

Ukrainian Resource Center
Hosting Information
Ukraine

Ukrainian Resource Center (URC) is a faith-based 501(c)3 non-profit organization that strives to meet the needs of orphaned children living in institutions in Ukraine. In 2010, the Ukrainian Resource Center started a Travel Program through which orphaned children are sponsored and hosted by US American families. The URC Travel Program occurs twice each year—once in the summer and once in the winter. The summer program offers one session of approximately six weeks and the winter holiday program runs from mid-December into early January, and it is approximately three to four weeks in length. We invite you to read through this handbook prior to hosting a child through our program.

Why a Travel Program? URC created the Travel Program in order to raise awareness of the needs of orphans throughout Ukraine. Our goal and desire are for families to connect with orphaned children in order to have a better understanding of the children's lives and needs. **URC's program is a travel program—not an adoption program.** While **URC is not an adoption agency**, many families do decide to adopt the children whom they host. While this is a wonderful bonus to our program, our program is not an adoption program but we can provide resources that will aid in your adoption process should you choose to pursue that.

What is a Travel Program? The URC Travel Program is an opportunity for orphaned children to have a cultural and educational experience visiting the United States. Families sponsor and host orphaned children for three to six weeks and provide the children with the unique opportunity of having a family and friends who care for them in the United States.

Information All Potential Host Families Should Know

Financial Requirements:

Qualification: Host families must consist of a husband and wife. Ukrainian law only allows for married couples (a male and female) to adopt. Though we are NOT involved with the adoptions process, we have chosen to mirror the qualifications in case the host family chooses to want to proceed with adoption through an appropriate accredited agency to do so.

Cost: URC's Travel Program has a three-tiered fee structure.

Tier 1: Early Bird: Commit and pay hosting fees by March 11th: \$2400 per child. (\$100 discount and \$300 application fee is waived).

Tier 2: Commit and pay hosting fees from March 12 thru May 1st: \$2500 per child plus \$300 application fee.

Tier 3: Commit and/or pay hosting fees after May 1st: \$3500 per child.

The host family is also responsible for any expenses related to the child's travel from and to the arrival airport.

If a family requests an additional guardian to stay with their family the cost of the guardian (\$1800) may be added to families hosting expenses. If we are unable to find a host family for one of our guardians, we may require

some or all of the host families in that geographic area to host the guardian for a short time.

Payments Due: The \$300 Deposit/Application Fee is due with your application. If you would like to have a child placed on “hold” before you send the application you may pay the \$300 using our online portal. We will then hold the child you have chosen for 7 business days as we await your application. The balance of the hosting fees are due on either March 11th or May 1st. Those committing and/or paying after May 1st must do so in a timely manner. These dates are fixed and all fees must be paid in an orderly fashion or you will not be permitted to host a child. The \$300 deposit/application fee is not refundable.

- ♦ **What does the cost include?** The URC Travel Program Fee includes the cost of passports, emergency medical insurance, visas, transportation from Ukraine to the US for all children and guardian/translators, a donation to your hosted child’s orphanage and the cost of National Criminal Background Checks and Sex Offender Checks.
- ♦ **What if my hosted child is not able to travel for reasons such as not getting a visa or because of illness or injury?** If the host child is unable to travel, the host family will be reimbursed all unspent funds and all recovered funds from the flights, if available.
- ♦ **How do I make the Travel Program Payment?** All URC Travel Program Fees are tax deductible. The Travel Program Fee can be made via check or our online portal located on the photolisting page.

Please make all checks payable to the Ukrainian Resource Center.
Ukrainian Resource Center
c/o Laura Passanita
1104 Ben Franklin Drive #518
Sarasota, FL 34236
- ♦ **Can I fundraise to off-set my costs?** If families are interested in hosting and do not feel that they can afford the Program Fee, we encourage families to seek donations for their sponsored child from friends, families, churches, or businesses. Because URC is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization, all donations over \$250 will be receipted and all contributions are tax deductible.

Note: If you do raise money for your hosted child:

- *ALL FUNDS are due on the Travel Program Due Date.*
- *Please be certain that all checks are made payable to URC, and please mail ALL checks TOGETHER in one envelope.*
- *Please mark YOUR name and YOUR HOSTED CHILD’S name in the memo line of the check.*
- *Please have all donors mail checks to you, and then mail all checks TOGETHER to URC.*

Host Family Responsibilities

What are my responsibilities—financial and otherwise—as a Host Family?

