



Vol. 13, Issue 14 - Monday, January 14, 2008

From Russia to the isles: 2 boys, 1 history

By Katie Amberg-Johnson
Contender

Many students at this school have been friends for a long time. However, not many can claim to have a history like Adam Trecker and Alex Johnston, two boys who have known each other longer than they have known their parents, and whose unique friendship is one to marvel at.

Both boys lived in an orphanage the first three to four years of their lives in Novosibirsk, a Russian town near Siberia. Though their memories are sparse, Trecker and Johnston agree that life in the orphanage was hard. They were taught to stay in the cribs in the morning until someone came to get them. The food consisted mostly of oatmeal and potatoes. Johnston remembers the punishment for swearing was getting your mouth washed out with soap.

Trecker smiled at that. "Alex was swearing? We were so young, I could barely form words," he said.

"Everyone in the room had a small crib," Trecker recalled, "but Alex got the big bed!" Johnston and Trecker hung out all the time in the orphanage and were best friends from the beginning.

Within six months of each other, both boys got adopted by their parents. Moms Nikki Johnston and Christina Trecker arrived in Russia and spent the last month out of a six-month process there meeting the children and finalizing the plans for adoption. Johnston remembers how Trecker was quick to grab the hand of his new mother. When they arrived in Hawaii, it took some time for them to get adapted to their new environment.

"The first time we went to the beach," Johnston remembers, "we were walking with our knees high in the air because we thought the sand was snow." Trecker and Johnston were fascinated by some of the things that kids growing up in America take for granted.

"I was fascinated by a lamp because I had never seen it before," Trecker said. "I kept clicking the lamp on and off because it was cool."



COURTESY PHOTO
Alex Johnston and Adam Trecker, at the Le Jardin
lookout, are still friends after all these years.



COURTESY PHOTO

Adam Trecker and Alex Johnson, as little boys,
bundled up for the harsh Russian winter.

Bev Allen, Le Jardin Academy's elementary school music teacher, remembers the excitement and apprehension when Alex and Adam arrived. Both boys were in her preschool music class, and she recalled with great affection one special day in her class.

"When they first came to class, they were, of course, very quiet and very lovable. You could tell that they had been taken good care of. They liked to be hugged and give hugs, especially Alex. One day I was showing and reading a lovely book about snow. The boys looked at each other with the biggest smiles and began talking in Russian to each other without stopping. Oh! The joy on those little faces!" Allen said. "I will always remember."

Although both Trecker and Johnston are happy Kailuans, they still have a few relics of their previous Russian lives. Johnston has a Russian doll and little Russian toy cars from the orphanage. Every year the two keep in touch with other adopted children from different Russian orphanages at a yearly Russian Christmas party.

For many adopted children, the matter of their biological parents is often a curiosity. Trecker has plans to go to Russia to find his biological mother after college. All he has is his mother's name, but one of the nurses at his old orphanage remembers him and is helping him locate her. If the boys go together, it will be their first time back in Russia since they were adopted.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

YOU ASKED

"If you were a building, what would you be?"

by The Contender staff

Jessica Shiarella

"Matsumoto's Shave Ice, because it is very family-oriented."

Brita Hofwolt

"A one-room house made out of twigs and mud, because I can't see myself as the Taj Mahal."

Kristi Leong

"The Eiffel Tower, because it's different and kind of out of the blue and unique."

Monica Hika

"An opera house, even though I sing badly."

Sarah Failla

"A zoo, because I'm wild."

Tai Stewart

"A small, specialty restaurant because I'm one of a kind."

Dinah West

"I would be a motor home because I don't want to be confined to one place."

Adam Kenner

"A temple, so people would bow down to me."

Meghan Van Bergeijk

"I'd be a cafeteria so I could be full of food."

Article URL: <http://starbulletin.com/2008/01/14/features/story02.html>
© 1996-2008 The Honolulu Star-Bulletin | www.starbulletin.com