com)*

**WE HOPE TO SEE ALL OF YOU THERE FOR A GREAT GET-TOGETHER,  
SMILES, FUN AND LAUGHS!**



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## **Russian accreditation news**

\* Complicated bureaucracy in Russia is delaying the approval of new accreditation for all of the 89 foreign agencies that operated in Russia just a year ago. New accreditation rules were introduced last year following an outcry over the deaths of several adopted Russian children abroad. The Russian media had reported extensively on cases of abuse of Russian orphans by foreign parents, especially those in the United States. The Education Ministry said in 2005 that 11 Russian children adopted by U.S. families had died violently since 1991. Also delaying adoptions was a new requirement under a 2006 law obliging agencies to also register with the Ministry of Justice as nongovernmental organizations. We are pleased to say that CHOC has passed this hurdle.

The federal agency overseeing adoptions (Ministry of Education) informed that most of the agencies had applied for new licenses in January. The process for accreditation is moving slowly, with approval needed from the Interior Ministry, the Foreign Ministry and other agencies. It takes up to three months to get an answer from each agency. And so we wait patiently with good hope, as according to the head of the child protection department of the Russian government: "There are no plans to reduce the number of agencies, each agency will be examined individually by a commission, and it will receive accreditation if there are no complaints against it." \*

For more news regarding accreditation, please read on CHOC website, [www.chocadoption.com](http://www.chocadoption.com), in the News section.

\* From publications in Associated Press and Moscow Times.

## **Upcoming Events**

**May 15, 2007, Regina -- Wise-Up Parenting workshop.** 7 pm, Albert Library. Parenting program to help children who are adopted and their parents deal with questions around adoption. \$35/couple (book included). Adoption Support Centre of Saskatchewan, 1-866-869-2727, 306-665-7272, [adoption.support@sasktel.net](mailto:adoption.support@sasktel.net), [www.sasktelwebsite.net/adoption](http://www.sasktelwebsite.net/adoption)

**May 27, 2007, Toronto -- Toronto -- Families in Adoption.** Support group meeting for local and international adopters. Last Sunday of the month, Jan., Mar, May, Sept., Nov.; picnic in July. 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](mailto:Pat.Fenton@416-964-0042), 416-964-0042.

**June 2, 2007, 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. \$215; \$350/couple; +tax. [Sofie Stergjanis](mailto:Sofie.Stergjanis@416-483-0003), International Adoption Centre, 416-483-0003, [www.whatisadoption.com](http://www.whatisadoption.com)

**June 23, 2007, Kingston ON -- Intricacies of Open Adoption Relationships.** One-day workshop for birth parents, adoptive parents and adoptees. Understanding birth parents; building an open adoption; birth parent letters and profiles. 9:30-4 pm., Seniors Assn., 56 Francis St. \$350+tax. [Jennie E. Painter](mailto:Jennie.E.Painter@613-542-0275), Adoption Resource and Counselling Services, 613-542-0275, [jennie@openadoption.ca](mailto:jennie@openadoption.ca), [www.openadoption.ca](http://www.openadoption.ca)

**For more events, please visit Family Helper @**  
<http://www.familyhelper.net/events.html>

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