

# ROOF tops

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Newsletter of the Russian Orphan Opportunity Fund Jan-Feb 2012

## Elegance and Entrepreneurship for Orphans: “English Afternoon Tea” at Cafe Ciferblat in Moscow!

When ROOF volunteers Oxbridge graduates Andrew and Penny Grenfell moved to Moscow in 2011, they came with an idea. Filled with intentions to combine the best of English social graces with Andrew’s small-business know-how (Andrew is a fellow at the Russian Microfinance Centre), their plan was to start a Moscow cafe that would serve tea in high, English tearoom style, but with a social enterprise twist. The goal is that the new cafe is eventually to be staffed, run, and maybe even eventually owned by graduates of Moscow orphanages.

But how do we get from a good idea to a full-fledged business run by graduates of Moscow orphanages? The plan is that both initially and eventually, the business should be primarily conceived of as a social enterprise – a project that applies business strategies to the achievement of philanthropic goals.

In the case of “English Afternoon Tea” the philanthropic goals are the formation and professional training of orphanage graduates and the reduction of entrenched societal prejudice against this group. At present it is planned that the project will provide temporary employment for the orphanage graduates who participate, “incubating” them until they have the skills and connections to get a job elsewhere. But program “graduates” will

also be asked to provide training and moral support to their “English Afternoon Tea” staff successors.

Those who stay intensely involved in the project will likely end up with a share of ownership in the concept, ongoing development and business. As with any developing business, it is difficult to say precisely what the project will look like in five years time; commitment to organic growth also entails the willingness to “switch gears” mid-project if a new and more promising line of development appears along the way.

In December 2011 the dream of “English Afternoon Tea” was propelled into reality when a location to pilot the project was found. Cafe Ciferblat (“Clockface” in German) – a unique and classy Moscow business that sells time while offering coffee, tea and toast free of charge to customers – agreed to grant ROOF the use of a large room at the back of their downtown Moscow cafe. During this trial phase the tea ceremony will be held weekly, on Saturday afternoons, at Cafe Ciferblat.

Trial “English Afternoon Tea” ceremonies were run on two occasions in December and January, with Ciferblat issuing invitations to the events, which each attracted around 25 people with a good mix of locals and expats. Andrew and Penny hope that the phenomenon of a cross-cultural “by invitation only” English tea ceremony with native English speakers on hand for conversation will draw in many who might not otherwise come to a cafe run with philanthropic goals.

Working together with ROOF staff, Andrew and Penny are now recruiting a manager, cooks, waiters and waitresses for the new cafe. Initially the cafe will have between 4 and 6 young adult employees, all graduates of Moscow orphanages.

At “English Afternoon Tea” the emphasis will be on preparing and present-



ing tea, biscuits, cakes and scones with great beauty and elegance. The project aims to combine an atmosphere of professionalism with high quality personal mentoring for all cafe staff. The Grenfells returned from Christmas in England with three full tea services for use at “English Afternoon Tea” and are taking the lead in instructing our young staff in the art of presenting an English tea party. As staff become acquainted with their responsibilities, the Grenfells and ROOF staff members will be present alongside to discuss their development progress. We hope our orphanage graduates will literally drink in the beauty and harmony of their surroundings, along with the tea itself, as they serve their guests.

Cooks will learn to make a range of tasty treats and all staff will learn invaluable confidence, time-planning, budgeting, quality control and interpersonal skills, in addition to experiencing all the logistics that go into “pulling off an event” beautifully and efficiently.

Beginning on January 21st 2012, “English Afternoon Tea” meets from 16:30 to 18:30 every Saturday afternoon at Cafe Ciferblat, ulitsa Solyanka 11/6 in downtown Moscow.

More information is available at the “English Afternoon Tea” Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/English-Afternoon-Tea/295913777135279>



### American Adoptive Family Spearheads Opening of Programs in Tuchkovo Orphanage with New Year Party!



Thanks to the generosity of American adoptive parents, on the 29th December, ROOF and the Ronald McDonald Center for Health and Physical Education organized a sports holiday for 29 orphaned children from Tuchkovo Special (Correctional) School-Internat. The event marks the beginning of ROOF programs for the children of Tuchkovo.

The Center’s trainers quickly brought the children into the exciting world of all sorts of new competitive sports games. The children were also actively assisted by volunteer Muscovite high-school students in their final year. The participants were divided into three teams, each of which participated in a relay race and in various team-sports games using the special equipment at the Center.

In addition, the children were invited to find their way through a big soft maze with ladders and slides, a plastic ball pit and an aerial ropeway! The highlight of the event, however, was the games with the huge coloured parachute at the end of the day, which filled children and adults alike with great joy. After the sports day each of the orphanage children received small prizes and souvenirs, and ROOF made a common New Year’s gift of a good boom box /music center to all the children and orphanage staff.



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