All host families (and *not* URC) are responsible for the following:

- ♦ Providing hosted children with all meals;
- ♦ Providing hosted children with clothing; (*Note: please see the “How to Prepare for your Hosted Child” section for more information.*) *Crosswalk Community Church has a clothes closet that may be used for this as well. You may call the church at (757) 258-2825 to inquire about this.*
- ♦ Paying for any activities in which you choose to participate;
- ♦ Paying the Program Fee and \$300 Deposit/Application Fee;
- ♦ Providing the add-on fare for children and guardians/translators traveling to airports other than the one chosen for the group, as applicable;
- ♦ Providing all transportation to and from the pickup point to your home;
- ♦ The cost of a “Short Visit Report,”
- ♦ If your hosted child is late to be dropped off at the airport for their return flight, the Host Family will be responsible for covering *all* incurred costs. The costs may include, but are not limited to, the change-of-ticket fee for the child and an orphanage guardian/translator, purchasing a new airline ticket (if necessary), and for paying for the hotel fees for children and guardian/translator prior to their departure;
- ♦ If your hosted child has an accident or emergency medical situation, the Host Family is responsible for presenting all information to URC in order to process the claim with the Medical insurance agency. If this is not done, then the Host Family will be fully responsible for all medical bills.
 - Please note: *this insurance is for medical emergencies only* and cannot be used for general care clinics, hospital visits or physician appointments. Families may choose to take their children for a check-up at their own expense; often a doctor or dentist will do the work free or give a discount if they know the children are international orphans

Information All Potential Host Families Should Know Before You Host:

Please read this page very carefully—it is the responsibility of the Host Family to understand the following information:

- ♦ **Committing to host a specific child:** Once you commit to hosting a child there is *no guarantee* that the child you chose will be able to come to America. In the past, URC has had cases where a child chosen by a family has become sick or injured and has not been able to travel. There have also been cases where local Ukrainian government officials changed their mind and refused to allow children from their specific city to travel. Finally, there is the potential for a child to be adopted before they travel with our program. While these situations do not happen often, these situations are possible, and you need to be aware of this before you decide to host a child (or have your heart set on hosting a specific child). URC staff will do everything we can to offer another child for you to host. We will not send a substitute child to you without your prior knowledge, and you will be refunded the main portion of the hosting fee minus the Ukrainian document fees, visa application fee and local travel expenses (\$500) if you decide not to host.
 - If a child does not travel due to illness or a change of legal status based on the Ukrainian government, the host family can either select another child to host *or* they will be refunded the main portion of the host fee minus the Ukrainian document fees (for visa application, travel expenses, etc.)
 - If a host family changes their mind and decides not to host, the family is still liable for paying the FULL Travel Program fee *or* finding a substitute family to host and pay the full amount.

Required Paperwork

What paperwork is required? (*Note: Please see “URC Background Requirements” for more information*)

- ♦ **Application and \$300.00 Deposit/Application Fee:** This fee is used to help cover the costs of local program expenses such as printing, postage, and phone calls. Please fill out all of the information and return the application to the URC mailing address.
- ♦ **Home Study or Short Visit Report** (see URC “Short Visit Report” Information pg. 9)
- ♦ **Host Family Agreement:** The URC Host Family Agreement is included in the Travel Program Handbook. Please be sure to fill in the necessary information and sign this form. It must be returned to URC with the Full Travel Program Application.
- ♦ **Background History Affidavit:** The Background History Affidavit is included in the Travel Program Application.

Timeframe

The URC Travel Program occurs twice each year—once in the summer and once in the winter. The summer program offers a session of approximately six weeks and a shorter session in the winter of approximately three to four weeks in length. There is a great deal of planning and organization that goes into our Travel Program. While URC is able to control some things, specific issues relating to our Travel Program are not in our control. For example: Because the children who travel to the United States are all orphans, their paperwork has to be processed through the Ukrainian government on the local and national levels before it can be presented to the United States Embassy. As a result, URC will not be able to provide you with exact travel dates until closer to the travel time. Because we are dependent upon the Ukrainian government and the United States Embassy (as well as the availability of the airlines), we do ask for your patience, understanding, and flexibility as we organize the exact dates of each program. Please rest assured that we will provide you with accurate and up-to-date information about the program dates and times as soon as we possibly can.

