



Adoption Council of Ontario

Adoption Story: Russia

Our Adoption Story: A Moment I Will Never Forget

As all of us in this community know, the journey toward becoming adoptive parents is long and at times difficult. It has incredible highs, like seeing your child for the first time. It also has some lows: closure on fertility issues and the uncertainty of the adoption process come to mind.

We have all taken this journey and I can safely guess that all of us have gone through the same basic ups and downs of the process. I can also safely guess that all of us would do it again in a heartbeat. My wife Elina and I adopted a beautiful boy, Daniel, from Ivanovo, Russia, almost four years ago. Looking back on the trip, I often find it funny how my memory seems to spark on the little details instead of focusing on the big picture. I remember the warm smile and loving support of our gracious host. I remember playing with our son at the orphanage. I remember the staff at Aeroflot giving us a complimentary upgrade to business class when we told them why we were travelling to Russia. I remember the look on the tired businessman's face seated in the row behind us on the plane after two hours of young Daniel's wailing. I remember the first diaper. I remember the sharp sense of humour our tour guide in Moscow displayed when we visited Lenin's tomb. I remember "camping" in the President Hotel in Moscow and using the sink as an all-in-one food preparation station. I remember drinking hot chocolate after shopping along the Arbat. I remember watching Daniel eat bowl after bowl of hot cereal for breakfast. I remember the first book we read him (Snuggle Puppy) and the first toy he played with (a stuffed hippopotamus).

All of these memories are important to me. They all help define the adoption experience. Looking back, however, there is one moment that stands out most in my mind. I don't think I will ever forget it and it brings tears to my eyes today whenever I think about it. Following the finalization of our adoption, we left Moscow to return to Toronto. The ten hour flight took a turn for the worse when I decided to wake our baby (I know...I know). He cried the rest of the way home. Anyway, we arrived in Toronto exhausted, both physically and emotionally. We were directed to proceed to the Canadian Immigration authorities. We stood in line with our papers at the ready and waited for the next agent. Our name was eventually called and we sat in front of a desk in a small cubicle and presented our son's immigration papers. The immigration officer quietly and seriously looked over all of the papers. It seemed to take forever. We were so close to home, yet we faced one last hurdle. What if something was wrong? Who would I call? What could I do? After what seemed like an hour (but was probably only 5 minutes), the immigration officer looked up and asked "Which one of you is Daniel?" Elina and I looked at each other, and pointed towards the baby stroller at our feet. "He is," we said. The immigration officer rose to her feet, looked over the edge of the desk and said to Daniel, "Welcome to Canada".

I don't think that I have ever been prouder to be Canadian.



Every Child Deserves a Forever Family.

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