



**CARING HOMES
FOR ORPHAN CHILDREN**

HOMeward BOUND

The Caring Homes for Orphan Children

Newsletter

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C.H.O.C. 2009 GALA RE-UNION



BRING YOUR FAMILY! BRING YOUR FRIENDS!

Sunday, July 12, 2009.

11:00 a.m. 'til 2:00 p.m.

C.H.O.C.'s 2009

GALA RE-UNION

FREE CATERED PICNIC

GUARANTEED DRY!

(WE HAVE RESERVED LARGE PICNIC SHELTERS
IN CASE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER)

FACE PAINTING ♥ GAMES & ACTIVITIES

BAR-B-QUED CHICKEN ♥ HAMBURGERS

HOTDOGS ♥ SNACKS ♥ SOFT DRINKS

BRING YOUR FAMILY!

BRING YOUR FRIENDS!

Bruce's Mill Conservation Area

Maple Grove I, near the entrance

the conservation area is 20 min. north of Toronto
on the south side of Stouffville Rd, between Warden and Kennedy
take the 404 to Stouffville Road exit, east

R.S.V.P. BY JUNE 15, 2009

The Toronto Region Conservation Authority charges a park entrance fee
at the gate. \$5 per adult (15 years of age and older).



CARING HOMES FOR ORPHAN CHILDREN

3727 Chesswood Dr., Toronto, Ont. M3J 2P6
tel: (416) 630-2472 e-mail: info@chocadoption.com

"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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I love stories with happy endings. This one reads like one of my thrillers, with lots of twists and turns, and ups and downs, and major character developments. All of the characters in this story are heroes and heroines!

-Erin

Reject, Reject, Accept!

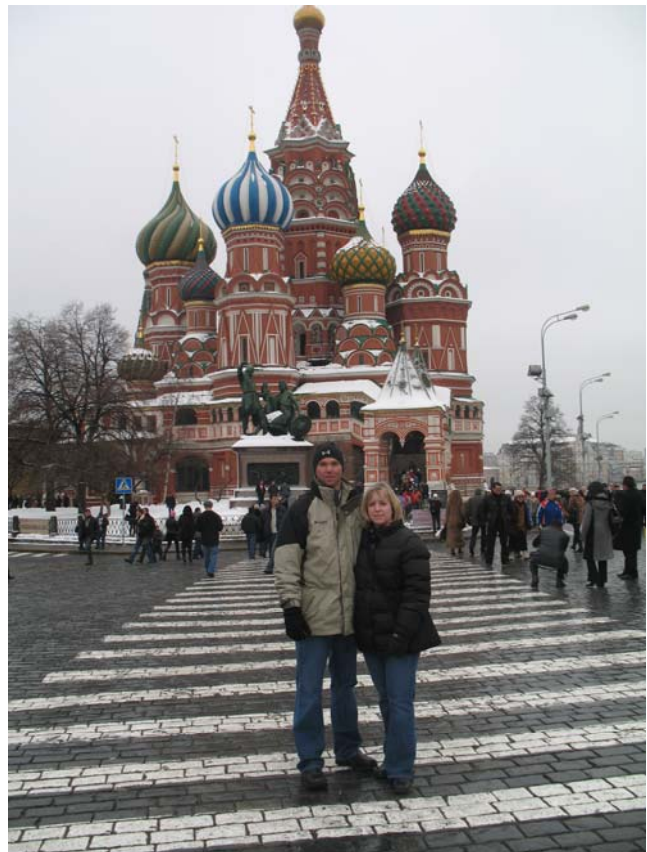
By: Melissa and Jason Ford

Wow, what a surprise! It was the second week of January and we got a call from Caring Homes (CHOC). We had received our invitation to travel to Russia. The moment we had waited for was here much sooner than we had expected. Our application had been in their hands for only 10 weeks. In three and a half weeks we had to be in Russia to meet our child. We were adopting from Moscow Region. That meant we were going there blind...we would not find out anything about the proposed child until we arrived. All of a sudden our lives got a bit more chaotic.