Note: We ask all host families to seriously consider their personal and work commitments prior to committing to hosting children. It is the responsibility of all host families to recognize the timeframe of the Travel Program and to reorder their schedules as appropriate in order to host and care for children. URC does not permit babysitters or child care programs for Travel Program children. All caregivers other than host families must be screened and approved by URC staff. Please contact us if you need more information about this.

URC Regulations

- ♦ **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES ARE YOU PERMITTED TO KEEP YOUR HOSTED CHILD PAST THE TRAVEL PROGRAM DATES.** URC CANNOT allow families to host or keep children past our travel program dates. Doing so is ILLEGAL, and doing so would jeopardize our entire program with the Ukrainian government, the United States Embassy, and the orphanage staff with whom we work. YOUR CHILD MUST BE AT THE AIRPORT AT THE DESIGNATED TIME ON THE DESIGNATED DATE OR LEGAL ACTION WILL BE TAKEN.
- ♦ **Hosting children:** Families are not permitted to host more than three (3) children in their home per Travel Program. Please contact URC staff if you have questions about this.
- ♦ **Guardians:** The Ukrainian government requires Orphanage Staff and Guardians/Translators to accompany children traveling to the United States through the Travel Program. If a child/children are being hosted in a new geographic area, a Guardian/Translator is required to stay with the family or families for a period of time or for the duration of the trip. A “new” region or geographic area is constituted by more than a two-hour drive from the next closest region. All families who live outside of the pickup areas must also pay for the connecting flights of the Guardians/Translators.
- ♦ **Arrival and Departure:** Host Families are responsible for picking up **and** dropping off their hosted children at the pickup area. If your hosted child is late to be dropped off at the airport for their return flight, the Host Family will be responsible for covering *all* incurred costs. The costs may include, but are not limited to, the change-of-ticket fee for the child and an orphanage guardian/translator, purchasing a new airline ticket (if necessary), and for paying for the hotel fees for children and guardians/translators prior to their departure.
- ♦ **Flights:** URC must work in conjunction with the Ukrainian government as well as the U.S. Embassy and various Ukrainian and U.S. airlines PRIOR to purchasing the airline tickets. THEREFORE, URC CANNOT GUARANTEE THAT YOUR HOSTED CHILD WILL FLY INTO AN AIRPORT NEAR YOUR HOUSE. When you agree to host a child, you are agreeing to take responsibility for their arrival and departure—regardless of whether or not they will fly into an airport nearest you.
 - **Host Families/Children requiring Connecting Flights:** All connecting flight families are financially responsible for the connecting flight fees of the child they are hosting *as well as* the Guardian/Translator who is traveling with the children. The guardian/translator connecting flight fees apply regardless of the number of children traveling to a specific location. If there is no guardian available, one representative from the group will be required to come to the pickup area to pick up the group.
- ♦ **Responsibility:** It is the responsibility of host families to serve as the guardians of URC Travel Program children at all times. Therefore, hosted children may not spend the night at other people’s homes without their host families. URC must abide by strict rules that prohibit anyone who has not been approved through our program of hosting URC Travel Program Children. Your child will be removed from your home, at your expense, if we find that he/she has stayed with a non-URC Family. If you have a friend or a family member who you would like to have approved to help you host your child, please contact URC staff.
- ♦ **Cell Phones:** URC strongly recommends that all host families carry cell phones with them to and from the airport as well as during outings with your hosted child. It is of paramount importance for our staff to be able to reach you. In the past, Host Families have been caught in traffic or have had emergencies and have not been able to contact our staff. Communication is of the essence with the URC Travel Program. Please be sure to carry our staff’s numbers with you at all times, and please be certain that your (and your spouse’s, if applicable)

cell phone numbers are on record with our organization.

- ♦ **Insurance:** URC insures all Travel Program children, guardians, and translators. This policy is only to be used in the event of an emergency. If your hosted child is having an emergency, please contact URC staff immediately. All information and details should be submitted directly to URC in order to process the claim for complete coverage.
 - **Disclaimer:** Please note this insurance is for medical emergencies only and cannot be used for general care clinics, hospital visits or physician appointments. Families may choose to take their children for a check-up at their own expense; often a doctor or dentist will do the work free or give a discount if they know the children are international orphans.
- ♦ **Punishment:** Corporal punishment is strongly discouraged by URC. If families are discovered using corporal punishment, their hosted child will be removed from the home.

