



Winter 2008

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Welcome to the KidsFirst Foundation (KFF) newsletter and thank you for joining us to help kids in need around the world. Through your generous donations, we raised nearly \$120,000 last year. And this newsletter is designed to highlight the various ways we are putting your gifts to work.

In 2007, KFF explored various ways we could join forces with other organizations to make a greater impact for orphans living in Russia and Kazakhstan. I'm pleased to report that our partnerships have exceeded our expectations and we plan to strengthen our relationship with partners in 2008.

KFF is now working with Children's Hopechest to provide tutoring programs for older kids living in Kirov, Russia. We are also reaching at-risk youth through a partnership with Interlink Resources that provides life skills and employment training to graduating orphans in Kazakhstan. Both of these programs are making an impact.

We are also starting a new program with KidsFirst Adoption Services to build playgrounds at several orphanages. This newsletter shares a few of our partnership stories, and I hope you enjoy learning more about these exciting initiatives.

This issue also includes upcoming event information. The fifth annual WestPoint Financial Group (WPF) Golf Invitational is set for June 20th. This event earns rave reviews every year and we can't thank the whole WPF family enough for their support. The first annual KidsFirst Foundation Run/Walk is set for May 17, and we hope you will join us for this family-focused event at scenic Fort Harrison State Park.

Thanks again for helping us make a difference. There are so many kids in need around the world and we are grateful that you have made them a priority. If you feel like spreading our good news to your friends and family, please forward this newsletter to them or point them to us online at www.kidsfirst-foundation.org.

Enjoy the newsletter and please contact me if you'd like to talk more about KFF.

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KAZAK YOUTH BENEFIT FROM IMPACT PROGRAM KFF Partnership Makes a Difference

Recent statistics place the number of orphaned children in the world at more than 140 million. That figure is staggering, and the painful reality is that most of these kids will never be adopted. For them, tutoring and training are the lifelines they need to make a successful transition from institutional care to independent living.

Fortunately, the InterLink Resources organization has established a program to address this growing need. Through InterLink's Youth Impact Program, young adults in Kazakhstan are now being provided employment and life-skills training to help them prepare for the unique challenges that face all graduating orphans.

The Youth Impact Program started in 2007, and the KidsFirst Foundation helped this important initiative take flight. KFF funds were put to work to kick off the program last August in Taraz, Kazakhstan. And the Foundation plans to continue its support in 2008.

"Getting this program off the ground took a lot of hard work, but the Kazak youth have really responded well to the opportunity," said Sandi Baron of Interlink Resources. "These kids want direction on how to succeed in life, and we appreciate everything the KidsFirst Foundation family is doing to bring hope to youth who are too often overlooked."

The Youth Impact Program provides youth the opportunity to learn about setting goals, overcoming obstacles, working in teams, trusting one another and embracing an "I Can" attitude. Basic employment and career development training is provided. The program also includes social skills training so youth can learn how to communicate and interact effectively with others.



"This program is already making a difference for the youth of Taraz, and we think it has tremendous potential going forward," said Carol Johnson, board member of the KidsFirst Foundation. "InterLink has gained the trust and interest of these youth, and our partnership is going to play an important role in helping these kids succeed."

Youth Impact Participants and Leaders.

KFF Playground Program

Kids love playgrounds and children in orphanages are no different. That's why KFF is starting a new program to build playgrounds in Russia.

We recently reached out to a few orphanage directors and the response was clear. There is an urgent need for playgrounds. We plan to address that need so children in orphanages can have some fun, get some exercise and work on their developmental skills.

We'll have more news about this initiative in our next newsletter. For now, we'll just say thanks and stay tuned. Because of your kindness, some needy kids will soon be swinging, climbing and laughing on their new playgrounds.