Our first roadblock - we immediately had to fill out the applications for our tourist VISAs, get pictures and a money order. The Russian Embassy in Ottawa takes 15 working days to process the VISAs so that didn't leave us much time. Our application arrived in Ottawa a day later than planned due to adverse weather conditions. This meant that one of us had to fly to Ottawa the day before we left for Moscow to pick up our VISAs in person. An unexpected but very necessary extra step.

We left on a Friday night from Toronto and arrived in Moscow, with the time change, on Saturday afternoon. We were relieved to be met at the airport by our translator holding a sign with our names on it. We piled our luggage into the car and took the hour drive to our apartment in downtown Moscow. At the apartment we are met

by a representative of the company owning the apartment. He took copies of our passports and VISAs in order to register us with Moscow Region. We were traveling with another couple from Canada. On Sunday the four of us went sight-seeing for several hours. Later you will realize that we were very glad to have these companions (now friends) to share this experience with.



Sunday was a sleepless night in anticipation of receiving our proposal at the Ministry of Education

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(MOE) Monday morning. We were picked up at about 9:30 in the morning. The MOE was not what we had expected. We had read so much literature in preparation of our trip. We expected this long line up of prospective parents in this big fancy building. We were the third couple to arrive out of four that day. We patiently waited on couches in this narrow hallway on the fourth floor. We were called in first with the other couple from Canada (also clients of CHOC). You walk into a paper-filled office and sit around a small round table with your interpreter and the MOE representative. The representative explained what was going to happen, what our rights were, and the fact that there are no healthy children available for adoption in Russia. (The reason they state there are no healthy children for adoption is because Russian families are offered money incentives to domestically adopt children, therefore, decreasing the amount of children available for international adoption.) If we choose to refuse the proposal they may not be able to find another child. The first thing about our proposal that completely caught us off guard was that the child was a girl! When we submitted our application we indicated that the gender of the child did not matter in hopes to speed up our process and were told over and over to expect a boy, but you never know. On file at the MOE they have a one page summary of the child with a black and white photo of the child in the corner (it is common that the picture of the child is old – typically when they are an infant or first put into the orphanage). We received minimal information about the child (i.e. age, date of birth, history of parents and many big medical terms that you need to study for ahead of time). This was a very quick process! You can ask as many questions that you want but be prepared and have some written down ahead of time. Keep in mind the MOE had very limited information. They then asked if we wanted to go and meet this child. Since we agreed we signed 5 documents

(all copies of each other). By late morning we were on our way to an orphanage to meet a 17 month old girl. When we arrived we met with the head of the orphanage to review the file for the proposed girl. Our advice – take many notes because you don't get copies of any of the paperwork! Some of the information was repeated from the notes that we took earlier at the MOE. After the review of the file was complete a caregiver brought in the little girl. They had her in a dress, I assume to look nice for the prospective parents. We played with her for about an hour or so. Looking back, we knew during that time that something wasn't right. She wouldn't make eye contact. She seemed to play with toys the same way over and over again. There were also some medical issues we documented during the review of her files that we were suspicious about. We spent most of the night talking to doctors at home and discussing with each other how we felt about this girl. We decided that we would wait to see what happened the next day. The designated medical practitioner (DMP) would be assessing the girl in our presence.

