



FAMILIES FOR RUSSIAN AND UKRAINIAN ADOPTION
Including Neighboring Countries
HOPE, HELP AND COMMUNITY FOR ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

Key Messages for our Members

- FRUA is heightening its National outreach efforts to increase awareness about FRUA's mission value both in the U.S. and abroad.
 - We are apolitical, nonsectarian, and we support families across the adoption life cycle.
 - Current outreach has included: (1) developing relationships with Embassies from the birth countries of our children this past year; and (2) our regional chapters hosting visitors focused on inter-country adoption from all FRUA mission countries.
 - The newest outreach effort is FRUA's trip to Moscow to participate in the World Russia Forum.
- FRUA's mission includes all birth countries of our children from Eastern Europe and Central Asia, not just Russia.
- Our current FRUA Board consists of FRUA members who have adopted children from Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Bulgaria.
- FRUA was invited to attend the World Russia Forum in Moscow next week by the meeting sponsors.
 - FRUA was invited to the Forum by American University in Moscow and the Russian Association of International Relations.
 - Attending the Forum is just one part of FRUA's overall outreach program which includes building relationships with Embassies from all FRUA birth countries.
- We recognize people in certain countries may have positive or negative views about each other. It is a core FRUA value to encourage cultural acceptance among all of our families, regardless of where children are adopted from, or their level of challenge.

FAQs

Why is FRUA increasing its Outreach efforts at this time?

FRUA's mission statement: FRUA offers families Hope, Help and Community by providing connection, education, resources, and advocacy, and works to improve the lives of orphaned children.

FRUA has become increasingly aware that many of our key stakeholder communities are not broadly aware of FRUA or its mission. These include families who are part of the inter-country adoption community and key decision makers in the adoption community.

Building awareness about FRUA's mission is fundamental to helping FRUA accomplish its mission of bringing Hope, Help and Community to families.

My child is from one of the former Soviet bloc Countries. How do I talk to my child about the current situation with Russia and Ukraine?

FRUA's mission is to serve families who have adopted from Russia, Ukraine, and the surrounding countries. These are primarily countries that were part of the former Soviet Union. Many of our FRUA children are from one country, but have heritage from another. It can be very confusing for children and parents alike.

The former Soviet Bloc countries and republics include:

Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

We recognize that people in certain countries may have positive or negative views about each other. It is a core FRUA value to encourage cultural acceptance among all of our families, regardless of where children are adopted from, or their level of challenge.

In March 2014, FRUA began preparing tools for parents and teachers in an effort to reassure adopted children and help further understand the Ukrainian and Russian situation, especially around Crimean region issues.

The pdf file below is one such tool. It has been recently updated (August 2014). The document was prepared to help answer children's questions about the turmoil between the governments of Ukraine and Russia. We are all in the midst of "teachable moments", when we can reassure children, while helping them understand big ideas about the world in which they are growing up.

<http://www.frua.org/resources/teachable-moments-parent-educator-tools>

With the new school year for children underway, this is an excellent tool for starting the discussion with teachers, and all of our children, regardless if they were adopted from Ukraine or Russia.

Does FRUA have plans to go to my child's birth country?

We support families who have adopted not only from Russia and Ukraine, but also all Eastern Europe countries and Central Asia. In fact, our current FRUA Board consists of FRUA members who have adopted children from Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Bulgaria. It is important for our National Board to ensure that we forge relationships on behalf of the children from all the countries that FRUA represents, not just Russia and Ukraine.

During the past year, FRUA has been actively developing relationships with the Embassies of other FRUA countries. Recent visits and communications to Embassies and personnel in the U.S. have included: Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Latvia, The Kyrgyz Republic, Armenia, Georgia, and Uzbekistan.

Also, for the past ten years, FRUA regions have held events to host visitors from the U.S. State Department International Leadership Visitor Program (IVLP). In the next month, two of our regions are hosting visitors from several of our children's birth countries.

FRUA is sending a representative to Russia now because the FRUA Board believes if we do not take this opportunity now, we may not get another chance in the near future. With the escalation of tensions between the U.S. and Russia, and the current Russia-Ukrainian conflict, we are worried that we may lose an opportunity to get FRUA's voice of hope, help and community heard among the Russian people.

See the current members-only *Family Focus* in the mail this month to see more about FRUA Outreach efforts. Also, the upcoming members-only digital *FRUA News* will focus on FRUA's National and Regional efforts to build awareness of FRUA among representatives from countries from which our children are adopted.

What are the dates for the FRUA Moscow trip?

FRUA was invited to attend the World Russian Forum by the event's organizers, which include the American University in Moscow and the Russian Association of International Relations. The Forum is being held in Moscow, September 8-9, 2014. Our FRUA Chair is attending the Forum on behalf of FRUA. She will also be attending meetings surrounding the Forum itself, as well as visiting an orphanage for teens in Moscow on behalf of our FRUA families and meeting at the Maria's Children Moscow studios, an art rehabilitation program for orphans. FRUA has supported and continues to support this program through the sale of its artwork on www.frua.org/store.

What is the purpose of the FRUA Moscow trip?

While in Russia, our Chair, Jan Wondra, will be attempting to (1) present a more balanced picture of inter-country adoption by telling our members' success stories in face-to-face meetings, and (2) forward the message of the importance of Russian culture in the lives of these children.

