Daniil (Joey) with Down Syndrome at the Orphanage
Authors: Lynn & Yuri Kolber, parents of Sasha adopted from an orphanage in Ukraine and Travis.

Delivering materials from the Down Association in Chicago to the orphanage. Posters and videos of kids with Down Syndrome leading normal lives – playing soccer, the piano, dancing ballet, and so on.

Visiting the orphanage in May 2004 we catch glimpse of Daniil. Daniil has Down Syndrome but is integrated with a regular group and had just come in from outside.

Daniil washes his hands and totters off to play with his friends. But a little part of Daniil has lodged in our hearts.

Investigating what happens to orphans with Down Syndrome once they age out of the baby orphanages makes us realize that we need to find Daniil a family.

By January 2006 Daniil has grown into a handsome young boy. He is attached to his caregivers, smart, talking and very cute.

Our search for a family continues frantically. Fortunately for Daniil the commission that decides where to place him is wise and sends him to a kindergarten age orphanage instead of an institution. And we manage to find a family for Daniil! The Stolz family start preparing their adoption paperwork.

In January 2007 the last winter without a family is passing slowly for Daniil as he waits patiently for his forever family.
Daniil (Joey) goes home....

June 2007 and what Daniil does not know is that he is about to become the first of many children with Down adopted from Ukraine.

Mom Mary and Dad Jim meet Joey for the first time. Joey will now have 7 brothers and sisters, 2 of them adopted from Ukraine. Matt his older brother has Down Syndrome too.

Daniil on the train and plane going home!

In July 2007 Daniil started school in America. He catches the school bus. He loves to cook, swim and dance. He lost his first 2 teeth. He grew 8cm in three months. He is a regular boy in a family!

Joey has a family and a future!
Adults with Down Syndrome

People with Down Syndrome want you to know that they are regular people. They have feelings like you and me. They have dreams like you and me. They love like you and me. The difference is that they are bottled up in a body with a disability. Given the right opportunities they will grow and blossom into wonderful, productive members of our society.

In many countries, individuals with Down syndrome are active participants in the educational, vocational, social and recreational aspects of their communities. In fact, there are more opportunities than ever before for individuals with Down syndrome to develop their abilities, discover their talents and realize their dreams. For example, more teens and adults with Down syndrome each year are graduating from high school, going to college, finding employment and living independently.

A person with Down Syndrome undergoing training for a job in a supermarket in Scotland. People with Down work as nursery school assistants, in restaurants, in stores, dental assistants, as caregivers for old people and invalids, go to the army in Israel, work as actors, artists, musicians and so on.

Osnat Barnett was born in Jerusalem in 1974, the eldest of three children. After completing her primary and secondary education, Osnat undertook two years of National Service. Osnat studied at the WIZO Institute in Jerusalem and became a qualified Nursery Nurse Assistant. In 2000 Osnat married Daniel Sened, and moved to live in Kibbutz Revivim in the Negev, south of Beersheba, where she works in the kindergarten and paints. In 1985 she was featured in the book "Looking for Osnat", and in 1991 starred in the film "A Touch of Magic". In recent years Osnat has been active participant in several drama groups in the Beersheva area, and has also taken part in Yossi Lev's highly successful performance where she accompanies him to schools around the country and explains what it is like to live with Down's Syndrome.

Russia: "When my son was born in 1966, the nurses wanted to take him away before I even got the chance to feed him," says Saima Makarova. "The doctors told me we should put him in an orphanage and try for another child instead. They said nothing good would come of him." Saima kept her son despite the doctors' advice. No kindergarten or school would accept him Sergei so his mother taught him at home. Sergei Makarov is now a theater actor. He is also internationally famous for his leading role in the movie Little Old Ladies [Старухи]. In the film, Makarov, 37, plays a disabled man whose mother leaves their village and leaves him in the care of a few grumpy old women.
Chris Burke was born with Down Syndrome in 1965. The doctors told his parents to put Chris in an institution. The Burkes ignored that advice and treated Chris the same as his older brother and two sisters. Chris became an actor and for four years played the lead character in the TV series "Life Goes On." He has also played roles in 10 other movies and TV series. Chris says, "People said I could never become an actor because I’m retarded. It goes to show you that anyone can make their dreams a reality." Since 1993 Chris has been part of a folk music band that has released four albums and toured the United States. Chris is an ambassador for the National Down Syndrome Society and is editor-in-chief of its quarterly magazine. He is an usher at a Catholic church near his NY home. Chris has co-authored a book about his life, has marched in former US-President Bill Clinton's inaugural parade, and has received awards for his work as an actor. There is even a New York City school named in his honor!