URC “Short Visit Report” Information

All new host families must present URC with a “Short Visit Report” or with a completed and valid Home Study. Families can contact a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) or an Adoption agency to do their report. In the “Short Visit Report,” we ask LCSWs to meet with the host parents and their children as well as review the Host Family’s home. The LCSWs then present a report and recommendation to URC detailing their experience. Enclosed is a letter to the LCSW detailing the report. Please contact URC if you have further questions about this process.

Guidelines for the Short Visit Report: The LCSW should address the following issues and questions during the Short Visit Report:

1. Please interview all family members regarding their interests and hobbies as individuals and as a family. Please discuss the type of profession and the individual work schedules with the adults.
2. Please ask Potential Host Families how they heard about the URC Travel Program, and ask them why they are interested in the program.
3. Please ask: What do you, as a family, expect of the Travel Program? What are your expectations of your hosted child? Why are you interested in hosting a Ukrainian child?
4. Please ask if the family is aware of some of the behaviors that can be associated with children who have lived in orphanages (abuse, neglect, abandonment, bed-wetting, etc.)
5. Please ask: Have you participated in any other adoption or foster programs? Have you read any materials about adoption or foster care children? Please explain.
6. Please ask: What are your experiences with children? Are there children currently living in the household? Do you have adopted children? How do current children feel about the Ukrainian Resource Center?
7. Please discuss methods of discipline used in the home, and please explain that corporal punishment is not permitted regarding their hosted child.
8. Please ask: What types of support systems does the family have? (extended family members, friends, church groups, etc.)
9. In terms of the physical home . . . Where will the hosted child/children sleep? Will hosted children share a bathroom with other family members? Are dangerous objects and medications safely stored out of reach? Are there pets, and are there rules regarding the pets? Is the home sanitary and appropriately cleaned? Are there any safety concerns that need to be addressed?
10. Are there any unresolved loss issues that may complicate a family hosting a child? (i.e.: the recent death of a child, etc.)
11. Are there any “red flags” or concerns that you have about the family’s participation as host parents for the URC Travel Program? Are there any issues about which our staff should be aware?

Note: URC recommends that each question is answered during the interview and then discussed in the LCSW’s write-up/report. Please include your recommendation and professional opinion, as based on your interview with the Host Family.

Please print the Short Visit Report on letterhead and mail it directly to:

Ukrainian Resource Center, c/o Laura Passanita, 1104 Ben Franklin Drive #518, Sarasota, FL 34236

About your Hosted Child

For both legal and personal reasons, URC is not authorized to provide personal information regarding the children, their medical history, their family history, etc., to families who are hosting children. We also are not permitted to provide information concerning a specific child's availability for adoption. After you have committed to host a child, we can direct you to one of the adoption agencies we recommend and they will be able to provide this information.

All hosted children come from the orphanage system in Ukraine. It is of paramount importance that all host families recognize and understand the vital difference between growing up in the United States and being raised through the Ukrainian orphanage system. While we cannot tell you specific information about your hosted child, we can tell you general information about the children with whom we work in orphanages in Ukraine:

- ♦ Children in Ukraine are orphaned for many of the same reasons that children are placed in foster care within the United States: child abuse, neglect, sexual or emotional abuse; drug and alcohol usage and abuse; incarcerated parents; etc. In addition, many children are placed in orphanages because their parents have abandoned them or because their parents (or guardians—grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, etc.) cannot financially afford to care for them. Poverty plays a significant role in why children are often orphaned.
- ♦ Many children do not have any relatives, other than a sister or brother, and many children have lived their entire lives in the Ukrainian orphanage system. Children have been placed in orphanages since birth and they have moved from orphanage to orphanage as they have grown older.
- ♦ Some children who live at the orphanages do have a family member who has remote contact with them. Usually, this is a parent, an aunt or uncle, older sibling, grandparent, or a distant family member who cares about them from afar. Depending on the different situations, the children are allowed to visit with their relatives while living at the orphanages. While some children with relatives are not adoptable, we have not found this to be the case with all children.
- ♦ Life in the Ukrainian orphanage system is dramatically different from the “typical” American lifestyle. Many of the orphanages where we work have between 400-500 children living in them. As a result, the children who live in these orphanages do not have people caring for them day-in and day out, as a parent would care for a child. Therefore, many of the children carry emotional and psychological baggage with them. Some children have difficulty in learning to be loved and to love in return. Orphaned children often lack social and hygiene skills since no one has ever taught them to “use their manners” or “say please” or shower daily. While these issues are not a problem for every child, it is important for all host families to recognize the impoverished and undereducated background that orphaned children are raised in for the entirety of their lives.

