

# INTO *the* HEARTLAND CAMPAIGN

SAMARA PEDIATRIC SURGICAL-EDUCATIONAL MISSION V  
SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2007



## THE HOUSEHOLD AND THE FAMILY

Denis' mother, Alyona, is an unusually sunny person, with a lovely smile and warm bearing. Alyona is a Tatar; Denis' father, Oleg, is Chuvash. Before Denis was born, Alyona worked as a caretaker in a preschool where her mother is a teacher. Oleg is an automobile dispatcher. They have a 9-year-old daughter, Vika, who Alyona describes as a tall, budding musician. The family lives in Yelkhovka, an agricultural community 62 miles from Samara by car. They rent a house with few amenities: it has electricity, but they use an outhouse and have to fetch water from a well. "We wouldn't mind having something better," said Alyona, shrugging. "But many other families in our village live like this." Alyona and Denis both have three siblings. Alyona's parents also live in Yelkhovka, and provide a lot of help with Denis.

## CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT AND CONDITION

Denis was diagnosed when Alyona was in her sixth month of pregnancy. He had his first operation at 6 weeks of age. He still has trouble breathing, but he started to walk when the family came to the hospital a week ago. He tries to talk. Denis sleeps no more than four hours at a time, day or night, but he eats well. Alyona glows when she tells me how happy she is that "the Americans" will help do Denis' surgery.

Because the decision to operate on Denis was only finalized on the eve of the operation, the baby was already in the operating room when we interviewed the parents. Actually, that morning, as Alyona was coming out of the ICU, she was weeping too much for us to ask for an interview. Twenty minutes later, she found us, all smiles, explaining that she had had a brief breakdown when Denis was taken away to surgery. She laughed at herself, claiming that she should be used to it by now, because this is her baby's second operation.

*Based on an interview conducted in Samara, in Russian, by Heart to Heart volunteer Rose Glickman, PhD.*

## PATIENT PROFILE

Child	Denis M.
Age	16 months old
DOB	June 7, 2006
Birth weight	7 lbs (3kg 200g)
Current weight	23 lbs 2 oz (10kg 500g)
Home	Yelkhovka
Mother	Alyona, 33 years old
Father	Oleg, 35 years old
Diagnosis	Williams Syndrome with aortic arch hypoplasia
Open-heart surgery	October 5, 2007
Discharged	October 19, 2007