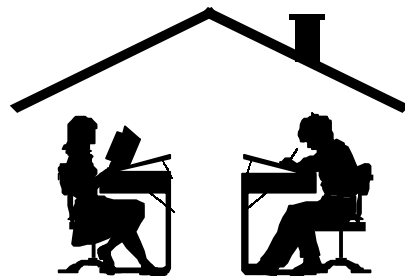


ROOF-tops



Newsletter of the Russian Orphan Opportunity Fund

Issue 7, Summer 1999

In This Issue

- ◆ *Summer exchange*
- ◆ *The banking career of a D-student*

Summer exchange *by Irina Ryazanova*

The idea of arranging an exchange between the det-doms in Pereslavl-Zalesski and Moscow arose as a unique opportunity for each group of children to visit a new place in a trip which combined a summer excursion with an educational visit. It was also an extremely cost-effective excursion as the only cost involved was that of bussing the children between two locations. The children from Pereslavl, in Moscow for the first time, would be able to broaden their horizons, see something of their capital city and get to know Muscovite children and develop long-lasting friendships with them. For the children from Moscow, even more advantages and educational opportunities would come from a visit to one of the oldest towns on Russia's 'Golden Ring.'

Early in the morning of 12th June the children from Pereslavl set off to Moscow where they were to be met by a group of volunteers who had prepared for their visit an interesting and educational schedule. At the same time, a busload of Moscow children set off for Pereslavl. In each group were eleven children aged between ten and fourteen years accompanied by their vospitateli (orphanage staff). The road was long, but regardless of the heat and the jiggling of the old bus, soon enough the children arrived in Pereslavl. They were given lunch at a factory's canteen, and then moved on for a swim in Lake Plescheevo: what boundless joy! The water of the lake and the refreshing pine air soon removed all traces of fatigue providing energy for the tour around Pereslavl. After this, they set off for the camp where the children from Pereslavl's det-doms were spending the summer months. Here, everyone very quickly introduced each other, made friends, and again set off for a swim.

The next morning we set off on the bus for Great Rostov. I can tell you that the great beauty of the Rostov Kremlin, the pleasant Lake Nero, and the Ascension Monastery will always have a place in the memories of these children. Everyone was transfixed in the monastery by the beautiful sound of the bells ringing. Lunch was taken in the refectory of the Rostov Kremlin palace. As a memento, I bought for the boys small earthenware bells, and for the girls pendants made of the famous Rostov enamel. On the return journey, the children again swam in the lake and sunbathed, returning finally to Pereslavl in the evening.

The next day saw excursions to the Goretsky monastery, and to the naval museum which was started upon the remains of a childhood toy fleet of boats belonging to Peter the Great, and later joined by another museum celebrating the history of the Russian navy. We walked through Pereslavl, basking in the tranquillity and majesty of the ancient churches and monasteries. But sadly, it was already time to begin the long trip home: Moscow was waiting for us.

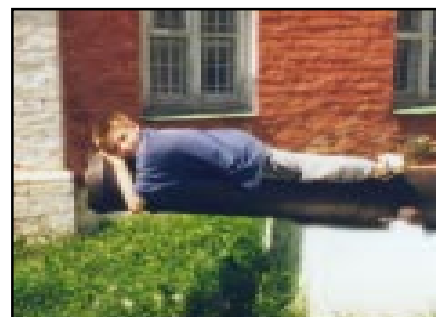
Waiting in Moscow were the children from Pereslavl. There was so much delight in their eyes; so many stories of the Kremlin tour, the river-boat excursion, Gorky Park and much, much more that had been squeezed into those three packed days. Finally came the experience of the tears of parting, and with them, a mutual desire to meet again, to keep in touch, and to remain friends.



Sergei and Vanya explore an aeroplane at the naval museum



Visiting the naval museum



Sergei finds a comfortable cannon to rest on

Tel/fax: (7-095) 229-5100
e-mail: roof@glasnet.ru
web: <http://www.glasnet.ru/~roof>

The Banking Career of a D-Student *from Moscow's 'Sevodnya'*

(This article is a translation of an article published in the Moscow daily newspaper, *Sevodnya*, in May 1999.)

