



CARING HANDS NEWS

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Two-way traffic

Galina Davidovich is the Director of a centre in Volkhov which provides therapies, activities and general support to disabled children and their families. It was known as 'Filippok' – after a small boy in one of Tolstoy's stories – until its remit was extended to cater for children and young people up to the age of 18. Now known as 'Veronica', it is also a place where we have worked in recent years. This year, we were able to welcome Galina on a visit to this country, to see something of the provision offered here to youngsters whose challenges she is familiar with.

Galina had expressed interest in three areas in particular: learning more about the Portage system of care for disabled children; seeing the practical outworking of the UK's policy of, wherever possible, including and integrating children with special and complex needs in mainstream schooling and society - a concept entirely new to Russia; and visiting centres that disabled children attend, and talking with the staff.

Despite the late confirmation of their travel dates, and the intervention of school holidays, we managed to put together a programme of three meetings, ten school and group visits, and 'tourist time' in Ipswich, Lavenham, Southwold and London, plus shopping, in a period of nine and a half days. And still have evenings off.

For Portage, we arranged two meetings with professionals and a visit to a group for parents with very young children. As examples of Inclusion, we made visits to three Nursery/Pre-schools, a village Primary School, a much larger urban Primary School, and a High School. The specialist provision was demonstrated by a meeting with a portal body that funds and advertises providers, and thence a visit to a provider; a visit to a group for parents with very young children, and a visit to each of Ipswich's two special schools. A Russian woman who lives locally helped with translation.



Everybody was enormously helpful. Quite apart from the conversations, which Galina constantly enthused about, some substantial practical help has been offered in terms of providing training materials and the possibility of holding and staffing training sessions by Skype and even events in Leningradski Oblast. Galina has since told us that she found it the most interesting and useful overseas trip she has made. A Portage workshop has since been held in Volkhov.

Some years ago, we arranged a similar visit by the Director of a Craft Centre we were supporting in St Petersburg, which was equally appreciated. As we look to the future, it is encouraging that facilitating a flow of ideas, experience and know-how between caring professions on both sides seems to be something we can do.

2017?

Over the last 23 years, we have always worked on the basis of responding to requests for help received from Russian nationals. This is especially useful when folk ask us why we go, or why we have come, to Russia.

We invited our primary partners in Volkhov to think through their needs, and be in touch with us if any of them wanted to frame a request for help. To date (November 25th), we have received no request.

We work on the basis that, for practical reasons, we need to advertise any plan to recruit a team before Christmas. It now looks unlikely that we shall be doing that for 2017. Trustees will visit in any case, as part of the process of discovering how best we may help disadvantaged Russian people in the future.

We Hope

- that this Newsletter will give you food for thought and prayer. For more details, or for one of us to come and speak at meetings or church services, contact:

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'More Rainbows of Hope': The Team at the Raduga Centre, August 2016

The Rainbow ('Raduga' in Russian) **social rehabilitation centre in Volkhov** exists to help orphan children and children from troubled families, by addressing immediate needs and by looking for people to foster orphans, so that children can grow up in a family setting. It is now the place to which 'at risk' children are brought while decisions are made about their futures. For all 3-18 year-olds, the Centre aims to restore them to school or college, to return them to, or place them in, families, to provide social and psychological help (to parents as well as children), to observe and defend children's rights, to provide medical care and to assist in finding work.

The work we undertook this year was to refurbish the main entrance steps and improve the appearance of the surrounds, as the photographic record shows. Staff have since said that now, when they come into work, they see the building and smile. The children love it. Previously, the front entrance could have been daunting for a bewildered child arriving for the first time. Now, the entrance is more child-focused and welcoming.

Uncertainty due to staff changes at the Centre meant that prior planning for the work was minimal, and as we had not worked at Raduga in this building before, there were slight delays with equipment. In the event, a trip which could easily have been difficult or unproductive, finished by putting smiles on Russian faces! And British ones.



In addition, basic training in First Aid was presented at both Raduga and Veronica, which went well and was deemed well worth the effort, in what was an entirely new experience for our Russian colleagues. We had previously obtained a Resusci Anne (CPR training aid) which has been left at Veronica for future use in the two Centres.

It had been originally hoped that we might be able to carry out some improvement works to the sports pitches, as the Director had been particularly keen on meeting this need. However, it was quickly ascertained that this would be far too big a task for such a team as ours, but would require heavy equipment and locally-based specialist attention.

Finance

We warmly welcome any financial support, as well as prayer and interest. We are funded primarily by direct giving, by individuals and by churches.

Any help you could give would be marvellous and much appreciated. We do not use professional fund-raisers.

We can send you a **Gift Aid** form if appropriate (or you can download it from our website); it increases the value of a contribution at no cost to you, provided that each gift is identified and you pay a sufficient amount of Tax.

You can also make donations via our **PayPal** account. You'll find it on our website, on the Donate page.

Or you can give to Caring Hands Russia at any branch of Lloyds Bank or Bank of Scotland (and probably through your own bank) or online:

Sort code 30-97-00 Account number 01338970

Summary of finances (year-end 31 March 2016)

Income-

Balance at 1/4/2015	8118
Standing Orders & donations	682
Tax on Gift Aid 2013/14 & 2014/15	2102
Total	10902

Expenditure-

Flight 2015	297
Flights 2016	1379
Promotion (Newsletter, website etc)	179
To Vera from 'Broken Chains'	100
Balance 31/3/2016	8947
Total	10902

Following the summer's work, the balance in hand is around £7000.

Email: This Newsletter is produced in pdf format for uploading to our website. If you would like to receive the Newsletter by email (as a pdf attachment), rather than by post, please email Tony Wilcox as overleaf.

Our website is at: www.caringhandsru.org