

Buckner seeks hosts for 'angels from abroad'_122004

December 17, 2004

Posted: 12/17/04

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DALLAS-Angels from Abroad, a Buckner International Adoption program to expose American families to international adoption, will be offered again in 2005.

The program allows adoption-minded families to host orphan children ages 7 to 14 when they visit the United States during their summer vacation June 4-20.

"Angels from Abroad offers host families the opportunity to make a difference in the life of a Russian child visiting the United States," said Mary Ann Hamby, community relations coordinator for Buckner International Adoption. "Hosting is a great way for potentially adoptive families to participate in the experience of having a child from Russia living in their home as they consider international adoption as an option for parenting."

The Russian children will stay in host family homes during their visit and participate in several Buckner-organized events, including a family picnic, Vacation Bible School program, child-centered activities and a swim party. In addition, host families will have the opportunity to plan their own family activities around the schedule of events.

Hamby, who noted that all of the children have been identified as available for international adoption, emphasized the need for host volunteers who are "willing and capable Christian families and single women who can successfully parent these precious children."

Debbie Wynne, clinical director for Buckner International Adoption, said participating families will be able to call on her agency's staff to make their time with the Angels as positive as possible.

"The Buckner clinical team will be connected with each approved host family and will be checking on the family during the course of the child's visit to lend support and guidance as needed," Wynne said. "In addition, Buckner will have interpreters available to assist families with translation and regular communication."

While Buckner is working with churches and donors to help offset a portion of the costs of travel, visas and other expenses, host families must pay a host program fee to help with remaining program, home study and travel costs.

Potential host families must attend a workshop Jan. 11 at the Buckner International Adoption office, 4830 Samuell Blvd. in Dallas or call (214) 381-1552 to view the meeting on VHS. Christian couples and single women at least 25 years old who live in North Texas and are active church members are eligible to be considered as host families. Each family must pass a criminal background check and home study.

Buckner also is seeking volunteers to support the Angels from Abroad program financially as well as prior to and during the visit to assist with some of the events and activities. "We need assistance with playgroups, babysitting, carpools and a carnival for the children," Hamby said.

Buckner International Adoption is officially accredited by the Russian Federation to place children for international adoption. Buckner has placed

more than 150 Russian children in adoptive families in the United States since 1995.

For more information or to host or volunteer, contact Mary Ann Hamby at Buckner International Adoption at (214)381-1552 or mhamby@buckner.org

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