



Igor (11) came to Des Moines for Camp Hope in June 2010. He is a bright, thoughtful boy with an easy-going, friendly disposition. He loves animals, sports, art and being with friends. Igor would love to be part of a family of his own! Igor is available for adoption now.



Thank you for your interest in Igor. My husband, three children and I had the pleasure of being Igor's host family during Camp Hope 2010. Although it is difficult to sum up any child in just a few words, overall I would say that Igor is an all-around great kid. Ray and I will do our best to help to explain to you Igor's strengths and needs.

When Igor first landed on American soil he would hardly look up at us or talk to his adult travel companions. The overwhelming onslaught of these strange Americans, all wanting to know him, intimidated him. Our interpreter helped us understand that what he needed was to sleep. When we got him home, the first positive thing Igor did was connect with our two dogs, Baxter and Margo. When his head hit the pillow and he was asleep, he had one hand our lab's head. This connection with our pets, including our cat, continued throughout his stay with us and he spoke many of his first English words to them.



The next day I set about to fill Igor with healthy food. This took some doing as he seemed to be a picky eater. What eased the pickiness was putting food on a central platter out for ALL my kids. Then, sure enough, Igor started to eat. The fresh fruits, toast, pancakes, waffles and sausage did the trick. A couple of trips to the European grocery also helped. The Russian clerk knew what to point out to him. Kielbasa and dried fish were added to his diet.



For more information about adopting Igor or other older Russian orphans, please visit www.camphope.net or call 515-559-3819.

The first day at our house was filled with riding bikes, kicking soccer balls, playing ball with Margo, the dog, and meeting neighborhood kids. Then we went shopping at the GAP and Target for a few things for Igor. My husband called from work during the day worried that Igor was



still a shy little 11-year-old. He couldn't believe it when I said that all was good. And it really was! My son Eddie is 10 and a "futbol"

fan and player as well. The common language of sport and competition was something to see. A stranger walking by would not have known that the boys playing in the yard were anything but typical school friends.

On another Camp Hope day we visited my daughter's school. Charlotte's school is the area school for ELL students so the classroom teachers are well prepared for kids like Igor. Ms. Ortiz got a chance to work with Igor on some multiplication facts. She made it a game and with the help of

Maria, our interpreter, Igor easily beat Charlotte at basic math facts. We got a chance to ask him about his schooling in Russia, too.

He told us he was in the 4th grade and not a fan of school. His favorite courses in school are PE and lunch. I laughed as that sounds like my son! According to Russian records Igor is a "C" student, but what I saw was a kid that needs a home and a family that provides structure and, more importantly the opportunity for Igor to raise the bar on himself. I complimented him on his quickness on his math facts and he smiled. I said, "Igor, for a little boy that just likes PE you don't fool me that you aren't a smart boy." His smile glowed!



Maria (*right*) was Igor's translator during Camp Hope. Maria said that Igor loved to draw and had filled his new sketch books by the time he returned to Russia. The first few days he would run away at chore time. Then he figured out that all the kids did chores and did what he was asked willingly. Maria likes Igor and thinks he was a nice boy who liked to tease, but nothing mean.



During his stay, Camp Hope Director Anne Nieland stopped by with her two boys, also adopted from Russia. Anne's boys have a talent for drawing. Anne set the three boys up at our kitchen table and they began to draw. Despite my 9- and 10-year-olds bugging him to come play, Igor continued to draw. He spent a great deal of time on the details of his drawing and taking care of the art supplies. When Eddie brought him a pile of paper his face lit up at the amount of paper in our house. This was a luxury my children had never thought of before. Besides the details of



Igor's drawing what struck me most was the concentration and time on task. Long after Anne's sons left, Igor kept on with the art, following the step-by-step instructions in one of Eddie's drawing books. Igor concentrates and sticks to the task at hand. Impressive for

me as my own biological children have issue with this sometimes.

In the neighborhood, all the kids wanted to meet and play with Igor. At school, he was somewhat of a rock star. "Is this Igor, Charlotte?", "Can I talk to him?", "How do you say 'Hi' in Russian?" This was overwhelming for Igor at times, but who can blame him? In the orphanage, he is one of many, but here in the U.S. he was different and special. Giving him time to be alone with a Russian music CD in a headset and snuggling with animals gave him a chance to decompress.

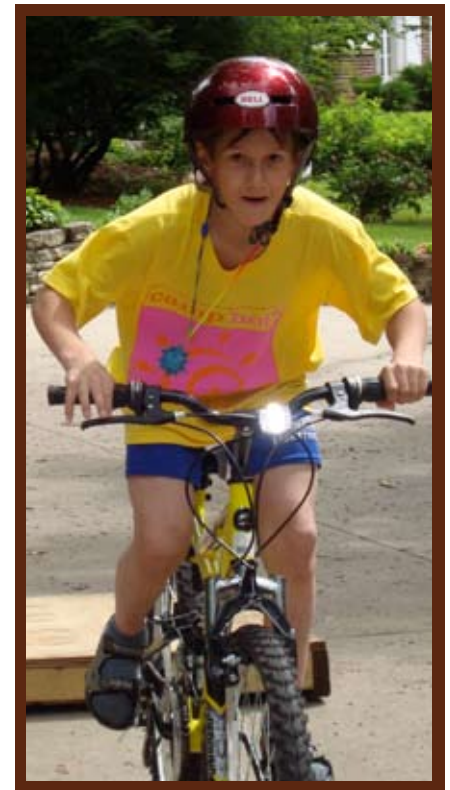


By the end of Igor's stay I looked back on our ten days with him. Each day Igor showed us a different part of his personality. From our point of view Igor would be matched well with a family who likes outdoor activities and sports, has animals and will ask him to reach his academic best. His willingness to use new English words with us told us he really wanted to connect with us. By the end of our stay he called us Momma and Papa and hugged us several times a day. He looked out for his host siblings, his interpreter, Maria, and the animals. He is sometimes overwhelmed by the amount of love and curious affection for him. A parent that knows when he needs to be alone with his thoughts would be a good match.

We contemplated adopting him ourselves but alas, the amount of time away from my husband's job (he owns his own small business) proved to be problematic. My children found out about the Iowa Lottery so we play it occasionally so "Daddy can retire and we can go get Igor."

If there are any questions that we can help clarify for you please feel free to ask us. Our goal when we became involved with Camp Hope was to help our fellow man. We very much want to help Igor find a family. He is worthy of a family and the chance to contribute to society as a young man someday.

Fondly,
Carrie and Ray Bening
Katherine, Eddie and Charlotte



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