

STEP BY STEP



NEWS OF THE ORPHAN OPPORTUNITY CENTRE “STEP UP”

SEPTEMBER—OCTOBER 2010

With thanks to St. Andrew's Anglican Church, the companies Charity Aid Foundation (CAF), Clifford Chance, Deloitte, Global Fund for Children, Globus International, Linklaters, Nestle, Partners in Hope, Pfizer, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Raiffeisen Bank, Starbucks, St. Andrew Society of Russia, Tchibo, Troika Dialog, Vegas Lex, Vitol Charitable Foundation, and numerous private sponsors for their help and support of the Orphan Opportunity Centre “STEP UP”.

Opening the New Academic Year at the Orphan Opportunity Centre “STEP UP”



The opening celebrations of the 2010 - 2011 academic year at the Orphan Opportunity Centre “Step Up” took place on September, 13.

“Step Up” students and teachers, as well as our friends and sponsors, gathered in the narthex of St. Andrew's Anglican Church (for many years we have been using the premises of St. Andrew's for our lessons and parties). We all were very glad to greet our friends, both old and new!

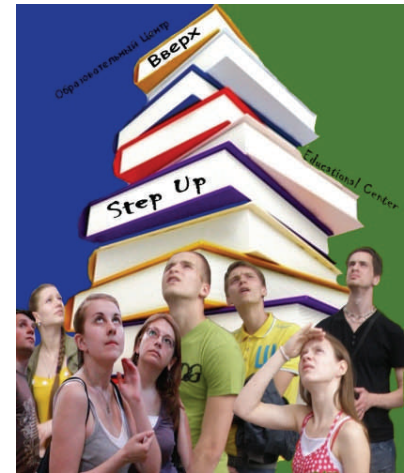
As per tradition, the new academic year opened with congratulations from Father Simon Stephens, the Chaplain of St. Andrew's, and Father Pyotr Kolomeitsev, a good friend of our Centre.

We reminisced about the happiest events of the previous academic year, congratulated our students who entered colleges and universities this summer, and announced our goals for the upcoming academic year.

The ceremony was followed by tea and refreshments.

The Orphan Opportunity Centre “Step Up”, formerly known as ROOF's Education Centre, used to be one of the projects of the Russian-American charity organization the Russian Orphan Opportunity Fund (ROOF). Since September 2010 the Orphan Opportunity Centre “Step Up” is an independent Russian organization.

Mission of the Centre “STEP UP”



Our mission is not simply to lead students to earning their diplomas, but to help them grow socially, emotionally, and intellectually. We do not see the academic year as going in a circle; we see it rising up the ladder of time

- from ignorance—to knowledge,
- from a lack of understanding of the self – to the development of personality,
- from social instability and disorder – to socialization,
- from reclusiveness – to engagement with the world.

What may help us turn study into ascent? Firstly, we believe friendship – friendship between students and between students and teachers—fosters this. Next, we empower students by nurturing their discipline. After all, education without discipline is impossible, education without empowerment is pointless. Lastly, we treat study as an adventure that challenges and captivates students.

We remember: it is looking up that makes a man a man.

The Cross Culture Club Starts its Work

The Cross Culture Club started its work during the first academic week. Club's moderators and participants decided to devote this year to the culture of Spain.

On September, 18 we watched the extremely sad and beautiful film “Oceans” by Jacques Perrin and Jacques Cluzaud at Khudozhestvenny cinema. This hymn to nature, as Jacques Perrin himself called his film, left no one indifferent. Once again the film made us see the beauty and perfection of nature, and think about irremediable harm a man causes to it.

On September, 19 the members of the Cross Culture Club visited the project Art-Experiment in the Centre for Contemporary Culture «Garage». This unusual event didn't have usual paintings, sculptures and photos, the artists there were the audience. We were painting on glass, modeling in clay, dancing in the darkness, writing our sacred wishes on pieces of paper and putting them on the wish tree.

Participation in Art-Experiment brought us many pleasant impressions. We wished this wonderful day never come to an end!

Visiting the Museum-Reserve Tsaritsyno



On September, 25 students and teachers from the Orphan Opportunity Centre “Step Up” visited the museum-reserve Tsaritsyno.

We were walking along the alleys of the park, enjoying last sunny days of autumn, admiring beautiful sights. As per tradition, Father Pyotr acted as our guide: he told us about the history of Tsaritsyno Estate in pre-revolutionary Russia, during Soviet rule and in our time, thoroughly described architectural design of the Estate and the difficulties in its realization, that took more than a century. The excursion was so interesting, that many people who were just walking in the park also joined us, making our group three times larger.