On Tuesday, we met the DMP at the orphanage. They brought in the girl and for approximately the first 20 minutes the DMP observed how she interacted with us and how she played with toys. Then she weighed her and did all the typical measurements (head circumference, height, chest etc). The DMP reviews the entire file of the child from beginning to end. At the end of the assessment the DMP (who spoke English) told us that this girl seemed to be living inside herself. She didn't respond to human interaction and only liked to play by herself. The DMP could not rule out a mental disability. At that moment our uncertainty was confirmed. We knew right away that we wanted to refuse this child because it would be a life time decision but in the same breath we were scared because we didn't really know what happened next. We had networked with many other families in our area who had adopted from Russia and all of them accepted the child they met on the very first day. We felt awkward and wanted to leave the



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orphanage, but before you can leave the DMP had to write a one page report indicating why this child was not suitable for us to adopt. When you refuse a child you must travel back to Moscow to the Notary and formalize the refusal. Once you have the formal refusal and the report from the DMP you return to the MOE for another proposal. The CHOC representatives had already called ahead to let them know we were coming. On the short drive to the MOE the CHOC representatives prepped us on what to say at the MOE. They accepted our explanation and presented us with another proposal. Surprise!...it was another girl who was 13 months old. No red flags were presented and we agreed to meet her. Since it was late in the day we were going to see her the next day. As we were getting in the car our representative got a call on his cell. There was a problem with the proposal. We were told to go to a near by café with the translator while he went back up to the MOE. About 20 minutes later we were called back up. A Russian couple had already shown interest in this girl, therefore, we could not go see her. The MOE gave us another proposal. Surprise!...yet another girl who was 17 months old. The MOE called ahead to the orphanage and were told that she was a good girl and was showing positive dynamics. We agreed to go and see her the next day.

On Wednesday we were feeling optimistic. It was the farthest orphanage away in Moscow Region (2 hours). Today another DMP met us at the orphanage. We all met with the head of the orphanage as she reviewed the file on this little girl. Everything was going well until they mentioned that the girl had suffered one seizure and had a MRI with undesirable results. As soon as we saw the girl we knew she wasn't the child for us. She was petrified of all of us and screamed through the entire medical assessment. The DMP started to give us her evaluation of the girl. It was unfavourable with too many

unknowns about her future at such a young age. I have never tried harder in my life to keep my emotions in check but I couldn't do it. I had a complete meltdown. My husband cleared the room as I was crying uncontrollably. What was happening? Why was this happening to us? Are we being too picky? We were starting to second guess ourselves. That was the first moment we really felt we would be coming home empty handed. Just as all we had worked for seemed to be crumbling down around us, the DMP mentioned that she evaluated a very healthy baby boy on Tuesday. The CHOC representatives knew the boy was still available and wanted to know if we could convince the MOE to propose us this boy would we be willing to go and meet him. The answer was an immediate YES! It was getting to be early afternoon so we quickly got our stuff together and I tried to get my emotions in check. The drive back to the Notary to formalize our second refusal took almost 3 hours in afternoon traffic. We were on a time constraint as the MOE closes at 6pm. Our representatives did call ahead to the MOE so they knew we were coming back yet again. The MOE also knew that we wanted to be proposed this boy that the doctor had talked about. We finally arrived at the MOE by about 5:30pm. We did not have to arrange for a DMP for this boy since he had the medical evaluation on Tuesday. Wednesday was the most challenging and most emotionally and mentally exhausting day.

On Thursday, we were on our way to visit a 10 month old healthy baby boy. We were pretty calm this morning knowing that he was healthy but excited to meet him. We arrived at the orphanage by 9:30 in the morning. Luckily this orphanage was only a 45 minute to an hour drive with minimal traffic. On our walk up to the orphanage we were met outside by a caregiver. Our translator and she had a brief but intense conversation. It turned out that the orphanage was having a surprise inspection and it would not be appropriate for us to be present while the inspectors were there. They told us to come back in two hours.