How to Prepare for your Hosted Child

URC recommends that all host families do the following:

- ♦ Visit your local bookstore and purchase a Phonetic Russian/English dictionary. Having a phonetic dictionary will help you pronounce Russian words when speaking to your child. Having the Russian-English portion will enable your child to show you words (in English) that they are trying to say in Russian.
- ♦ Please sit down with your family prior to your hosted child's arrival, and compile a list of rules for your family and your household. Please prepare to share these rules with your hosted child from their arrival on forward. Please *do not assume* that the children will “know how to act” or “use their manners.” If a child does not understand your rules, they cannot possibly obey them. Most children are visiting the United States for the first time, and they will need time to adjust to a new culture, a new language, a new time zone, and a different family. Please be specific in your expectations for your hosted child: May they “help themselves” in your kitchen? Can they call their friends who are staying with other families? Do they need to ask before leaving the table; making a phone call; riding their bike; leaving the house to play outside, etc.? Please also take the time to show your hosted child around your home so they can understand what is “off-limits,” etc. There are many online resources available to help in the translation of house rules from English to Russian. We encourage families to use these for clear and crisp communication. Disciplining the children is absolutely necessary. URC cannot be responsible for the behavior of your hosted child—especially when the child does not understand the rules or expectations within his or her new home.
 - One example of an online translator is: <http://translation2.paralink.com/>
 - *Note: Please translate from English-Russian and then back again from Russian-English to be certain that you are getting the clearest translation possible. Some words are difficult to translate!*

Note: *Many children from the orphanage system have never had the luxury of using telephones. Therefore, calling people is very exciting for them, and they oftentimes do not understand that they need to ask permission before making a phone call—especially long distance phone calls which may involve time changes. Please specifically address these issues with your hosted children.*

Other Cultural Differences:

- ♦ **Food:** URC Travel Program children come from orphanages throughout Ukraine; therefore, their diets vary. However, all orphanages are poor, and the children do not eat as well as they could. Popular Ukrainian foods include potatoes, cabbage, and soup. Starchy foods are also popular and common in Ukraine.
 - Children may not like American food when they initially arrive. Please be prepared for this, and do not be offended. Sometimes, American food can upset the children's stomachs. Most of the time, children do seem to enjoy pizza, chicken, french fries, and ice cream.
 - When offering food to the children/guardians/translators, please be persistent. It is custom in Ukraine to say "no" the first time food is offered, even if one is hungry. Please be aware of this cultural difference and be prepared to ask several times if your hosted child is hungry or wants to eat. We recommend placing food in front of your host children and encouraging them to "eat up!"
- ♦ **Temperature:** During the summer months, orphanages do not have the luxury of using air conditioning. Be prepared for your hosted children to be cold while the air conditioning is running. In the winter months, Ukraine is typically very cold, and the children are somewhat resilient to it. Nevertheless, please be sure that your hosted child is comfortable and has the necessary coats, gloves, blankets, etc., that he or she may need.
- ♦ **Communication:** Many Ukrainians are very decisive and sometimes seem stubborn or abrupt to Americans. The Russian language uses many harsh tones and commanding phrases. Please note that this is a cultural difference and not a personal infraction. You may notice that some Ukrainians seem to be screaming at each other when speaking in Russian. This is a commonly accepted way of communication in Ukraine.
- ♦ **English:** The children who participate in all of URC's Travel Programs come from orphanages throughout Ukraine. These orphanages are impoverished and some of their staff is undereducated. While all children are supposed to take English classes in school, many of the children do not speak *any* English at all. The Ukrainian government does not pay for English education for the children. Please do not expect children to speak more than a few words of English, if that. Additionally, if children do know some English, they are often embarrassed that they may say a word wrong or sound funny. Please understand that it takes time and patience for many children to speak what little English they know.
- ♦ **Hygiene:** Due to limited hot water in the orphanages, many Ukrainian children are unfamiliar with hot water, and they are also unfamiliar with bathing on a daily basis. These are important things to explain to hosted children. Please also reinforce the importance of the children brushing their teeth twice daily; washing their hands after using the restroom; and, washing their hands before eating meals. In Ukraine plumbing is also very different from the United States: therefore, children are accustomed to disposing of toilet paper in the trash can instead of in toilets. This is a hard habit for children to break. Please encourage children to flush all toilet paper, and please be aware that some toilet paper will still end up in your family's trash can. Additionally, Ukrainian children tend to wash their undergarments and socks while showering. Please be aware of this.

