

BIG FAMILY

Mission to Children

September 2005

"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)

Taking a new look at adoption

Here is very special news for our Family Friends who have asked about adopting an orphan from Russia.

We have recently discovered an international Christian adoption agency that has an office in St. Petersburg, Russia, and should be able to help with adopting children that are a part of our Big Family in Russia.

This agency also has a lot of experience in working with adoptions of older children (up to age 16). Not all of the children in our Big Family are available for adoption, because there may be a family relative who has not officially relinquished guardianship rights, even though the child is living at the orphanage.

In the past we have talked about how expensive it is to adopt a Russian orphan, but there is now a \$10,000 tax credit available which makes paying for an adoption much more workable. (This is a tax credit, not a tax deduction, so it actually reduces what you pay in taxes by \$10,000.) Also, the fact that this agency has an office in St. Petersburg, and would be able to work with children that have already been identified for adoption, further reduces the expenses involved.

Those interested in adoption would need to work with an adoption agency in their home state to complete part of the adoption process. This could be an agency, for example, like Bethany Christian Services, which has offices in most states where we have Family Friends.

For those of you who want to learn more about the opportunities for adopting Big Family children (or other Russian orphans), please go to the website of Nightlight Christian Adoptions: www.nightlight.org. Their page on adoption of Russian orphans can be found at www.nightlight.org/intl_russia.asp.

If you wish to check to see if a specific child in Big Family is available for adoption, just e-mail us or call us, and we will check it out for you. (See contact information on back page.)

The longer we work with Russian orphans, the more convinced we become that the only permanent solution for a Russian orphan is to provide him or her with a family and a home. We will continue to minister to children in the orphanages and provide them with gifts and special celebrations, but our long-term goal is to find a family and a home for each orphan.

Celebrating life at the orphanages!

Please pray for our volunteers as they begin monthly "life celebrations" in the orphanages at Kommunar, St. Petersburg, and Luga. Each month our volunteers will hold a life celebration for all of the children at the orphanages who wish to attend. Cake and tea will be

served, a "life lesson" from the Bible will be presented, and all of the children who are celebrating birthdays during the month will be honored and will receive a gift from Big Family.

To those of us who are accustomed to birthday parties in America, the introduction of this program may not sound noteworthy, but in Russia, it will be something new and different. We need your prayers that the orphanage directors will remain open to this kind of program at the orphanages and internats.

Big Family team at Luga...



In recent issues of our newsletter, we have introduced our Big Family ministers in Russia. Please pray for our team at Luga: above, Zemphera and Sveta with Sveta's daughter, at left, Tania, daughter of Zemphera. Our team at Luga needs much prayer and encouragement as they minister to the children at the Luga internat.

Only God can do this...!

Was it one of those “turning point” moments? I think it was. The scene: me (Ken) lying face down on our family room floor, crying out to God and also crying. Crying out: “I can’t do this... I can’t do this ... I can’t do this!”

Then, that still small voice within me gets a chance to talk and whispers...”I thought you knew that you could not accomplish this work, so now do you finally really know in your heart that the job is too big for you?”

Up to that moment, in my mind, I recognized that the vision God has given us for freeing 3 million Russian orphans is too big for me or Dianne or any other human to accomplish. At that moment on our family room floor, I realized in my heart that all we can do is take one step at a time and do what God is calling us to do next. When God frees and saves the children of Russia, it will be a “God thing” that only God could accomplish and to God will be all the glory!

When we started ministering to Russian orphans, we saw the importance of providing friendship and love to orphans. We did not realize what is eventually going to happen in most of the lives of the orphans if they are not rescued and placed in a real family environment.

For the orphan who spends his or her life in the orphanage system, their friends in the orphanage are like their brothers and sisters, and the teachers and caretakers have been their substitute parents over the years. Then, suddenly, they reach age 15 or 16, they “graduate” and go into a world they know nothing about. Even if a child is reared in a normal family environment, what child is able to make it on his own at age 15 or 16?

So Big Family continues to minister to orphan children, but now we broaden our vision to a humanly impossible task: **provide home and family for every Russian orphan!**

Yes, saving the orphan children of Russia is a work that only God can complete. We rejoice when we hear about the many ministries and churches that are working in Russia; it is confirmation that God is at work to replace the darkness with light!

More and more, we understand how much we need prayer, prayer, and more prayer to make the

plans, to raise the finances, and to wage the war to save all the orphan children of Russia. We relish your prayers and your encouragement!

Christmas gifts for our Big Family...

With this month’s newsletter, you will find a special donation card to use if you wish to send a donation for Christmas gifts for children at Kommunar, Luga, and St. Petersburg.

Last year, we sent actual gift items from the U.S. and the cost of the postage was equal to or greater than the value of the gift items that we sent.

This year we ask that you make a donation to participate in buying a special gift for each child in our Big Family. Suggested donation is \$25. Some of our Family Friends may not be able to give \$25, so if you are able and wish to give more than \$25, it will be much appreciated.

Funds for the Christmas gifts will be used by our volunteers and staff in Russia to choose a special Christmas gift (much needed clothing or personal items) to meet each child’s needs. All the children who are on our list for Big Family will receive a gift.

We will of course report on what gifts are bought and will feature the Christmas celebrations in the Big Family newsletter.

Prayer requests...

- A large house for our foster family in Kommunar, which would enable them to expand their family;
- For Russians with hearts open to taking orphans into their homes;
- Opportunities for Eva and Misha to present orphan ministry to church groups in Russia;
- Homes and families for the orphans of Russia, both in Russia and the U.S.;
- Opportunities for Ken and Dianne to present Big Family mission to church groups;
- For all the orphan children of Russia and for all of our Family Friends and volunteers.

Contact information:

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Big Family Mission is an inter-denominational mission outreach of Lighthouse Community Church