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When we returned we were not even let past the gate by security. Our translator called the CHOC representative who in turn called the head of the orphanage a couple of times. We were told to come back an hour later. We decided to wait outside in the car. About a half hour later we see a caregiver and man frantically waving us to come in. We jumped out of the car and started to follow them. We were almost running to keep up to them and my husband joked and said "Are you sneaking us in?" The young caregiver understood enough English and said "YES"! We were whisked off into a playroom almost directly inside the door, told to wait and then they locked the door behind us! Yes, they locked us in! Never a dull moment. About 15 minutes later they brought the baby boy down to see us. The head of the orphanage was tied up with the inspectors so we would not be meeting with her until the next day. He was not shy and was a good size for his age. What a relief to see a child that was interactive, curious, and healthy. We spent two hours with him playing around the room until the caregiver returned to take him for naptime. We felt good. This boy would fit in with our family. If we decided to accept this boy we had to formalize our intent to adopt him at the Notary. Since it was so late in the week we had to make a decision quickly

Friday was the only day of the week that did not contain any surprises or road blocks. We arrived at the orphanage to see the little boy around mid-morning. Again, we spent two hours with him playing and interacting. The head of the orphanage came to meet us and reviewed his file. They were really happy with his progress at the orphanage and he was right where he should be developmentally for his age. We did get in trouble today by the head of the orphanage. She feels that babies shouldn't play on the floor as it is too cold. I can tell you that this room was extremely warm and the children are dressed in

many layers. We wished we had brought t-shirts with us! Once we were alone we allowed him to play on the floor again...plus the caregivers that spent time with us the day before didn't seem to mind. It was sad to leave him behind but knew that he would be well cared for while we were gone. The only positive thing about meeting him at the end of the week was that it was easier to leave. We didn't have a chance to form a significant bond with him during the 4 hours we spent together. Our second visit was over and we made our decision to proceed to the Notary to formalize our intent to adopt him. Be prepared at the Notary...you must name your child at this point. We knew this before we had left on our trip and were prepared. On Friday night, we went out for dinner with our fellow Canadians and reminisced about the week's events. We survived many emotional moments and road blocks, however, we were the fortunate couple to be coming home the next day with good news. By the end of the week the other Canadian couple refused three proposals and was not successful. We were also aware of an Italian couple that refused one proposal during the same week. This process is not for the faint of heart. We were tested individually and as a couple emotionally, mentally, and physically...it was difficult. You have to be true to yourself and know definitively what decisions you are willing to make and stand strongly behind the decisions that you have made. All in all, the CHOC representatives are there to help you and have only your best interest in mind. They definitely worked long hours for us and we were so grateful that they did. In a couple months we will be coming home from Russia with our little boy as a family of three and we couldn't be happier.

As of today Melissa, Jason, and Ryerson Ford are all back home, enjoying their newly expended family.



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Welcome to Canada in '08-'09:

* Ryerson * Sophia * Elena * Joshua * Ivan L. *
* Aleksander O. * Roman * Liam * Justin * Kaiden *
* Sebastian * Ivan S. * Nadia * Eduard * Aiden *
* Duncan * Hannah * Aleksandr B. * Julie * Ava *
* Benjamin * Alexei * Alexander K. *

New Tariff increases legalization costs at the Russian Consulate in Toronto and Russian Embassy in Ottawa:

* In the past, clients were able to legalize documents necessary for their Russian application, by grouping them into dossiers with each dossier bearing a \$450CND legalization fee. Single documents were legalized at the rate of \$100CND per document. Legalization costs for all documents necessary to register an application with the Ministry of Education and Russian Court, used to total approximately \$1,500CND.
* As of April of 2009, The Russian Consulate in Toronto and the Russian Embassy in Ottawa will no longer be accepting grouping of documents into dossiers for legalization. Under the new regulation stemming from Russia, all documents must now be legalized separately. The cost for a single original document is reduced to \$60CND and for a copy of a legalized original, \$25CND.
* Due to the above new requirements, the legalization costs have approximately doubled, now averaging around \$3,000CND.

You may visit www.toronto.mid.ru or www.rusembcanada.mid.ru for more information.

