



Summer 2007

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Thank you for taking a minute to read over the first edition of our KidsFirst Foundation (KFF) newsletter. With your help, we are making a difference in the lives of needy kids around the world. This issue highlights some of those stories and also provides information about Foundation events and ways you can support our efforts.

Our top three priorities for this year are: 1) helping kids find families; 2) improving the quality of life for orphaned children, and 3) creating support programs for families. You can help us achieve these worthy goals through your time, talent and treasure.

If you have time, please contact us about volunteering. We have several annual Foundation events and we need people to help us plan and execute these activities. We also need people to speak at their churches and community organizations to promote KFF and help us get the word out about our grant program to help kids with special needs.

If you have talent, please let us know how your skills might be put to use at the Foundation. You might have business connections to help us secure items for one

of our silent auctions. Or, you might be an artist willing to create something to help promote the Foundation. Whatever you do well, there is likely a way we can put your talents to good use to help orphaned children.

And if you have treasure, please consider donating to the Foundation. You can donate online at www.kidsfirst-foundation.org or you can mail us a check. Our web site provides lots of good information and also includes a compelling video if you are interested in enlisting family and friends to join you in supporting our efforts.

Whatever you decide, please know that your support is helping us make a difference one kid at a time. Enjoy the newsletter and please contact me to talk more about KFF.

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NICHOLAS BENEFITS FROM EXPANDED GRANT PROGRAM Central Indiana Family Receives \$5,000 From KFF

When Nicholas met Linda and Ed Wallner at his orphanage in Borovichi earlier this year, life started getting better. He had found a family and would soon get treatments for his badly injured left leg. The Wallners gave Nicholas a new life and the KidsFirst Foundation has responded through a \$5,000 grant to help cover a portion of the costs associated with their adoption.

Those are the facts, but it's the story behind the story that speaks volumes.

Before adopting Nicholas, Linda and Ed Wallner had a nice life. They lived in Westfield with their two daughters (Jenna and Amanda), and enjoyed attending St. Maria Goretti Church. They had a happy family, but Linda felt a calling to adopt.

"The calling was specifically for us to adopt two little boys from a European country," said Linda. "It was something I had never given a thought to until about five years ago. So, we investigated several agencies and countries until we finally met with Inna Pecar."

Linda and Ed started the process of adopting in 2005. Then, on Christmas Eve of 2006, they brought their first son (Michael) home from Orenburg. It was a joyous occasion to be sure, but the Wallner's hopes of bringing two boys into their family had been dashed because of various complications.

Later, they traveled back to Russia and met Nicholas, a little boy whose left leg was injured from the hip down. He had great difficulty picking up his leg to take a step forward and the Wallners knew there would be challenges associated with bringing Nicholas into their family. But, that's just what they did and on March 17 of this year, Nicholas joined Michael and his two sisters in Westfield.

"There are so many orphans with special needs who never have the opportunity to find a family," said Deb Rigney, president of the KidsFirst Foundation. "Linda and Ed have provided Nicholas with an amazing gift and our Foundation is thrilled to honor their spirit of giving."

Since coming to the United States, Nicholas has seen many doctors and has become a regular at Riley Hospital. He has physical therapy three times a week and usually averages four or more weekly medical appointments as well.

Linda says that the physical therapy is helping him. He is now able to get his foot flat on the floor and he is working on building strength in his left leg. But, he has 90 percent loss of use of the nerves and muscles on the top side of his left leg. So, the goal of walking unassisted one day is likely to take years.

"All of the medical visits can be draining at times, but Nicholas has a sense of humor and a 100-watt smile," said Linda. "We have been stunned by the

Foundation's generosity. The assistance is so nice and one day we will tell Nicholas about the people who helped bring him from a lonely life in a Russian orphanage to a country that will hopefully help him walk again and lead a prosperous life."



Linda Wallner with Michael (left) and Nicholas (right).

Support Us Through United Way

Do you donate annually to the United Way through your work? If so, we have set it up so you can easily designate your contributions to support the KidsFirst Foundation. Over the last two years, we've received more than \$30,000 from caring people just like you who donate to us through the United Way.

If you are interested in designating KFF for your annual United Way contribution, simply list the Foundation and our account number (4167169) on your annual campaign contribution form. By doing so, you will be making the difference in the lives of needy kids.

And don't forget to ask your company about making a corporate match. By doing so, you can double your United Way KFF designation donation.

WestPoint Financial Group Outing Raises \$50,000 for KFF



Owen McRoberts Tees Off

WestPoint Financial Group (WPFG) has announced that the company's fourth annual golf invitational raised more than \$50,000 to support the KidsFirst Foundation. Since 2004, WPFG has raised nearly \$125,000 to help kids in need half way around the world.

The 2007 WPFG Golf Invitational was held on June 22 at The Trophy Club in Lebanon, Ind. Nearly 100 WPFG employees volunteered their time to help set a new record for funds raised.

Proceeds from the outing will support the KidsFirst Foundation. And the Foundation will utilize the funds to provide grants to parents who adopt older kids or orphans with correctible medical issues.

"There is a team of angels at WestPoint Financial Group helping us bring hope to orphans in the world," said Deb Rigney, president of the KidsFirst Foundation. "We are so pleased to have such great support and we will put these funds to work finding families for kids with special needs."

The WPFG outing will allow the KidsFirst Foundation to expand its grant program focused on finding families for orphans with special needs. Last year, the Foundation awarded one \$5,000 grant to a local hearing-impaired couple who adopt a little girl from Kazakhstan who is also hearing impaired. Earlier this year, the Foundation provided a second \$5,000 grant to a local couple who adopted a little boy from Russia in need of physical therapy and possible surgery.

"There is a team of angels at WestPoint Financial Group helping us bring hope to orphans in the world."

"We adopted our son, Owen, from Russia," said Greg McRoberts, general agent at WestPoint Financial Group. "He loves the outing and our WPFG family really takes pride in knowing that our efforts will help other kids find homes too."

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Russian Heritage Dinner Friday, September 28

Experience the magic at our 2nd annual heritage dinner with authentic Russian food, vodka and Live Russian music. A true Russian Dinner Experience...eat, dance, eat, dance, eat, dance, eat, dance...you get the idea! The dinner will be held at the Mavis Arts and Event Center in downtown Indianapolis. The dinner is \$150/per person. Our first dinner was a great event and we only have a limited number of seats available. Call KidsFirst at 317-843-2300 for reservations.

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KidsFirst Foundation Run/Walk Saturday, May 17

The KidsFirst Foundation's first annual Adoption Run/Walk will be held at Fort Harrison State Park from 9 a.m.-noon on May 17, 2008. The Park is located on the east side of Indianapolis at 5753 Glenn Road. Please contact Cara Bach at cbach9400@yahoo.com if you would like to volunteer for the event and/or be on the organizing committee. More details will follow.

DID YOU KNOW?:

According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, nearly 90 percent of the immigrant orphans adopted by U.S. citizens in Indiana last year were four years old or younger. Yet, millions of older orphans are left behind and they often remain institutionalized until they are 16. These older kids need families too. That is one of the reasons why the KidsFirst Foundation is working to expand a grant program designed to help older kids and kids with correctible medical issues find families.

The top six countries where immigrant visas were issued to orphans coming to the U.S. in 2006 include:

- 1) China
- 2) Guatemala
- 3) Russia
- 4) South Korea
- 5) Ethiopia
- 6) Kazakhstan

**"He who can reach
a child's heart
can reach the
world's heart."
—Rudyard Kipling**

**FIND THE KIDSFIRST FOUNDATION ONLINE AT
www.kidsfirst-foundation.org**



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