- ♦ **Clothing:** Because hosted children are coming from orphanages, they often come to the United States with only the clothes they are wearing. This is not an exaggeration. Many children visit the United States without bringing a single piece of luggage or even a small bag. If children do bring a bag, we encourage all host families to go through the bag with their sponsored child so you can be aware of the clothing needs of your hosted child. Because many orphanage children share their clothes, they do not bring *any* clothes to the United States. URC encourages orphanage children, staff, and directors to help children separate clothing to pack for their trips to the United States; but, this rarely happens. Please realize that is the responsibility of the Host Family to provide clothing to hosted children. Clothing can be hand-me-downs, purchased from consignment shops, or purchased new. Please feel free to collect clothing for your child from your church, friends, or business.

- ♦ **Gifts:** Because children often arrive with no more than the shirt on their backs or a small plastic bag of belongings, many families shower the children with gifts the moment they arrive. However, this gives the child the impression that their family is rich, and it often creates a spoiled child for the bulk of the visit. PLEASE do not spoil your child. Physically visiting the United States and staying in a home is a great experience for the child in itself!

Travel Program Shopping Advice:

- If you must spoil your hosted child, please do not spoil him or her during the first week of the visit. URC host families have found that the first week of the visit often sets the pace for the entire stay in the United States.

- You may buy your hosted child a few necessities when they arrive, but it is important to say “No” (or “Nyet!” which means “no” in Russian) if or when they start asking for shopping trips, CD players, and iPods!

- It is up to the discretion of host families to make “want-based” purchases for your hosted child; however, it is advisable to wait until the last week of the children’s visit so that you are not setting a standard for their time in the United States.

- Please be mindful of the orphanage staff and the hours that they spend working with the children and teaching them both before and after their visits. We do not want to create more work for the staff once the children return.

- Please also be mindful of the other children at the orphanages who were unable to come to the United States. We need to remind the children that they need to be respectful and caring of one another at all times . . . even once they return to Ukraine.

- In the past, children who have returned to Ukraine with an exorbitant amount of gifts have had many of their things stolen. Please keep this in mind when making purchases for your hosted child.

- All families and host families are different. Therefore, children will inevitably arrive back to Ukraine with different gifts, clothing, etc. Please be aware that many of the children will discuss their activities and purchases with each other both during and after their stay within the United States. As all children do, hosted children often compare their schedules and their gifts. Please keep this in mind and please feel free to discuss such differences with your hosted child.

Important Information about Orphanage Children

Children who have been living in orphanages or who grow up in “institutionalized care,” often present the following concerns which include, but are not limited to the following:

- Learning disabilities
- Developmental delays
- Delayed growth and development
- History of trauma, loss, physical and/or sexual abuse, neglect and/or abandonment
- Speech and language delays
- Emotional and behavioral problems
- Nutritional deficits
- Attachment problems
- Undetected health concerns

Note: The Ukrainian government places children with severe delays and/or disabilities in separate orphanages from “mainstream” children. At this time, URC is only working with children from such “mainstream” orphanages. If you have an interest in hosting a child with a significant need, please contact URC staff.

URC Recommends . . .

- ◆ **At the airport:** When you arrive at the airport to pick up your hosted child, please bring a sign with his/her name on it. Please also pack a small meal or snack or be ready for a trip to McDonald's for your hosted child, as children are often hungry as they arrive at the airport.
- ◆ **Other Host Families:** Please contact other host families in your area so that children can play together and host families can share stories. URC has found that children enjoy being able to speak Russian and relax with their friends during their visit to the United States as well.
- ◆ **When Hosting Guardians/Translators:** Please give guardians/translators/children their schedule in advance. URC has found that children and guardians like to be able to be prepared for the next day's activities.
- ◆ **Weekly Activities:** Please plan at least two activities each week for your hosted child and/or guardian/translator. Activities do not need to involve costs: you could go sightseeing in the car, visit a park, attend the story-hour at a nearby library, tour the Christmas lights in your city, go to the pool or beach, etc. Having planned activities give the children and adults something to look forward to and it also enriches their experience, education, and understanding of our culture and nation.
- ◆ **Community Gatherings:** Since one of the main purposes of the URC Travel Program is to increase awareness of the needs of orphaned children living in Ukraine, we ask host families to consider hosting a picnic, dessert party, or gathering with friends and family from church, work, or the neighborhood

URC Conflict Resolution Plan

If you are having trouble communicating with your child, or if you feel like you need help, URC Staff asks you to please contact a translator *first*. URC believes that it is very important for hosted children to be able to express themselves clearly as well. We strongly encourage all host families to contact a translator to help with conflicts or communication difficulties. Communication and understanding between the hosted child and Host Family are key components of our program. We ask all host families to be aware of the difficulty of the time, language, and cultural differences that the children experience upon arriving in the United States. Please provide your hosted child with time to adjust to his or her new surroundings.