Caucasian vs. Mixed Children

In the various regional offices of the Russian Ministry of Education, policy is to regard all Russian nationals as being of Caucasian race; this regardless of their ethnic background. Therefore one may be proposed with a "Caucasian" child, having apparent oriental or dark features, especially if one of the parents descends from bordering nations, such as:

- * Kazakhstan
- * Uzbekistan
- * Tajikistan
- * Kirghiz
- * Georgia
- * Armenia
- * Azerbaydzhan

Perinatal Encephalopathy a.k.a. Perinatal Encephalopathy of Hypoxic Origin a.k.a. Perinatal Damage of the CNS a.k.a. Perinatal Lesion or Affection of the CNS a.k.a. Residual Encephalopathy with Intracranial Hypertension Syndrome – What is it!?! Is it something to worry about?

- Dr. George Giovino, who was Canada's citizen and immigration chief medical officer in London, England at the time, once referred to the late Dr. Eric Downing, Canada's foremost paediatric authority in Russian adoptions, as an irreplaceable Canadian resource.
- Doctor Downing used to caution that the above types of diagnoses are meaningless on their own. All babies suffer from oxygen deprivation during the normal birthing process and will cry and flail about when first coming into the world. The only way to determine whether any of these "perinatal encephalopathies" are outside the norms of everyday birth trauma is to have a qualified medical practitioner (e.g. a DMP) conduct a proper physical and mental examination in person.

For more information on this as well as other common Russian medical child diagnoses, please visit <http://www.adoptionarticlesdirectory.com/>



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OHIP: 3 months waiting period is waived for adopted children, as per Regulation 552

*Effective as of April 1, 2009, internationally adopted children who arrive to Canada with a Landed Immigrant status are eligible for OHIP coverage right away, and are exempt from the 3-months waiting period that applies to Landed Immigrants. More information can be found on the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care website at <http://www.health.gov.on.ca>

Bill C-37: New Citizenship Act limiting the rights of foreign born adoptees

*A change in Canada's citizenship law has been implemented on April 17, 2009. According to Bill C-37, children born abroad and adopted internationally by Canadian families are now considered "first generation born abroad". Here are some of the possible implications that these children may face when they grow up:

- ~ If they will end up giving birth to a child while outside of Canada, regardless whether it is for business or other circumstance, their child will not be a Canadian Citizen by birth.
- ~ If they will adopt a child internationally, that child will not be eligible to apply for Canadian Citizenship under the adoption provisions of the citizenship act.

* This new regulation takes away some of the rights of internationally adopted children.

* **What can be done?** Olivia Chow is a member of Parliament who is actively trying to amend the new citizenship act. You can visit her website at: <http://oliviachow.ca/mp/?p=1694> to see her petition form. You may also contact her or your local MP and inquire what other actions may be taken in order to get involved in bringing about a change in Bill C-37, and restoring Canadian Citizenship rights to foreign born adoptees.

"Orphan" movie – disturbing misrepresentation of adoptees!

- *Dark Castle Entertainment and Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. are planning an upcoming release of the "Orphan", in theatres everywhere starting July 24, 2009.*
- *Trailer can be viewed at: <http://www.tribute.ca/trailers/Orphan/17238>*
- *This is a horror movie about an adopted girl who "has a secret" and is "not what she appears to be". The plot is very insensitive to families formed through adoption, and portrays a negative and disturbing view of adopted children to the public.*
- *We encourage you to contact the film distributors and express your concern.*
- *Dark Castle Entertainment: 408-362-1500*
- *Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.: 818-562-3060*

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Regions Overview As Of Summer 2009

Moscow Region

- * Blind region - no preliminary information about proposal prior to arrival in Russia.
- * One of the fastest moving regions with wait times ranging from 8-12 months.
- * 8 Specialist exam required on second trip (refer to our information kit for details about this procedure).

Moscow City

- * Recently picking up, and is now one of the fastest moving regions with recent wait times ranging from 6-12 months.

