

“Worship that is pure and unblemished in the sight of God the father is this: to visit and help and care for the widows and orphans in their affliction and need....” James 1:27 (AMP)



Sveta (we think it is Sveta) enjoys having her hair done by the experts....

Thanks to Big Family and our Big Family volunteers in Russia, the girls at the Luga internat (orphanage) recently enjoyed an afternoon of special treatment... having their hair done by professional hairdressers who had volunteered their time and services to provide this special event.

The boys were not left out, because our volunteers also delivered toys that had been donated by the Ikea store in St. Petersburg.

Even before the “beautiful day”, Tania had a lovely smile



It's a beautiful day in Luga!

The Luga orphanage (internat) is almost three hours south of St. Petersburg in a rather large town (estimated population around 100,000) where it is very difficult to find even one church.

Our Big Family volunteers describe Luga as the city that received all of the criminals and misfits that got kicked out of St. Petersburg during the reign of the Russian czars. Our friends at Russians Reaching Russians, a church planting ministry, once started a church in Luga, but it didn't make it. Our volunteers in Luga are part of a small cell church that would like very much to grow!

But now it is a beautiful day in Luga... and the forecast is for more beautiful days... because the light and love of Jesus is working to bring good news to the children of the Luga orphanage. The Luga school, like the the Kommunar school where Big Family ministers, is actually an “internat”, a type of school that is somewhat “foreign” to those of us who reside in the U.S. Russia has “internats” in virtually every community. The internat schools receive all of the children from poor and dysfunctional families.

The children are beautiful, but they live and grow up in a very risky environment. It is not unusual for children in the internats to “come and go” as residents of the internat. For example, at Luga, there are about 30 children who live at the internat (some who have living parents and some who do not), and another 120 children who come to school during the day but go home to a relative or guardian during the evening.

Lucky to live with a relative?

Who is more fortunate? The children who live at the school or the children who go home at night? Sometimes, it is difficult to tell. The children who go home may go home to a parent or guardian who is addicted to alcohol or drugs, someone who does not wish to take any responsibility for the welfare of the child.

All of the children who attend school at Russia's internats have a difficult life. We are so thankful for the help that you provide for our volunteers to go into the orphanages and internats of Russia, and to make a difference in the lives of the children!

(Please turn the page to read more...)

What is next for Luga?

Coming up soon for the children of Luga: a very special bus trip into St. Petersburg to go to a dolphin show (this is a “once in a lifetime adventure” for most of these children), an Easter party (yes, Easter in Russia is celebrated on Sunday, May 1), and coming up in May, we (Dianne and Ken) expect to have an interesting visit with our young friends at Luga. Dianne has promised to bake a pumpkin cake for the children, and they have promised us that they will teach us how to pick wild mushrooms!

For the past few summers, the children at Luga have not been able to go to the state-run summer camp for children, and so they spend their summers at the school. We are praying that for this summer God will prepare the way for the children at Luga to go to a summer church camp.

Please pray for Kommunar children

The spiritual warfare continues in Kommunar. In a recent newsletter, we were joyous to report that more children from the Kommunar orphanage are going to church services. Now, we have received reports that the mayor of Kommunar has begun to question whether the children should be allowed to attend church services. This concern by the mayor is very difficult to understand because the supervision of the orphanage places almost no controls on other activities that the children get involved with, including some activities that are clearly not in the best interest of the children and their well-being.

Please continue to pray daily for all of the children in Russia who do not have families!

New “captains” for Luga...

We are delighted to report that Bob and Vickie Felix, members of the Gettysburg Baptist Church, have prayed, received the blessing of their church, and now will become our “captains” for the outreach to the children at the Luga internat/orphanage.

As we have already pointed out in this issue of the newsletter, Luga is a very special place and the children at the Luga internat need very special attention. Most of the children at the Luga internat have Family Friends from Gettysburg Baptist Church, and now with the help of Bob and Vickie, all the Family Friends of the children at Luga will be able to better keep in touch with the children and their needs.

Why do we use the term “captains”? We do indeed believe that Russia is a spiritual battleground, and we know that Luga is need of much light and love from our God.

Please pray for strength and protection for Bob and Vickie as they embark on this life-saving venture!

Prayer Requests

- ▶ Please continue to pray for our foster home in Kommunar and for our new family there: Maxim and Ira, and their children Ulia, Tania, and Vania. Start-up expenses for the foster home have been higher than we anticipated, and cost of maintaining a household in Russia is now increasing at a rate of about 15 per cent per year. If you can give a special gift for the foster home or help support the foster home on a monthly basis, it will be a big blessing to the Big Family there!
- ▶ Please pray for us (Ken and Dianne) as we leave for Russia on Sunday, May 1, and will be returning to the U.S. on May 10. Please pray for safety, protection, and health during our visit. Also for productive meetings with other ministries in Russia and for abundant opportunities to share the love and light of Christ with the children.
- ▶ For opportunities to share about Big Family Ministry with church and Sunday School groups in the U.S.
- ▶ For God’s guidance as we plan future direction for Big Family in Russia.



Children at Luga enjoy toys donated by Ikea in St. Petersburg