Re-placement of a child in a different home: If you are having trouble with your hosted child and you would like your child to be placed with another family, please follow the URC Conflict Resolution Plan:

We ask all host families to give their hosted children a minimum of three or four days to adjust to the new time difference, their new surroundings, and their Host Family before contacting URC about re-placement . . .

Note: If your child must be removed from your home and re-placed in another home in a different city, the original Host Family is responsible for the cost of airfare for their hosted child and guardian/ translator to relocate.

72 Hour Conflict Resolution Plan:

- ♦ **STEP 1:** Please contact URC Staff immediately to explain your situation and to express your concerns.
- ♦ **STEP 2:** URC Staff will immediately contact a translator to intervene in the situation. The translator should intervene within 24 hours of the initial complaint phone call. URC prefers intervention to be done in person, but if a translator cannot get to your home, the intervention can be done via telephone. *After the intervention, we ask for all host families to please wait 24 hours.*
- ♦ **STEP 3:** If the Host Family, after 48 hours from the initial contact, still desires for children to be placed in another home, the family must immediately call URC Staff, and re-placement plans will be made within the next 24 hours. All host families must understand that they will NOT receive a refund or reimbursement for children who families choose to have removed from their home and placed with another Host Family.

URC Translators

Many families feel uncomfortable with the idea of trying to communicate, for three to six weeks, with a child who speaks Russian. As a result, URC hires translators to travel with the children and to help families communicate with children throughout the duration of the URC Travel Program. All families will have telephone access to translators here in the United States, and all families will become very experienced in communicating through drawing, facial expressions, charades, and “talking with their hands”!

URC will provide information with translators’ phone numbers as soon as we have it. Additionally, families who are interested in hosting a translator in their home for the entire Travel Program or for a portion of the travel program are welcome to do so.

Families who host translators are expected to do the following:

- ◆ Provide food and housing for translators
- ◆ Pay for activities for translators (i.e.: trips to a museum, amusement park, etc.)
- ◆ Understand that other host families may be calling for translation assistance. (Please be willing to share your translator!)

Note: Translators are not to be used as babysitters. We respect our translators and are grateful for their hard work. Please do not expect them or ask them to watch your hosted child for more than one hour or so.

Translators: URC recommends:

- ◆ When explaining your “house rules” to your hosted child, please also be specific with your translator: Can your translator “help him/herself in your kitchen”? Do you mind if the translator cooks for the children? Can your translator use your phone? Can your translator make long distance calls? What things are “off limits”? What can they do and what should they not do?
- ◆ Please be clear about your expectations of the translator up front to avoid confusion later.
- ◆ Please read the “How to Prepare for your Hosted Child” section of the handbook, and please note the following:
 - Communication: Many Ukrainians are very decisive and sometimes seem stubborn or abrupt to Americans. The Russian language uses many harsh tones and commanding phrases. Please note that this is a cultural difference and not a personal infraction. You may notice that some Ukrainians seem to be screaming at each other when speaking in Russian. This is a commonly accepted way of communication in Ukraine.
- ◆ Please try to give translators an idea of their schedule at least a day in advance. Translators like to be able to prepare and know what to expect.

Note: If you have a problem with your translator, or if an issue arises, please contact URC staff immediately. Please be honest and open with your translator about the problems you are having. If you do not contact URC staff about translator-related issues, we cannot help you resolve them.

Orphanage Guardians

Per the request of the Ukrainian government, each orphanage selects guardians to accompany the children who travel. URC does its best to prepare all guardians who will travel to the United States with the children. However, guardians often prove to be more difficult to work with than the children families host. Guardians do not have to stay with host families. They could stay with neighbors or friends, but the guardians must be hosted. The guardians will periodically check in on the children from their orphanages who are being hosted by families throughout the US.

Note: Host families must host guardians in order for our Travel Program to succeed. If you or your family is interested in hosting a guardian or finding a host for a guardian, please be sure to mark your interest to do so on the URC Travel Program Application.

