

Outraged Utah Family Speaks Out Against Russian Adoption Ban

The DiGirolamo family expressed feelings of outrage and dismay at Russia's ban on American adoptions. They adopted three Russian girls in 2002 and President Vladimir Putin's ban on American adoptions today prevents that same opportunity from happening for thousands of Russian orphans needing parents and a good home.

Salt Lake City, UT, December 2012 – Vinny and Dana DiGirolamo of Draper, Utah, [recently interviewed on Fox-13 News](#), expressed new feelings of outrage and dismay at Russian President Vladimir Putin's deaf ear as he approved the ban on American adoptions. They have eleven children of which three were adopted from Russia in 2002. The DiGirolamos have presented their Russian adoption story at adoption seminars with Catholic Charities, spoken at Latter-day Saint firesides and other adoption forums promoting international adoptions.

"Why any country would curtail this blessed opportunity for their institutionalized, unwanted, dislocated, abused and special needs children who are already victims of a hard life is beyond reason to us," states Vinny DiGirolamo. "Using children as political leverage for the emotional response it evokes as a means to resolve other political differences only serve to denigrate Russia's credibility and humanity on a global scale."

Vinny DiGirolamo sponsors a website/blog (www.dontforgetthechildren.com) that tells their adoption story, provides advice on having a successful international adoption, and tracks ongoing developments in the adoption ban proposed by Russia.

Dana DiGirolamo appealed, "These are children we're talking about here! All they want is a family to love and nurture them. When they turn eighteen in Russia, they are turned out on the street. Many have no extended family to help them out and what else do they have but to turn to a life of despair, drugs and prostitution. We know this firsthand. It's not propaganda."

She continued, "Despite what the Russian government has done, we don't believe the Russian people want this for their children either. We've seen the Russian protestors on the news and we remain connected through Skype and Facebook with our adopted daughter's extended Russian families. We love them and they love us for what we were able to do for their family. What more can anyone ask for?"

Aliana, Nikki and Cami were adopted while the DiGirolamos lived in Stafford, Virginia and were featured as the [2002 Christmas story in Fredericksburg's Newspaper and Online site](#). Since then, they have grown up as three beautiful young women who are afforded every opportunity every young American has.

Aliana and Nikki are now seniors in High School preparing for college and they're both productively employed by [iQue Repair](#). Cami is a freshman in High School and still has a few years before she gets her license, but meanwhile enjoys horseback riding, X-box, shopping with her mother and hanging out with her sisters, nephews and nieces – all typical teenage activities. Where would they be today had Russia banned American adoptions nine years ago?



Dana added, "Our hearts and our prayers go out to the adoptive families and children who are caught in the crossfire of this cruel and horrible lapse in judgment. We know that these families already have relationships with their adoptive children."

She continued, "We worked hard to build our relationship with our girls beforehand and in between our visits to Russia by calling every week with another Russian immigrant acting as interpreter. That helped us get a head start on our new relationships. While obtaining their visas at the American Embassy in Russia, another couple asked if the three girls hanging all over us were our biological children or our Russian adoptees. They couldn't tell the difference, but instead saw the love we showed each other already. "

Vinny affirmed, "Adoption is an intensely intimate and spiritual journey. As Latter-day Saints, our firm belief is that God approves of adoption and we know many adoptive families from all different walks of life have had faith filled experiences just like us during the adoption process."

He further explained, "For example. While in Russia, we visited another orphanage not part of our itinerary because our escort needed to conduct some business there. Having to use their toilet facilities (a hole in the ground out back) we were escorted through the orphanage and saw several rooms of boys and girls between the ages of 8 and 14, all sitting in beds during what appeared to be nap time. It was 110 degrees in the building. I felt inspired at that moment to start a blog called, '[Don't forget the children](#)' to raise the awareness of the opportunities to adopt and advocate it internationally."

Dana remembered that day, "I will never forget the sight – they were all beautiful children wanting only one thing – the love only a family could give." She continued, "We need to do all we can and more to facilitate adoptions, not hinder them. There are lots more loving families that if they could afford it, would adopt."

Finally, Dana, appealed, "We know firsthand that the adoptive families and Russian orphans caught in this political tug of war are going through heart-wrenching emotional hell. Russia, please reconsider this action against your children and please do what's right for the world's sake."

They both concluded, "America and the rest of the world is waiting to see Russia overturn their ban and make the right decision for humanity's sake."