Three times a week, Alyosha Turutin gets up earlier than the other children at the orphanage where he lives. He gets up at 7am, silently eats breakfast and is out of the door to the bank — where he works. This is because Turutin, an orphan, is a staff employee of Dresdner Bank, Moscow. Alyosha himself admits this isn't because of his own merit. It's just that last year the Moscow city Duma passed a law 'On employment quotas

"We are giving Alyosha a chance to intertwine his own future with that of our bank..."

NEW! Mailing addresses

Please use these addresses to post donations to ROOF. Our old Post International addresses are no longer valid, and in any case, cheques posted to those addresses may be intercepted by customs and destroyed. Cheques can safely be posted to the addresses below:

In the USA:

Russian Orphan Opportunity Fund (ROOF),
835 S. Gilpin St.
Denver, CO 80209
Fax (Russia): +7-095-229-5100
Fax (UK): +44-870-0548-741

In Europe:

Russian Orphan Opportunity Fund (ROOF),
P.O. Box 1648,
Cannock,
Staffs, UK
WS11 1YB
Fax (UK): 0870-0548-741

Please note our new Russian telephone/fax number on the front page. This is our new long-awaited permanent office telephone number in Russia, and will be in operation from the beginning of August.

in the city of Moscow,' which states that employers must supply places for invalids and children under 18 — especially for orphans. So Zoya Michaelovna, the Director of the det-dom ['children's house'] where Alyosha lives, received a phone call from Dresdner Bank and was asked to pick one boy for a job.

Alyosha wasn't the most promising of the lot that Zoya Michaelovna has to pick from. But the orphanage education committee decided that this was a unique chance to distract a D-student with the contrasts and bright possibilities of the business world — a chance to give him a perspective on something so irresistible that it might even change his character.

Alyosha came to the orphanage with his sister Sveta because of his parents' unending inclination towards drink. First his father died, having sold the family apartment. Then his mother died. The children stopped attending school altogether somewhere along the way. Upon re-entering school Alyosha was placed in the 6th grade, where the other children referred to him as 'Uncle.' This, not being the greatest confidence boost, soon led him to drop his studies for a second time.

The situation seemed hopeless, remembers Zoya Michaelovna, until the social/charitable organisation ROOF (Russian Orphan Opportunity Fund) intervened. ROOF provided school teachers in all subjects and these teachers started to pull the best possible results out of not only Turutin, but 5 other children who were in similar situations. As a result, Turutin passed exams for the 6th and 7th grades in the course of a single year — and this at the same time as he held down his job at the bank.

At this point, Alyosha has been at the bank for 8 months but he often tells of how horrifying his first days were: 'Everyone around me seemed so smart, and I couldn't do anything.' At first, the bank employed Alyosha as a courier, but not long ago he was actually given a promotion on merit — they moved him to the back office operations. When he got his first monthly paycheque, which, incidentally, was twice as much as the det-dom vospitateli earn. Alyosha bought his sister a scarf and bought Coca Cola for all the children at the det-dom. He also bought a cake for the vospitateli. When, at Christmas, Alyosha got an invitation to an elegant banquet, it caused



Alyosha Turutin

quite a stir at the det-dom. An entire entourage accompanied Alyosha to the store to see what he could pick up in terms of evening wear. He turned up in a three piece suit, having received a quick lesson in good table manners in the orphanage dining hall. The leadership of Dresdner Moscow don't hide the fact that the process of changing Alyosha into a banker has its difficulties. His bosses forgive Alyosha for some of his faults, but not in a doting manner. Just the other day he was scolded quite seriously for showing up in the operations room wearing headphones.

By law, the bank only has an obligation to employee Alyosha until he is 18 years old. "We are giving Alyosha a chance to intertwine his own future with that of our bank," says Vice President Eric Keobe. "But everything depends on his own success."

This idealistic picture we have painted would not be complete without including some dry statistics. In the capital there are at least ten thousand orphans living in orphanages. Approximately two thousand of these are children who are graduating or are about to graduate from det-doms and who need work. The dreadful thing is that it is difficult for these children to find work even as nightwatchmen. Our average employer is trying desperately to rid himself of 'unnecessary problems.' Thanks to our very own city laws, employers are able to get out of the 'orphan clause' (they are no longer required to hire an orphan or invalid). Any employer who pays twelve times the average annual salary directly into the city employment fund automatically becomes exempt from the 'orphan clause' if he can prove that he paid the money. Besides which, Moscow has fewer than one thousand banks, which means there isn't a job in this for every orphan...