We combined our walk with the session of professional photography. Our photographer was Vladimir, a friend of Ulyana Shilkina, the Cross Culture Club moderator.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Father Pyotr for interesting excursion and to Vladimir for wonderful pictures.

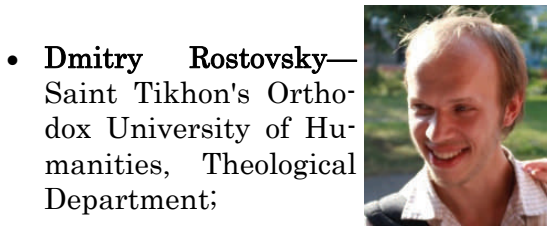
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Our Congratulations

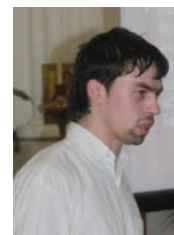
The Orphan Opportunity Centre “Step Up” administration and teachers send their greetings to the students who entered colleges and universities this summer.



- **Maksim Mironov**— Russian State University of Physical Education, Sport and Tourism, the Department of Physical Education and Sport;



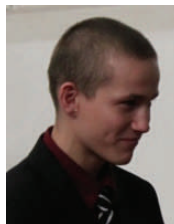
- **Dmitry Rostovsky**— Saint Tikhon's Orthodox University of Humanities, Theological Department;



- **Aleksey Sazonov**— Moscow Institute of Electronic Technology, IT Department;



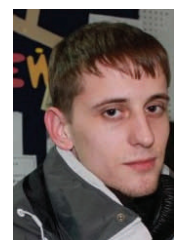
- **Alena Vasina** — College of Industry and Hospitality Management # 23;



- **Victor Kartinsky** — College of Industry and Hospitality Management # 23;



- **Victoria Kozlova** — College of Service and Tourism # 29;



- **Denis Makarov**— the Colledge of Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics and Informatics, the Department of Applied Informatics.

The Literature Club Sessions

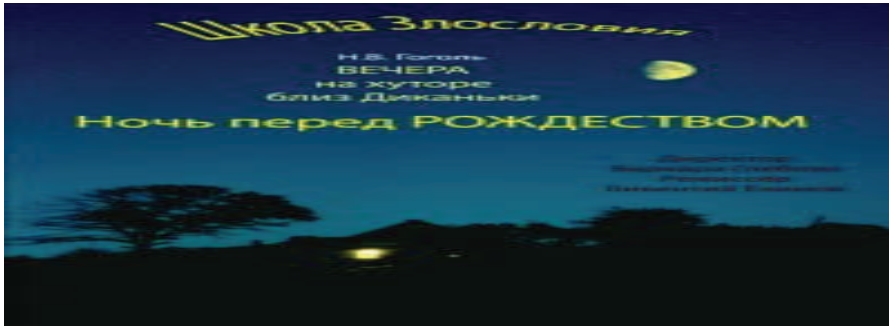
New season of the Literature Club started in October. Three first meetings (October, 2, 9 and 23) were devoted to the discussion of two novels by English writer Thornton Wilder.

The first novel, “The Bridge of San Luis Rey”, arose, perhaps, the main question of the mankind — the question of the meaning of life. Considering the destinies of five heroes, who died, when the bridge fell under them, as well as of their relatives, who remained alive, we came to a conclusion, that only unselfish love can fill emptiness in human soul and make each life meaningful and not in vain.

“The Ides of March”, the mockumentary novel of more complex structure, captivated us with the characters of Julius Caesar, Gaius Valerius Catullus and other tragic and contradictory Romans. Drinking tea with mint cakes we realized, that, in spite of being very far from us, these extraordinary people experienced the same spiritual thirst contemporary people have. Impassioned longing for sense, for some absolute truth didn't die away for two thousand years... Maybe, it happened because it is this longing that makes a man a man.

© Varvara Glebova

«The School for Scandal»



This all started in the 2007—2008 academic year from Svetlana Gennadyevna, the teacher of Russian language and literature. We put on 2 performances “Cyrano de Bergerac” (2007—2008) and “A Hero of Our Time” (2009—2010) under her guidance. After “A Hero of Our Time” some important changes happened, the students took the initiative and started directing theatre studio by themselves. We called it “The School for Scandal”. “School” as the process of perfection is endless, and “Scandal” as this process is always accompanied by many words (sometimes, sharp, “scandal” words).