In her early 20s, Karen Gaffney was the first person with Down Syndrome to complete a relay swim across the English Channel. At 29, she swam nine miles (six hours) from Nevada to California across Lake Tahoe. "We are trying to show that people with Down Syndrome are more like everyone else, rather than different from everyone else," she said in front of reporters. With the help of her family and teachers Karen was able to attend a regular school and graduate from high school. She now works as a teacher's aide.

Michael Johnson's interest in art began when he was 10 years old. He taught himself to paint and surprised everyone with his skills. Today, Michael (who has Down Syndrome) is an accomplished artist. He paints almost every day and sells his paintings through his own business. Michael is often commissioned to do portraits of individuals and animals from photographs. These are some of Michael's paintings.

Blair Williamson (born in 1979) has played in 9 different movies and TV shows. Blair was born with Down syndrome weighing 3 lbs. 6 oz. He had 9 surgeries by the time he was 5 years old and didn't walk until he was nearly 4 years old. By the time he was a healthy 10 year old he was running 400 meters for Special Olympics. Blair lives with his parents and has a girlfriend. He plays an instrument and continues to train for Special Olympics.

What can you do? Helping the Children in the Orphanages
Families who want to help the children in the orphanages are welcome to contact An Orphans Smiles (www.anorphansmiles.org). Contact Monica at monicab@anorphansmiles.org.
What can the Orphanages Do?
As families got to hear about the possibility of adopting children with Down Syndrome so several more children were adopted in the three months following Daniil’s adoption. Masha (Macey), Naum (Xander), Oksana (Kristina) and Ksenia (Anya). More families are now preparing their dossiers to travel and adopt orphans with Down Syndrome.

- Paste this poster on a wall where your staff can read about Daniil and Down Syndrome.
- All those who take care of these children must be very patient with them and from a very early age do all they can to help them develop their mental and physical capabilities.
- Mainstream the children with Down Syndrome in the regular groups and try to develop these children so that they can go to kindergarten and not an institution.
- If the children are orphans, register them for adoption.
- Fluctuating hearing loss is a common problem in children with Down syndrome. Hearing loss and middle ear fluid must be treated by a physician and audiologist to minimize the effect on speech and language development.
- 40-50% of people with Down Syndrome have heart problems, some of which require surgery.
- All children with Down Syndrome can be helped to progress more quickly. The earlier special help or 'stimulation' begins, the more ability the child is likely to gain. 'Stimulation' means giving a child a variety of opportunities to experience, explore, and play with things around her. It involves body movement and the use of all the senses—especially seeing, hearing, and touching.
- Help the child prepare for basic activities for daily living: eating, drinking, dressing, and control of bowel and bladder (peeing and pooping). These 'self-care' skills help the child become more independent.
- Provide the children with Down Syndrome with exercise, toys to play with, music to listen too, take them outside, let them draw in the sand, and so on.

Adopting a Child with Down Syndrome
Families from the USA who want to adopt a child with Down Syndrome can read the guide for U.S. citizens who plan to adopt a child in Ukraine: http://travel.state.gov/family/adoption/country/country_343.html

You can join Families for Russian and Ukrainian Adoption (FRUA). FRUA exists to support adoptive families who are considering adoption: http://www.frua.org/

Contact Mary and Jim at stolzfamiliy@juno.com for more information.
имейте веру в меня!

Я люблю  Я улыбаюсь  Я учусь  Я читал

Я мечтаю  Я играю  Я чувствую

Я бегу  Я надеюсь  Я иду в школу  Я имею друзей

A child with Down syndrome is:

Smart
Beautiful
Innocent
Happy
Unique
Strong
Kind
Amazing
capable
Loving
Playful
cherished