WAYS YOU CAN HELP

We will always rely on financial contributions to live our mission, but donors can also make a big difference by donating airline miles or hotel points to the KidsFirst Foundation. None of the travel or lodging expenses incurred during our mission trips are paid for with Foundation funds. By donating airline miles or hotel points, you could help our mission trip leaders defer some of their costs. If you are interested in helping, please contact Carol Johnson at Carolj999@aol.com.

“The language of friendship is not words but meanings.” —Henry David Thoreau

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Bounce Into Spring at KidsFirst Foundation Social Sunday, April 20, 3:30-5 p.m.

Enjoy meeting and socializing with other adoptive families. KFF has rented the entire facility for your enjoyment. The cost is \$8/child (ages two and younger are free). Bounce Zone is located at 14701 Cumberland Road in Fishers. Bounce Zone has a great playroom for toddlers, too. Learn more at www.bouncezoneindy.com. If you have questions about this event, please e-mail Deb Rigney at rigney98@sbcglobal.net. No registration is necessary.

Seminar with Dr. Ronald Federici Friday, April 25

Dr. Federici's 2007 seminar was a big hit. So, KidsFirst Adoption Services is bringing him back. Dr. Federici is a top specialist on kids who experience deprivation early in life. Visits to his office cost thousands, so this is a great opportunity. The seminar will be held at the Monon Center from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. A limited number of family consultations will also be available on April 26 between 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at the KidsFirst office. To register or inquire about costs, please contact KidsFirst at (317) 843-2300.

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. to noon on May 17, 2008. This is a family-focused event that will provide opportunities for both competitive runners and leisure walkers. Fort Harrison is located on the east side of Indianapolis at 5753 Glenn Road. If you would like to register for the event, please contact Cara Bach at cbach9400@yahoo.com.

WestPoint Financial Golf Invitational Friday, June 20

The fifth annual WestPoint Financial Golf Invitational to support the KidsFirst Foundation will be held on Friday, June 20, 2008. The Trophy Club, located in Lebanon, Ind., will host us again and event proceeds will go toward bringing hope to orphans in need around the world. To date, the WestPoint Financial Group family has raised more than \$125,000. Registration information will be going out soon to golfers that have participated in recent outings. Information will also be available online at www.kidsfirst-foundation.org.

International Heritage Dinner Friday, September 26

Our annual KidsFirst Foundation Russian Heritage Dinner has been such a huge success that we are going international for 2008. Please plan to join us for an evening of great food and entertainment at the Montage on Indy's north side. The dinner will feature cuisine from around the world. All proceeds go to benefit orphaned children.

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

FOUNDATION PARTNERSHIP HELPS BRING HOPE TO SOVIETSK

Tutors can be a lifeline when trying to master a difficult subject. That's especially true for orphaned children. So, KidsFirst Foundation has partnered with Children's Hopechest to address this important issue.

Last year, the KidsFirst Foundation provided funds to make teachers, coaches, tutors and therapists available to children at the Sovietsk orphanage for the 2007-2008 school year. Our partnership with Hopechest is helping children in the orphanage with math, chemistry, Russian grammar, regional history and more. The kids are also benefiting from the expertise of an art studio teacher, speech therapist and soccer coach.

“It is obvious that these opportunities are having a real impact as the children add to their self-worth and identity,” said Daniel Clark, outreach director for Children's Hopechest. “Our partnership is based on helping children succeed and we are off to a great start.”

The Sovietsk orphanage houses nearly 40 kids and they are TB-exposed but healthy. Sarah and Ben Clark, part of the KidsFirst family, have been involved with Hopechest for some time and they serve as sponsorship coordinators who monitor the success of our collective effort. Sarah and Ben will travel to Sovietsk August 7-16 to see the programs firsthand. They have invited other KFF families to join them for the trip.

“We are so encouraged to see the progress that is being made in the Sovietsk orphanage through our partnership with Hopechest,” said Deb Rigney, president of the KidsFirst Foundation. “This program is bringing hope and opportunity to a bunch of kids who deserve our support.”



Two teenagers, Anya and Kostya, benefiting from tutoring program.



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