

INTO the HEARTLAND CAMPAIGN

TOMSK III SURGICAL-EDUCATIONAL MISSION

APRIL 15-26, 2008



PATIENT: ANASTASIA A.

Age	9 months old
DOB	July 24, 2007
Birth weight	8 lbs 9 oz
Current weight	17 lbs 11 oz
Home	Strezhevoi Tomskaya Oblast 420 miles from Tomsk
Mother	Yulia, 27 years old
Father	Evgeny, 40 years old
Diagnosis	Coarctation of the aorta
Open-heart surgery	April 24, 2008
Discharged	May 5, 2008

THE HOUSEHOLD AND THE FAMILY

This is a second marriage for Anastasia's parents, Yulia and Evgeny. Yulia is currently in a graduate program to enhance her qualifications as a pharmacist. Evgeny is a highly-respected neighborhood police lieutenant. They both have children from their first marriages, an 8-year-old son and a 17-year old daughter. They wanted to have a child together to complete their family, and everyone welcomed Anastasia's birth with great joy. However, their living conditions are unenviable, even by current Russian standards. All five of them squeeze into one small room in a dormitory, as they cannot afford to buy, or even rent, an apartment. The family shares a bathroom and kitchen with other residents.

CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT AND CONDITION

Although Anastasia experienced repeated respiratory distress in the first two months of her life, she developed fairly normally. When she was six months old, the family's local doctor detected a murmur in Anastasia's heart during a routine examination. As there is no pediatric cardiologist in Strezhevoi, the family was sent to a diagnostic center approximately 75 miles away. The cardiologist there understood that Anastasia's very serious cardiac defect required immediate intervention. Yulia wept incessantly: "My tears didn't flow – they gushed from my eyes." She and Evgeny were haunted by the possibility of losing Anastasia and overwhelmed by the potential expense of her upcoming surgery in Tumenskaya Oblast.

Fortunately, the family learned of the Tomsk Cardiology Institute, where Anastasia could be treated without payment. The Tomsk doctors advised the family to wait until Heart to Heart's arrival which, also fortunately, was imminent. On April 18, the Tomsk and Heart to Heart cardiologists examined Anastasia, explained her condition to Yulia and Evgeny, and scheduled her surgery. The next day, Anastasia began to run a fever, presumably due to teething. The doctors would not be able to perform her operation if she still had a fever. Thankfully, her fever broke.

Yulia is happy and grateful to be on the pediatric ward of the Tomsk Cardiology Institute. She comments that Evgeny was a great comfort to her at home, in the early days following the discovery of Anastasia's heart murmur, but he often has to work nights. "It was terrible to be home alone. Here on the ward, we mothers bond with each other. We exchange stories, discuss diagnoses. We calm each other, and give each other hope."

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