Adoption

URC is not an adoption agency. URC staff specifically tells hosted children that they are NOT traveling to the United States to be adopted. All hosted children do understand that this program is for cultural and educational purposes only. Despite this, orphanage children see American families coming to the orphanages to adopt children, and they automatically assume that children are being adopted by families they visited in the United States. It is impossible to completely distance ourselves from adoption in the minds of our Travel Program children.

Many host families are interested in adoption. We discourage families from openly discussing adoption with Travel Program children. Above all, DO NOT make any promises to your hosted child. The adoption process is lengthy; and, unfortunately, we have seen potentially adoptive families change their minds about adoption while in the process. The children you are hosting have been abandoned and many have been through much more difficult experiences than we will ever face. We do not need to provide them with false hope of adoption. Please be respectful and mindful of this.

Resources for Host Families and Potentially Adoptive Families

Restaurants: URC encourages host families who are interested in experiencing a taste of their hosted child's culture, to look up Russian, Ukrainian, or Eastern European markets or restaurants. We recommend families to visit the restaurant, talk to the staff, and taste their food. Hosted children may enjoy this experience as well. *Please let URC staff know if you find restaurants or markets in your area that you would like us to recommend to other host families.*

Reading in English: www.starfall.com; website for helping children learn to read

Center for Adoption Support and Education, Inc. (C.A.S.E.)

8505 Arlington Blvd., Suite 420

Fairfax, VA 22301

703.573.3701; www.adoptionssupport.org

Russian Yellow Pages and Russian-Speaking Web Portal for Greater Washington and Baltimore:

www.russiandc.com

FRUA (Families for Russian & Ukrainian Adoptions): www.frua.org

TUCA (Tidewater Ukrainian Cultural Association) www.tuca.us

For more important information about the Ukrainian adoption process please visit the website of the US

Embassy in Kiev: http://web.usembassy.kiev.ua/amcit_adoptions_eng.html

Helping Ukrainian Resource Center

Resources: If you or your family comes across helpful resources, please let us know! For example, if you find a good translation website, a great “about Ukraine” site, or a tasty Russian restaurant nearby, please make a note and provide us with your resources so that we can pass information on to other families.

Medical Donations: If you know medical professionals in your town who are willing to donate services to URC's Travel Program children, please let us know. We would also love to be able to properly thank all doctors, dentists, etc., who help our Travel Program children. Please provide URC staff with the name of your hosted child, the service provided, and the name and address of the medical professional who helped you.

Photos and Videos: If you have pictures or videos from the URC Travel Program that you would be interested in donating to URC, please let us know. We are a very small organization, and we would love your help!

Volunteers: URC is extremely grateful for our volunteers who help our programs grow and expand. If you are interested in helping in any of the following areas in your town or state, please let us know:

Publicists: Volunteers are needed to help promote URC's Programs within the community. If you are interested in helping with press releases and spreading the word about our programs in your area, please contact us.

Fundraisers: If you are interested and available to solicit donations, merchandise, or in-kind donations (i.e.: services), please let us know. We would love to be able to provide Host Families with the services available to them, and the more funding we raise, the more children we can help! If you are interested in helping us coordinate fundraising or speaking efforts in your area, please contact URC's staff.

Area Event Coordinators: If you are interested in organizing local events in your area for the Travel Program children, please let us know! For example, having a pot luck dinner one evening with other host families or organizing a group trip to the zoo could be a tremendous hit for the children and families. If you are interested in helping us coordinate fundraising or speaking efforts in your area, please contact URC staff.

Volunteer Translators: If you speak Russian and are willing to hand out your phone number or help translate during trips or Travel Program outings, please let us know. This service is of great importance to our host families!

Travel Program Partners: Volunteers who have a solid understand of the challenges that our hosted children face as they transition from life in an orphanage to life in the United States of America are welcome to be “Travel Program Partners.” TPPs will provide friendship to hosted children and support to host families. We prefer these volunteers to be former host families or adoptive families.

Back-up Host Families: If you and your family have experience hosting and would like to become a “back-up family” for future travel programs, please contact URC's staff. “Back-up families” are called into volunteer when URC host families decide that a child must be removed from their home and re-placed with another family. Although “back-up families” do not have to pay the Travel Program Fees, they are responsible for the food, clothing, and activities of hosted children. All “back-up families” are also responsible for submitting the necessary background information to URC before a child can be placed in their home.

