

# Two girls find home half a world away

By Laura Dunham  
Special to the Irregular

NEW PORTLAND — Many years ago, two little girls in orphanages in Russia and the Ukraine were just waiting for someone to adopt them; however, they were born with birth defects and no one wanted them.

Then Mike and Deb Wales, who live on New Portland Hill, started the adoption process for Lianna from the Ukraine, but the red tape was terrible as they tried for five years to get Lianna out of the country, Deb said. The couple's daughter, Melissa told them they should try another country.

In 1995, the couple traveled to Russia and brought home their one-year-old daughter, Annie, who was born with a cleft lip and palate.

"We were only home two weeks, when we got the call that we could come and get Lianna in the Ukraine," Deb said. Lianna, then five years old, had been born with three fingers missing on her right hand.

What a joy these two girls have been to their parents, "We are the lucky ones," said the Wales. The girls are both home-schooled by their mom.

Bu then, it was back in July of last year that the girls' dad, Mike, fell off the roof of the barn and broke his back. It's been tough going for the family. Mike is expected to go back to work at the end of this month.

When Dad got hurt the girls decided they had to do something to earn some money in order to keep their prize possessions: Annie's horse Jasper, and Lianna's horse RC, and help pay for the grain and hay.

So, Annie has started her own soap company, Annie's Soaps. About two years ago Annie was studying botany and had to grow her own herbs and other plants. One of the projects was to make scented soap for homemade Christmas gifts (family exchanges only homemade gifts).

"First I gave away most of my 'experiments,'" said Annie, "then I found this was too expensive and people asked if they could purchase the soap. My mom thought

this was a good way for me to learn marketing."

Now Annie offers three different types of soap: clear glycerin, white glycerin and goat's milk. The soap can be ordered by calling Annie at 628-5921.

Annie loves soap making, horsemanship, quilting, needlework, all outdoor activities, milking cows and giving her older brother a hard time. Annie also loves serving God and feels that the Lord will lead her to be a farmer, a farmer's wife and a mom.

Lianna is an accomplished pianist and violinist despite missing three fingers on her right hand. She now gives piano and violin lessons at her home to help with the horse expenses. Lianna also does beautiful watercolor paintings that she sells. "I love to paint anything," said Lianna but portraits. She earned Best of Show last year at the Farmington and Skowhegan fairs.

Lianna's other hobbies, besides piano, violin and painting, include making her own clothes, quilting all outdoor activities, haying and farming.

Lianna, like her other family members, enjoys serving her church the Faith Baptist Church in Skowhegan and enjoys working with young people, giving lessons and working with the church ministries.

"I feel that the Lord is leading me to serve the mission field," she said. Lianna added that she would like to go to Africa or Haiti with mission groups and is also looking forward to returning to her home country of the Ukraine and share the Gospel with the needy.



Pictured are two very talented New Portland teenage entrepreneurs: Annie Wales, 13, who now has her own soap company, Annie's Soaps, and shows off some of her product; and Lianna Wales, 17, who gives violin and piano lessons and is also a gifted artist. (Laura Dunham photo)

"The Lord blessed me richly with wonderful parents and siblings," she said, "I just thank him for picking me from all the orphans and bringing me across the world. I wasn't only adopted physically by the parents that God gave me, but I was also adopted spiritually into God's family."

Anyone interested in taking lessons from Lianna can call her at 628-5921.

The Wales family has lived in New Portland for the past 30 years.

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