

## The Adoption of our Girls

By Jen and Rod.

Our journey with our adoption of our girls began many years prior to us actually arriving on Russian soil. We went through over 7 years of infertility waiting to see what God had for us. In his timing he revealed to us adoption was how our family was to be made and Russia was where our daughters were awaiting. I had known since I was 15 that Russia was a part of me but had no idea that almost 20 years later it would be for our daughters.

In November of 2003, after many months of waiting we were finally matched to our beautiful daughters. We arrived in Moscow, Russia on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, our 13<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, and were driven to the city of Ivanovo where we were able to visit our daughters at the orphanage along with our representative, Galina. We spent about 1 hour on Dec 23<sup>rd</sup> and then Christmas Eve which meant so much to us as we had spent our daughters first Christmas together. Even though it was only 2 hours it was more precious than any words could ever express. We took video of our time together which I played over and over upon arriving home and is a

treasure to our girls today as they love to watch it each Christmas.

Meeting the care givers, doctors and others at the orphanage gave us information and understanding of the amazing care our girls were receiving. Unfortunately we were unable to see our girls again due to flu quarantine. At this point we had signed all the necessary documents but now had to go back to Moscow and then Canada to await a court date. This was very difficult having to leave our daughters and not knowing when we would be allowed to return. Yet, the love, warmth and hospitality we experienced from our representatives Galina, Natasha and Tatiana were so unbelievably comforting. Our time in Moscow allowed us to embrace our daughter's heritage and culture. We visited a toy store where we were able to buy traditional dolls that any little Russian girl would own. Visiting the Kremlin, art gallery, restaurants, and a music store where my husband purchased traditional Russian music for guitar, as he is a classical guitarist made us feel closer to our girls and their amazing heritage.

## TESTAMONIAL

Dear Gordon and Diane,

My husband and I want to say a big thank you for everything. We cannot believe how perfectly our adoptions have worked out.

And although the wait seemed so hard at some points, we couldn't have dreamed of a more beautiful outcome. Our son just seems like he was meant to be a part of our family.

We are still in awe of how similar our first son and our newest child adoption stories are even though they are difficult stories. I keep saying lately "it's like we planned it" or "it couldn't have worked out better if we had planned it!" It's like someone up there sure planned this for our family and we are so, so grateful.

Thank you for everything.  
All our love.

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The day we had been waiting for had finally arrived on February 16<sup>th</sup> when we received the call that our court date had been set. It was an emotionally draining week as we prepared to travel to Russia as two but to come home as four with our daughters. Our arrival back in Russia found us spending our first night in Moscow and travelling up to Ivanovo the next day. It was then that we were able to spend consecutive days and more time with our girls leading up to our court date of March 2<sup>nd</sup>. All the necessary information and photos for passports were organized as well as last moments of debriefing before going to court.

The day of court was a whirlwind as it was fast, quick and nerve racking. Our representative, Galina, was wonderful and certainly put us at ease but having our fate being discussed in Russian and translated for us made the experience like nothing I know how to describe. The procedures went so fast that we were unaware that when congratulated in the intermission that it was all done. The head of the orphanage came to congratulate us and later we found out that she didn't usually come to the court proceedings but wanted to be there to support us in having our daughters come home. When we were brought back into the courtroom, we

will never forget when the judge said, “according to Russian law we now consider you the new biological mama and papa of Katarina and Natasha”. At this moment after so many months of having to keep our emotions under check we wept with pure joy on those precious words.

That evening was a night of literally no sleeping, for the anticipation of the next morning was more wondrous and magical than anything we had ever desired. We arrived at the orphanage with our daughters new little outfits where we were able to go up to new parts of the building where we were able to dress our daughters for the first time. How could we ever begin to describe that, it is too deep. As we left the orphanage through that big wooden door and got into the car it was a piece of heaven we were experiencing. Our daughters bonded with us and cuddled as though we had always been together from the beginning. We were blessed and we knew it.

It has now been over 8 years, and our girls are 9 years old. We are reminded each day how blessed we are to have them, our gifts for God.



**Katarina and Natasha meeting her Majesty the Queen.**