At the first meeting of «The School for Scandal» we tried to decide, which performance we will stage on, but we couldn't reach the general consensus and at the end we all left without having decided anything. We needed someone who will show us the direction. Ulyana (a good friend of ours, the moderator of the Cross Culture club) introduced us to Kseniya Yuryevna, a wonderful teacher of theatre arts, a true professional. She corrected our mistakes carefully, gave us good advise, invited us to see her students' performances. She was the initiator of the new performance - «Cinderella».

We never approached any performance with such a zeal and seriousness. Each rehearsal was a step forward for us. We were growing!

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Village Fete



On September, 4 all St. Andrew's Community gathered in Church yard for a traditional holiday Village Fete (village holiday).

Students and teachers of the Centre “Step Up” also joined the celebrations. We took part in interesting and joyful contests, enjoyed delicious food, meanwhile selling our T-Shirts and the post-cards with the paintings of the children from Podolsk Orphanage.

Many thanks to our students - Lesha Abaturov, Tolya Borisov, Kirill Evdokimov, Sasha Chasovnikov, who took active part in preparation for the party and the party itself. Very special thanks go to Polina Bykonya, Kasha Ekimov and Sergey Smirnov, who took most active part in preparation for the party, the party, and also helped to put everything in order after the party was over.

«A Minor Incident from Personal Life»

On October, 16 the students from the Orphan Opportunity Centre “Step Up” visited Literature Concert «A minor incident from personal life» (by the stories of M. Zoshchenko) in Polytechnical Museum.

We are grateful to Troika Dialog for the season ticket to 4 concerts «Humor and Satire» and for the opportunity to visit such joyful and interesting events.

The first night of the performance "Cinderella" took place on June, 25. It is so important, when you are on the stage, acting, curious eyes of the students, teachers, guests, friends are looking at you, and you collect yourself, and, feeling the support of your team, you start acting, and there is fire, smile and faith inside you... A storm of applause. We do not understand what happened. So many different feelings, excitement, joy. It was unforgettable!

The rehearsals and performances made us more self-confident, relaxed, we learned to solve problems independently, work as a team, help and support each other! It's so great, when the creative process brings joy, smile and new opportunities.

Our theatre studio "The School for Scandal" does not stop at what has been achieved, we are going up. In October new season opened, the work on the performance "The Night Before Christmas" by N.V. Gogol started. We hold rehearsals twice a week, and everyone is welcome.

In January 2011 you are welcome to our premiere!

© Polina Bykonya

Student Council of the Centre «Step Up»

Student Council has already been acting in our Centre for the third year. Several times a month the representatives from each group gather to discuss the questions, important for our Centre.

This year we have already met twice. On October, 17 and 24 we discussed at the Council how to organize our life better, keep the office and classrooms in order, how to keep discipline during the lessons.

Quite quickly we solved such simple questions as duty: just like the previous year all by themselves the students made the schedule, appointing the groups responsible for keeping the Centre rooms tidy.

Besides, during Student Council meetings it was decided that each month the students will give money for tea and sugar (50 rubles) to groups' monitors, the students cannot use teachers' computer in the office, during the classes everyone will turn their mobile phones off, after classes put everything in order, and after tea wash their cups and wipe the table in the office.

These decisions, that seem so simple, clearly show the rise of students' independence and their wish to take more responsibility for their own life upon themselves, including daily things. The possibility to remind young people of these simple rules, referring not to some abstract «must», but to their own decision – is an important pedagogical instrument.

Certainly, we are pleased of such initiative, as independence is one of the most important qualities, that we want to cultivate in our students. Such a start of Student Council work this year shows that our students understand that we all create this unique atmosphere in our Centre.

We hope that the Student Council will remain so initiative all year, fruitfully cooperating with students and teachers.

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Master Class: The Art of Photography



I lived with twelve people for nine years. We met in a community making workshop, and after one year of discussions we bought a large house together. In the beginning we held weekly encounter sessions and discussed our relationships with one another; the goal of total honesty was rarely met, but we were good at having fun together. We built a sauna for twelve in the basement and used it nightly before festive dinners hosted by rotating cooks; we joked that whenever we wanted to see someone naked, all we had to do was invite him (or her) for dinner.

On October, 30 Natalya Vasilyeva, the photographer of the magazine Esquire, gave us the master class on photography.

We learned many interesting and useful things on the basics of photography art and got acquainted with life and work of a great photographer Tony Mendoza.

Many thanks to Natalya for this bright and amazing class. We are looking forward to new photography classes that, we hope, will help us to become professional photographers.

How to make donation

Bank Transfer to RF

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Making donation, you help young people from the orphanages get high value education and belief in themselves.