

BIG FAMILY

Mission to Children

November 2006

“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)



Above are a few of the photos taken at Christmas parties for orphans in Russia during 2004 and 2005 Christmas season. Christmas celebrations were conducted by volunteers from churches in Russia.

Provide a gift for a Russian orphan... You can light up a life this Christmas!

The Big Family Mission Christmas celebrations that are led by church volunteers are a special time for our children in Russia. Without your generous support, many of the children who we are helping would not receive a Christmas gift.

For those of you who have been Big Family Friends for several years, you will remember that we originally provided Christmas gifts in Russia by gathering items in the U.S., putting together gift packages, and sending them to Russia. The air parcel post for the gifts cost more than the gifts that we sent to the children. And, because the Russian postal system is very inefficient, packages that should have been delivered within 10 days took 6 to 8 weeks to reach their destinations.

Last year, we asked our Big Family Friends and others who were interested to make a contribution for the Christmas presents, and we purchased toys and other gifts for the children in Russia. This method worked much better, so we have decided to buy the gifts in Russia again this year.

We plan to buy gifts for 100 orphans at an average cost of \$25.00 per gift. Not all of these orphans have Big Family Friends (sponsors) and not all sponsors will be able to afford to help us with Christmas gifts, so for those of you who are able, we appreciate your giving more than \$25 if you can.

Our Christmas celebrations with the children provide wonderful fellowship with the children, as well as the opportunity to tell the children about the true meaning of Christmas and God's love for them.

With this month's newsletter, you will find a "Christmas giving" form that you can send in with your donation. For those of you who give to Big Family Mission in your local church, you can just include the form with your gift at the church.

At this special time of the year when we pause to give thanks for God's many blessings, please consider helping us Light up the life of a Russian orphan!

What orphans need most!

When we first started our mission to Russian orphans, much of our focus was on improving the living conditions for orphans: installing showers; refurbishing activity rooms; providing beds, pillows, washing machines, computers, cameras, and other equipment; making sure that the children had warm shoes and underwear; etc.

Much of this work we continue to do, and we find



Left to right, Misha, Eva, James, Olga and Mike Cantrell, Liza Hulley, and Larisa: team for the New Family hosting program in St. Petersburg area.

that the conditions in orphanages are improving, through our efforts and the efforts of other mission and government groups.

Over the years, however, we have become increasingly aware of the fact that better orphanages and better living conditions are “good” but they do not provide what orphans need in order to have a hope for the future.

Orphans need families!

Without families, 9 out of 10 orphans are destined for imprisonment, alcoholism, drug abuse, prostitution, and early deaths. Therefore, Big Family Mission is now focusing on encouraging opportunities and programs that can lead to “forever families” for orphans.

In last month’s newsletter, we presented the New Horizons for Children U.S. hosting program that will bring Russian orphans to the Northeast for a four-week period in the summer of 2007. Big Family is also working with the MIR organization in St. Petersburg, Russia, to start a hosting program for Russian families. This new program, which will be known as “New Family”, will offer a group of Russian orphans the opportunity to spend two weeks with a Russian family during the Christmas holidays later this year.

Starting a program like this in Russia is not an easy task: much government bureaucracy and red tape must be overcome, families must be identified and screened, children must be identified and screened, and activities have to be planned.

Please pray for the Russian team who is working on this new program, including Eva and Misha Ptuha from Big Family Mission. Pray that children and families will be blessed this Christmas through their efforts!

The slow Tsunami in Russia

After the fall of Communism and the break up of the Soviet Union, most Americans have lost track of what is happening in Russia. Before starting our mission work in Russia, our image of Russia was: big, strong, powerful, progressive.

Although some of the wealthiest people in the world live in Russia and Moscow has the highest cost of living for any city in the world, today’s Russia is an ailing country.

Consider these facts and observations about today’s Russia:

- Russia is rapidly losing population (700,000 people each year since 1991). Why? Because of one of the world’s fastest-growing AIDS epidemics; tuberculosis; rampant heart disease; alcohol and drug abuse; suicide; and air pollution.

- The average Russian man can expect to live about 59 years, 16 years less than an American man.
- Abortions outpaced births last year by more than 100,000.
- Tens of millions of Russians live in poverty; one-fifth of all Russians live on less than \$38 per month.
- Estimates of the number of orphans and children at risk range from 700,000 to over 3 million. The number of orphans continues to grow.
- Corruption in business and in government is rampant.
- Many cities with 50,000 or more people have only one church.
- Churches do not have buildings to meet in; they rent public facilities or meet in homes.
- Roads and highways outside the major cities are full of potholes and in bad need of repair.
- Many apartment buildings (most Russians live in apartment buildings constructed during the days of Communism) have not been maintained and are in bad need of repair.
- Most day-to-day economic transactions are conducted using cash. There is no personal checking system as we know it in the U.S. (For example, government pensions are paid once per month, in cash, at the Post Office. And, we in America complain when we have to stand in a line!)
- Many Russians have given up hope, and drown their days in a bottle of vodka (or home-made alcohol).

We sometimes say that the iron curtain has been replaced by a slow dark tsunami.

Our Christian friends in Russia are people of deep faith. They are the light and the salt in a very dark land. Boldly and courageously they lift high the banner of God. Please pray fervently and frequently for more Light and Love to sweep through Russia and set the captives free!

Contact information:

Ken and Dianne Dockery
Big Family Mission
83 Boy Scout Road
Kutztown, PA 19530 Home phone: (610) 683-6137
Website: www.bigfamilyministry.org
E-mail: info@bigfamilyministry.org

Big Family Mission is an inter-denominational mission outreach involving churches and Christians from many different denominations.