

# ROOF-tops



Newsletter of the Russian Orphan Opportunity Fund

September 2009

PROVIDING SUPPORT AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR ORPHANED YOUTH IN RUSSIA.

*We are grateful to Campbell's, Tchibo, Pfizer, Vegas Lex and numerous private sponsors, friends and associates. We express our appreciation to the volunteers and administrators of our summer camp. The summer camp wouldn't have taken place without your help and support.*

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

## The Tenth Annual ROOF Summer Camp in the Belskoye Ustye Children's Home and Internat, July 3 – August 1 2009



**The Summer Camp**

The tenth year in a row, the tiny village of **Belskoe Ustye in Pskov Region** completely transforms in **July**. At this time of year, besides the local inhabitants, one can see colorfully-dressed representatives of other nations, clowns, circus animals and a smorgasbord of fairy tale characters. It just so happens, that since 2000 **ROOF** has annually carried out a **summer camp** in the **Belskoe Ustye Internat** for the internat's little residents.

### Children and volunteers

The **tenth annual summer camp** operated from **July 3rd to August 1st, 2009**. This year, **25 volunteers** from **Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Great Britain, Luxemburg and France** took part in the camp.

The volunteers spent six days a week with the children drawing, sculpting, singing, dancing, playing sports, hiking, putting on plays. Through these many activities they engaged children in communication and fostered their emotional and intellectual development.



The Belskoe Ustye Internat currently houses **63 residents**, each with his or her own unique and unrepeatable personality, interests and fancies. Children were divided into **eight groups** based on their widely-ranging ages and ability levels. Each group was assigned **two-three volunteers** for the duration of the camp. Together, children and volunteers made up names and mottos and drew emblems for their groups. In place of the official 1st group, 2nd group, 3rd group, and so on, in only a few hours the children's home was filled with **hunters, pirates and robots, toffees, apples and candles, ducklings and stars** all proudly reciting mottos and wearing emblems.

### Holidays

The summer camp offered lots of memorable **thematic holidays**: **Laughter Day, Career Day, History Day, Travel Day, Shopping Day** and many more.

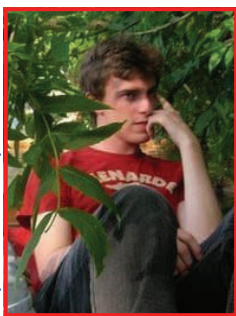
Children eagerly participated in all the activities. **History Day** was particularly noteworthy: a **historical reenactment troop "Pleskov-Grad"** visited **from Pskov** to recreate for children the famous battles between medieval Russian warriors and German knights. After the performance, the children had a chance to try on the knights' heavy armor and to shoot from the bows of the archers.

On the final day of camp, volunteers put on a **play of "The Little Mermaid."** The children, in their turn, brought joy to the hearts of volunteers with a **musical: "The Snow Queen."**



## Volunteers about the camp

*One of the volunteers of the summer camp, Howard A m o s , a graduate of*



*University, told interviewers from the BBC Russia about his life and work in the camp.*

“The first time I heard about ROOF was a few years ago, when I was the University student. I specialized in History, and, besides, I was studying Russian. So I wanted to practice the language, just like many other volunteers from Oxford, and went to the camp when I still was a student. This is my third visit there.

Not long ago, the majority of children in the internat were considered “unteachable.” Since their earliest childhood they have been in this category. Not all of them are orphans – some were abandoned by their parents.



We led activities with the children that would help them develop: playing, drawing, crafts...Sporting events were fairly difficult to initiate – there are children with physical disabilities, and it’s not good to exclude them from the games

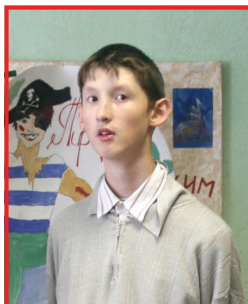
One would very much like to hope that steady lessons will begin at the internat. ROOF is working on this.

Now, I’m trying to make arrangements through ROOF to work as a teacher at Belskoe Ustye. If everything works out as planned, then I’ll return again in the autumn for a longer period of time.

In the youngest group there were some difficulties with one little girl...They say that from the time she was very little she was kept in the yard with dogs; she was obviously traumatized. When anyone would come up to her, she would yell, “lyag! Lyag!” It was impossible to explain anything to her. My colleague spent a lot of time with her one on one. By the end of the month, the girl began to behave much more calmly, began greeting people and participating in some of the games. This was probably the first time in her life that she had established close contact with another person.



One boy named Sasha and I had become particularly close friends. He’s 17 years old and, just like me, he’s interested in history. It’s amazing, how he knows so much, how he even learned to read – nobody ever taught him anything! This is one of the smartest youngsters in the internat, and I’m certain that he could study. I remember one incredible thing that happened: it was before the morning line-up, and we were talking about the Roman e m p e r o r Constantine, who converted to Christianity. It turned out that Sasha knows things that I had already forgotten. Everybody around is yelling, running, waving sticks, and he picked up a stick as well and, in order for me to understand what he was talking about, he drew a symbol in the ground. It was a Histogram. I couldn’t believe my eyes.”



# ROOF



## Belskoye Ustye Orphanage graduate’s personal story



**K o l y a Kudryavtsev** was a cook’s assistant in the summer camp.

Kolya grew up at the Belskoye Ustye Orphanage (BUO). At the age of 18 he was transferred to the ROOF’s Abilitation Centre in Porhov, which, afterwards, he decided to leave and to try living independently. After some time Kolya understood that he wasn’t ready for independent life yet and returned to Abilitation Centre.

In Porhov Kolya lives together with Sergey Nikolaevich Andreev, the manager of the program, and Anton, who also was BUO’s graduate. They spend much time together, share their secrets, solve problems and share each other’s success.

Kolya is a wonderful person with calm and easy character. He is fond of drawing. Kolya is a bit shy, but he enjoys communication with those he likes.

Not so long ago Kolya Kudryavtsev has got a social house in the town of Velikie Luki in Pskov Region.

We all are very glad for him and wish him good luck!