The FRUA Board discussed the importance of the trip during this critical time, including how the trip actively met FRUA's mission, and 501c3 definition of building awareness, not lobbying. After lengthy discussions and Board consensus, the Board voted to Fund the Chair's trip to Moscow only for the purpose of:

- expanding relationships to get the real stories of our family's successes and challenges to our children's birth countries;
- helping to keep the door of inter-adoption in countries open;
- offering our (FRUA) adoptive family support structure as a model for family success; and
- building relationships with people on the ground for future orphan support.

Who is going on the FRUA Moscow Trip?

Our FRUA Chair, Jan Wondra, will represent FRUA at the Russian Forum in Moscow. One of the responsibilities of the FRUA Chair is to move forward FRUA's Outreach initiatives. Jan has been actively broadening awareness among key adoption and government opinion leaders during the past year. She is our public face for high level discussions, and she is very well suited to this task. The Board is grateful for her making the time and effort for this important trip, during this very critical time. This is not an easy journey.

The FRUA Chair will be preparing a formal written report for the Board from her trip when she returns. She will be sharing specifics with Regional leaders and FRUA membership before, during and after the trip. FRUA Chair, Jan Wondra will be posting Blogs during this time so that we can follow her journey, as she shares our collective voices in Russia. You can access these blogs by clicking on fruanationalvoice.blogspot.com or going to FRUA.org home page for a link to these blogs.

I want the Russian people to know that our children are doing well (in safe, loving homes with opportunities for bright futures based on their abilities). Can I send anything to FRUA's Chair to have her bring it along?

FRUA's Chair will be meeting with many people in Russia, and telling member success stories on behalf of all FRUA members, as well as highlighting the importance of Russian culture in the lives of our families who have adopted children from Russia.

Our Chair is also planning to make a representative visit to an orphanage for older teens in the Moscow. Along with being a voice for all of our FRUA members, she is bringing a scrapbook of pictures (no names) of our children. Many of these photos have already been used extensively on FRUA.org. We have previously received approval by parents or guardians of the children to use these photos in places like FRUA web sites or brochures. The scrapbook was carefully and thoughtfully created by our Education Chair, Terry Mandeville, who has also spearheaded heritage camps in her region.

We want to let the Russian people know that:

- Our FRUA families, and the 65,000 children we have adopted from Russia, have added Russia's genetics and heritage to our families, not erased it.

- There are success stories to be heard; success means different things to different families.
- FRUA and its member families have not forgotten the children who remain behind in institutions.

Look for photos of the FRUA Moscow visit on FRUA's Facebook page (click on FRUA.org or go to FRUA's Member Center at frua.memberclicks.net for the link on either home page) and the upcoming, members-only *FRUA News* via email later this month. Join in your regional yahoo groups and Facebook pages to tell your own stories, and how you have brought your children's cultures into your families. FRUA's trip to Moscow is about making a strong statement to all of our families, wherever with Russian adoptees or from other countries.

Can we expect for Russian adoptions to open up anytime soon?

We are always hopeful that Russia and other countries will again open to the U.S. for adoptions of children who cannot be placed in homes in-country. One of our core FRUA values is that every child deserves a safe and loving, forever family. We care deeply about the children who are left behind in institutions.

We wish to be very clear that FRUA's trip to Moscow is not about trying to get adoptions to open up immediately. This is not FRUA's role, nor do we believe it will happen anytime soon.

Our nonprofit 501c3 status and mission does not allow FRUA to lobby our government to open adoptions in Russia, or any country for that matter. Our position, simply, is to try to have a "voice and seat" at discussions that affect our members and mission. FRUA is an adoption support group with a mission to support our families through hope, help and community. Our apolitical "advocacy" efforts are more outreach efforts to decision makers to build awareness for FRUA's mission.

Other adoption organizations, who do more true government advocacy work, by definition are focused on lobbying the U.S. and other governments for adoption policy creation and change; lobbying is NOT part FRUA's mission.

What is the status of inter-country adoptions?

Russia is still closed to adoptions by U.S. Citizens. Of course, we are always hopeful that all countries will open for ethical, transparent adoptions of children who cannot be placed in homes in-country.

For the most up-to-date information on inter-country adoptions, please go to U.S. State Department, Bureau of Consular Affairs: www.travel.state.gov.

How can I help?

We are always looking for Regional and National Volunteers to help forward our mission. Our Regional and Board volunteers are all unpaid.

As always, we invite you to donate by going to FRUA.org or by clicking on this link: [Donate Now!](#) to donate by credit card or check. You will be asked to select where you would like your donation to be use. The choices are: FRUA programming, Scholarships, or Orphan support.

Frankly, without your support, it is difficult for us to meet FRUA's mission of Hope, Help, and Community for adoptive families.

Where do I get more info on FRUA?

The best place to start is to go to: www.FRUA.org. You can also go to our Member Center to join or renew your membership: frua.memberclicks.net. You can send specific questions to info@frua.org and your questions will be routed to the appropriate FRUA volunteer to respond.

We appreciate all of our unpaid volunteers at the national and regional levels. We could not have served our membership for the past 20 years without their commitment. Please always let us know how we can better serve you and your family.