- * Blind region - no preliminary information about proposal prior to arrival in Russia.

Nizhniy Novgorod

- * Blind region - no preliminary information about proposal prior to arrival in Russia.
- * Slowed down, with no new referrals received within the past year.
- * Expected to pick up in the late summer - early fall.

*****The process of applying to MR, MC, and NN is very similar. Clients submit an application to the Regional Ministry of Education (MOE) office, and await an invitation to travel. Referrals are usually blind, that is, with the proposal being presented only at the MOE, upon family's arrival in Russia. The proposed child is then assessed by a designated medical practitioner (DMP), and is hopefully accepted by the family. In some cases when a child is rejected by the family due to a serious medical condition, if another child is available, another proposal is given while the family is still in Russia. However, sometimes there are no other children available, in which case families may have to return to Canada to await another invitation. For a detailed look at the process, please refer to our information kit*****

Orenburg

- * Short proposal is given prior to travel, sometimes with a picture, and sometimes without.
- * Few children are available, with long wait times that may add up to a couple of years.
- * Applicants need to be very flexible for gender and age of child in order to apply to Orenburg, since there is a very limited availability of children in this region.
- * If a child is rejected, there is usually no other child to propose while the family is still in Russia, and they must return to Canada to await a new referral which may take a while to receive, depending on the next time a child becomes available for international adoption.

Bashkortostan

- * Process similar to that in Orenburg.

***** Proposals presented prior to travel to Orenburg and Bashkortostan may be quite outdated. More up-to-date medical assessments would be obtained through a scheduled DMP meeting while the family is in Russia.*****

New Horizons

- * We are now researching the possibilities of developing new regions including St. Petersburg. Will let you know when there is more info.



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Upcoming Events from adoption counsel of Ontario, adoption.ca

**NACAC CONFERENCE: August 12 to
August 15, 2009, Columbus, Ohio.** -- . Don't
miss the 35th annual conference of the North
American Council on Adoptable Children in
Columbus, Ohio from August 12 to 15, 2009! (Pre-
conference sessions August 12; full conference
August 13 to 15.) Please see the NACAC website for
additional information:
www.nacac.org/conference/conference.html

Upcoming Events

**Jane Brown Adoption Playshops - September
25 to 27, 2009 - Registration starts June 30,**
Jane Brown Playshops provide an opportunity for
children, pre-teens, teens and parents to explore
adoption issues in an interactive and fun way.
Playshops are appropriate for adopted children 5
years of age and older, and for new as well as
previous participants. The Playshop sessions are
comprised of multi-sensory activities.
Participants engage in creative movement, plays,
drawing, writing, talking, and tug-o-wars. The
Playshops are being held at the Holiday Inn
Select Mississauga, 2565 Argenta Rd,
Mississauga (near Erin Mills Parkway and
Highway 401). [For more detailed information
about content of the Jane Brown Playshop please
contact Jane Brown directly at 602-690-5338 or
janebrown77@earthlink.net.](#)

Regular Meetings from FamilyHelper.net

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

Sudbury ON -- Sudbury Adoption Support Group.
Second Wednesday, except July and August. 111 Elm St.,
7-9pm. Must be 18 to join. [Esther](#), 705-969-7252.

**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, London, Alliston -- "How to Adopt"
seminars.** Twice a month. Dates and locations at
www.adoptontario.ca/news.aspx. Adoptive parents and
professionals discuss options, costs, homestudies for local
or international adoption. \$85/family.

In Toronto: Church of Saint Timothy, 100 Old Orchard
Grove

In London: Westmount Public Library, 3200
Wonderland Rd. S.

In Alliston: Gibson Centre for Community Arts, 63
Tupper St. W.
[Patricia Convery](#), Adoption Council of Ontario, 416-482-
0021, www.adoption.on.ca

Ottawa -- Waiting Parents Group. First Thursday of
the month (except July, Aug.). 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.

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

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