

### *The Wait is Over!*

*After a failed Russian adoption with a different agency, I entered Hands Across the Water's domestic Waiting Child program with more than a little trepidation. I had seen what could go wrong with an adoption — I had had my heart broken — and I wasn't sure if I was able to put my trust in another agency.*

*Working with the HATW staff, my fears were quickly put at ease. I encountered something that I was previously unfamiliar with in the adoption industry — honesty. HATW told me what to expect in the waiting child program; they told me about the ups and the downs I would likely encounter. And though the process was terribly difficult, never once did I feel unprepared.*

*After eight months, I was matched with my son, Alex. He was 10-years-old at the time and had his fair share of issues. HATW helped me understand the details in my son's background paperwork, they helped me navigate the waters of traveling to meet him, and they helped me deal with the overwhelming emotions I felt after first meeting my son. Alex moved home almost exactly a year after I signed with HATW. Our initial adjustment was difficult; any semblance of a "honeymoon period" we had was short and rocky at best. HATW held my hand every step of the way and they treated my son with such care.*



*Over a year later, Alex and I are still adjusting to life as a new family. But we, with the help of HATW's experienced staff, have come so far. My son has made huge strides with attachment, trust, expressing his emotions, and learning to "think like a family." I, also, have made huge strides — after all, suddenly becoming a single mom to a special needs pre-teen is no small task. As Alex and I continue to make progress and strengthen our bonds as a family, I will always be grateful for my friends at Hands Across the Water. They led me to my son... helped me find my family... changed my life forever for the better.*