



Winter 2009

THE KIDSFIRST FOUNDATION 2009 MISSION TRIP

In September, several board members and friends of the KidsFirst Foundation took a mission trip to Russia. The experience was inspiring and rewarding. Here is a brief account of the trip, and what was accomplished.

We started our work at a halfway house for older orphans in Moscow. During this visit, we met Mother Elizabeth, six teenage girls currently living in her care and several other young adults that have benefited from living in the facility in recent years.

The halfway house was clean and warm. But, it was also cramped and modest. From our visit, it was clear that Mother Elizabeth works hard to help these needy teens get access to a good education. But, they struggle by not having all the tools they need to succeed. So, we purchased two computers, a computer monitor and some software that will help the kids learn English.

We also met an impressive teacher who tutors the kids and she will play a key role in making sure that the new technology is put to good use. As we left, smiles filled the room and it was clear that our gifts will open new doors of opportunity for these needy teens.

The next day, we travelled to an orphanage in Tver. We met the orphanage director, toured the facility and interacted with kids from newborns through age five. Then, we went outside to see the playground that we built in 2008 with funds provided by WestPoint Financial Group.

Once outside, we planted two fir trees to acknowledge our partnership and how it will grow. Then, we played with the kids on the playground. We also took a banner over that says "Thank You WestPoint Financial Group". The kids had fun drawing on the banner and tracing their hands.

Based on our tour of this orphanage, it was clear that the kids could benefit from more food and better nourishment. So we spent \$7,500 to purchase critical food and medical supplies. The orphanage director was very appreciative and we hope that we can provide more food and medicine in 2010.

On the following day, we went to one of the orphanages in Novgorod. The kids in this orphanage were

age one through seven and it was good to see that these kids were receiving the food and medicine needed to thrive.

We toured the facility, played with the kids, read to them and went into a small classroom where a teacher was going over lessons. During our visit, one little boy asked if he would be travelling home with us that day. We had to tell him no, but at least we were able to spend some time playing games with him. Needless to say, it was heart breaking not being able to tell him that we were there to adopt him.

Since part of the Foundation's mission is to give orphaned kids a place to play, we committed to build a playground at this orphanage. So, we purchased equipment from a local manufacturer and also bought a dryer and a vacuum that the orphanage needed. The director was very appreciative of our support and we felt great rewarding kids, who need more to smile about, with a playground.

Then, we traveled to an orphanage in Borovichi. We met the orphanage director and toured the facility. The kids living there were newborns through age four. We wanted to build a playground for these kids too, so we made arrangements to purchase several pieces of equipment that will be installed next spring.

Since the Borovichi orphanage gets brutally cold in the winter, we also purchased two water heaters to provide warm bath water for the kids and two radiant wall heaters to keep rooms warm during the months ahead. We also purchased shoes and some exercise saucers/chairs for the kids. Again, it was smiles all around for the great work your contributions allow us to do.

The mission trip allowed us to identify needs on the ground and make various contributions that will help improve the living conditions for orphaned kids. Overall, we put more than \$27,000 in donations to work and we also came away with great insights into how we can do even more going forward.

In closing, we believe that building playgrounds is a meaningful part of our mission. It was great to see kids playing and it's clear that these kids simply need more things to smile about. We also saw how some facilities need more food and medicine. So, we will

continue to do all that we can to help in this area as well. And it's clear that access to education is what older orphans need to succeed. So, we will continue to provide computers and other tools that can open new doors to opportunity.

The work we are doing is important. Many of us have adopted children from the orphanages that we are helping. But, so many more kids are still left behind with little hope of every being adopted. Our support matters to them and we hope more people will be able to go on our next mission trip so that they can experience how good it feels to help kids in need.

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 and/or hotel points to the KidsFirst Foundation. None of the travel or lodging expenses incurred during our mission trips is paid for through Foundation funds. By donating airline miles and/or hotel points, you could help our mission trip leaders defer some of their costs.





KidsFirst Foundation

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**KidsFirst Foundation is a
501(c)(3) organization.
Donations are tax deductible.*

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Grandfather Frost Party January 16th

Since the feedback from last year's party was so positive, we've decided to do it again. So, be sure to save Saturday, January 16th for our 2nd Annual Grandfather Frost Party. We will host the party at the Robert Irsay Pavilion located at 1303 W. 116th Street, Carmel, IN 46032. The fun will start at 11 a.m., but you'll want to arrive early to make sure you have a seat.

Our party will be done according to Russian traditions with a dressed up Grandfather Frost and Snegurochka (his helper). Snacks will be served and all children will receive a holiday bag of Russian Candy. In keeping with tradition, children are encouraged to dress up in their finest clothes. They will also have a chance to share a song or a dance for Grandfather Frost.

Come join us around the tree for singing, dancing and a great celebration. This is a special free event hosted by the KidsFirst Foundation. Goodwill donations will be accepted to help orphaned kids.

**"There is always
one moment in
childhood when
the door opens and
lets the future in."**

— Graham Greene

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



EVENT UPDATE:

WestPoint Financial Golf Outing

Earlier this month, WestPoint Financial Group (WPF) announced a generous donation of \$17,500 to the KidsFirst Foundation to support the organization's mission to help orphaned children. The donation was made possible through proceeds from the company's sixth annual charitable golf outing held at The Trophy Club in Lebanon, Ind.

Since the inaugural outing, WPF has contributed more than \$172,000 to support the KidsFirst Foundation. WPF offers insurance and financial products and was named one of the "Best Places to Work in Indiana." For more information about WPF, go to www.westpointfinancialgroup.com



Magic of Russia Fundraising Dinner

Thanks to everyone who came out to join us in late September for our fourth annual fundraising dinner at the beautiful Broadmoor Country Club. Through your generous support, we raised nearly \$8,400 that will go directly to improving the lives of orphaned kids. This event is always a lot of fun and we look forward to seeing all of you again next year. Please mark your calendars for Saturday, September 25, 2010, for next year. The 2010 dinner will be held in Carmel, Ind., at the Robert Irsay Pavilion.