

# ROOF tops

[www.roofnet.org](http://www.roofnet.org)

Newsletter of the Russian Orphan Opportunity Fund Autumn 2011

## Adaptive Physical Education: A new direction for ROOF's work in Belskoye-Ustye and Elsewhere

For 11 years ROOF has sent teachers and volunteers in to work and play developmental games with the children of the Psycho-neurological orphanage at Belskoye-Ustye, Pskhov Region, Pskov Oblast. Over that time, the simple presence of summer camp volunteers has helped to change life for the orphanage children in more significant ways than any of us ever would have dreamed back in 2000. It was summer camp volunteers who first suggested the idea of opening "social ho-



tels", as an alternative to transferring the children to adult institutions at the age of 18, and it was volunteers who suggested a trial weekend fostering program to get some of the children out of the institutions and into local families – if only for a couple days per week. These programs, as well as ongoing educational and developmental programs, supplied the impetus for the orphanage administration to apply for funding to open a school within the orphanage two years ago – making Belskoye-Ustye the only one of 151 psycho-neurological orphanages in Russia to have taken this step.

ROOF's 2011 summer camp introduced what we hope will



become a new aspect of ROOF's programs for the children of Belskoye-Ustye. Experts from the Russian State University of Physical Education, working with the Ronald McDonald Fund, visited the orphanage and led a seminar in Adaptive Physical Education. Natalia Rubtsova, Head of the Department of Adaptive Physical Education, wrote her Doctoral Disserta-

tion on Adaptive Physical Education and is a pioneer in this field, which is the study of the relationship between bodily movement and cognitive activity. In her seminar for orphanage staff and summer camp volunteers she spoke of many inspiring events from her own personal practice, including helping patience to backbone injuries (who were assumed bed-ridden for their whole lives) to sit, and even walk. Natalia explained that specific physical exercises can have a direct effect on

and develop the intelligence of the person doing them, bringing new developmental hope for children who have been under-stimulated in early childhood or who struggle with sub-normal mental function.

Natalia was joined by three other specialists, including the Head of the Ronald McDonald Fund in Russia, Ilya Buriy. Together, the specialists gave lectures and practical seminars to introduce orphanage staff and volunteers to the methods of Adaptive Physical Education. **ROOF looks forward to hosting the specialists again at Baranovo/Belskoye-Ustye, as they have agreed to return to design a special program of therapy for each orphanage child!** In order to get a jump



start with the work, ROOF summer camp volunteers have profiled each child in the orphanage, documenting mental and physical talents and difficulties to the extent that they were able to do so, as non-specialists. Some of our volunteers did a bang-up job, however, consulting with psychologists, psychiatrists and specialists in autism from different countries before submitting their reports. We are so grateful to our 2011 summer camp team for helping out with the serious work of initiating personal development plans for each of the orphanage children.

R

## Congratulations Podolsk Orphanage 2011 Graduates!

On 29 August the orphanage in Podolsk said good-bye to its 2011 graduates. All the orphanage children, and their teachers and caregivers, gathered in the concert hall. The teachers and the Director, Nikolay Nikolayevich, said many warm words to the graduates, wishing them to be strong and have common sense to make the best of the education and upbringing they have been given in the orphanage. Congratulations to Kristina, Nastya, Ilya, Oleg, Andrei and Sasha – this year's 6 high-school graduates from Podolsk Orphanage:



Andrei has entered the Russian Institute of State Management (in the center of Moscow, very prestigious and very hard to enter!) Andrei says that he wanted very much to get into that particular institute so that he could help the official authorities in Russia change life for the better. Andrei has every chance to succeed in his goal: he is clever, modest, and while working with ROOF teachers was always very ready to help with younger children and help his classmates with their homework.

Kristina and Nastya have entered the same Pedagogical college in the town of Serpukhov as their friend Anya did, last year. During their time in the orphanage, Kristina and Nastya have both been very much respected. Nastya is quiet, and always tries her best at anything she is asked to set her hand to. Kristina always actively helps the teachers and is conscientious with the tasks she has been given. They are both calm and collected girls, even-minded and always nice with their classmates and polite with the teachers. Kristina is particularly fond of dancing and drawing, and ROOF has helped her over the years by paying for her dancing classes, as well for academic tutoring for both Kristina and Nastya. Kristina has even successfully represented her school at dancing competitions. She has also always been actively engaged on a social level, helping to organize activities and events at the orphan-




age. Both Kristina and Nastya will be greatly missed and we at ROOF congratulate them heartily on her graduation and acceptance into teacher training college – which is not the easiest of colleges to get into!

Graduate Ilya has gone on to study municipal forestry and settlement gardening at college № 35 in the town of Shatura.



Ilya's hobby is computers, and he is always doing something at his computer – not playing computer games, but working with programs. He has a clever technical mind, but our teachers are a little bit concerned that because he is reserved, shy and not very well spoken, that he will have a difficult time getting on at college.

Sasha and Oleg have graduated school but continue, at present, to live at Podolsk Orphanage. Thanks to generous sponsor support, ROOF tutors are able to continue working daily with them and with the many younger children who remain in Podolsk Orphanage, preparing them, too, to make the most of their lives and talents. Congratulations to this year's high-school graduates!! 



[www.roofnet.org](http://www.roofnet.org)