



KidsFirst Foundation



Winter 2011

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Season's Greetings! I am honored to write this letter as I wrap-up my two-year term as President of the KidsFirst Foundation. I want to express my gratitude to you for all of your support and generosity. Over the past year, your donations have allowed us to build playgrounds for kids in Borovichi and Novgorod, purchase tables and chairs for school classrooms in Kemerovo and provide nutritional formula for orphans in Ethiopia.

Your generosity has also allowed us to help orphaned kids in Haiti. In early August, I traveled to Fondwa, Haiti, for a mission trip with my fellow board members Mike Marker, Lisa Peterson and Mike Pitts. It was the most difficult, challenging and rewarding thing that I have ever done in my life. We worked hard and accomplished more than we thought we would. In seven short days, we built a new school for 200 students, painted the school and all of the temporary shelters in the community and took 40+ orphaned children to the beach.

The people of Fondwa are the kindest people that I have ever encountered and the children are simply amazing. They have so little and yet they give so much. These people of meager means taught me how rich I am, not by monetary definitions, but through my friendships, family and experiences. I will be forever grateful that I made a commitment to my fellow board members and saw it through – my life has been forever changed!

Though we accomplished a lot together this year, there is so much more that still needs to be done for orphaned kids here at home and around the world. Our mission is to help change the world one kid at a time. As you consider your year-end giving and how you will volunteer your time in 2011, we hope that the KidsFirst Foundation makes your list.

Dawn Lockwood
KidsFirst Foundation President

Calling All Tver Families

Last year, our mission team went to Tver, Russia, and visited an orphanage where many KidsFirst families met the children that they would adopt. We fell in love with the children in Tver and we were very impressed with the loving and caring spirit of the orphanage director. But it's very clear to us that the Tver orphanage needs more food, medicine and supplies to provide the best environment for the kids.

That's why we've decided to explore the idea of "adopting" the Tver orphanage to ensure that the children there can grow up in the best environment possible. To make this idea a reality, we are asking people who adopted children from Tver to join us in this important mission. If you join us in this endeavor, we will work with you to create an awesome legacy for you and your family in Tver.

If you adopted a child from Tver, or you just feel called to make a difference there, we'd love to hear from you. Please join us for this special project. For more information, contact Mike Marker at mike@bringthehope.com.

KIDSFIRST FOUNDATION NEEDS YOU

Do you have skills in marketing communications or fundraising?

If so, would you be interested in being a KidsFirst Foundation volunteer?

Our team loves giving back and we have a great time doing just that.

If you'd like to be part of something special that makes a difference for kids in need around the world, we'd love to hear from you.

For more information, e-mail Mike Marker at mike@bringthehope.com.



HAITI MISSION TRIP

After the earthquake hit Haiti last January, we heard about a group of orphaned children living in Fondwa that needed our help. Through your generous gifts, and our partnership with the local apparel company Bring The Hope, we raised \$8,000 to bring aid to the people of this mountain village that is located roughly one hour south and west of Port-au-Prince.

In late August, four KidsFirst Foundation board members paid their way to join a group of 15 people on a mission trip that included members of St. Luke's United Methodist Church, Family Health Ministries and Bring The Hope. The group spent a week working in Fondwa and the donations were put to good use in several important ways.

Fondwa lost its schoolhouse in the earthquake. So, the mission team constructed a new temporary structure that is currently housing more than 200 schoolchildren. The kids at this school score very well on national tests and education is essential to their future. We are pleased to report that our structure withstood the recent hurricane that hit Haiti and that no one was injured in Fondwa during that storm.

In addition to constructing and painting the schoolhouse, our team also painted several other temporary shelters around the community. But the building and painting was just half of the mission. The team also spent a lot of time getting to know the orphaned kids in Fondwa. The group played games, shared stories, sang songs and took a very special field trip to the beach in Jacmel. For many of the kids, it was their first time to go swimming.

We are also pleased to report that the good news didn't end when the trip was over. In September, we held our fifth annual KidsFirst Foundation Dinner and participants at that event helped us raise more than \$14,000 to continue helping our friends in Fondwa. Those funds will go to sponsor 15 schoolchildren, help build a permanent school in the year(s) ahead and bring a new structure called Paulette's House to life.

To view a special video of our mission trip to Haiti, please go to www.kidsfirst-foundation.org.



KidsFirst Foundation

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

Heaven Is A Playground

We love building playgrounds for kids. So we are thrilled to share pictures of our two newest playgrounds. The first playground is located in Novgorod, Russia, and it was put to good use over the summer and fall. You might be surprised to learn that children in Russia even go out on their playgrounds during winter. They get bundled up real tight and get a little cold-weather exercise. Thanks to all KidsFirst Foundation donors for making the Novgorod playground a reality.



Novgorod playground

The second playground is the one that you'll find in Borovichi, Russia. The kids in Borovichi love their playground and the orphanage director tells us that it makes such a difference when they are able to take the kids outside for some fun and exercise. When you think about all of the time these kids spend inside living in institutional care, you get the sense of just how important it is for us to give them an exciting and playful diversion in their days. Thanks for making this playground a reality as well.



Borovichi playground

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

WE LOVE WESTPOINT FINANCIAL

Last month, the WestPoint Financial Group (WPF) Foundation announced \$17,500 in new donations to the KidsFirst Foundation. WPF raised the funds at the firm's seventh annual golf invitational last June at The Trophy Club in Lebanon, Indiana.

"We are honored to be affiliated with the KidsFirst Foundation," said Greg McRoberts, managing partner of WPF. "The WPF Foundation was created to help give kids a boost. I want to thank all of our employee volunteers, participants and donors for supporting such an important cause."

The KidsFirst Foundation wants to thank the McRobertses and the entire WPF Foundation family for their kindness and generosity. Kids around the world will sleep better tonight and have a brighter day tomorrow because of your efforts.

WPF offers insurance and financial products and was recently named one of the "Best Places to Work in Indiana." For more information about WPF, go to www.westpointfinancialgroup.com.

"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children."

-Nelson Mandela

Father Frost Party - January 8th



This annual party just keeps getting better and better. If you haven't joined us yet, please join us on Saturday, January 8th, to experience this magical party for kids and adults. We will host the party in Carmel, Ind., at Creekside Middle School which is located at 3525 W. 126th Street. The fun will start at 10 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 Father 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 with Father 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.