

LOVE FOR KIDS - RUSSIA

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Outreach 2000 statistics:

- † Outreach to St.Petersburg, Minsk, Sakhalin, Siktivkar (in Republic of Komi)
- † 16000 children reached at 57 camps
- † 76 teams from 7 countries, 12 teams from Australia
- † 800 team members in total, 87 from Australia, 100 Russian coworkers
- † Preventative dental programme for 13400 children sponsored by Finnish Government foreign aid programme, done in conjunction with St.Petersburg Health Commission
- † Drug education to prevent substance abuse to 2900 children
- † **There are 200 camps operating in St.Petersburg region catering for approximately 200000 children. There are approximately 40000 camps across Russia for about 5 million children**

IT'S TIME TO ACT NOW!

Since the collapse of the former Soviet regime, the Russian nation has been searching for a new identity and a new foundation



for the lives of its people. The former system had put a lot of effort and money into training young people to be well-educated members of society. Schools and special cultural centres, as well as summer camps, were programmed to give the children a high level knowledge of the past ideology, as well as building a foundation for their lives and future.

When the doors to Russia opened up to the rest of the world in the early 1990's, Russia faced new challenges, as well as new problems. Unemployment, hopelessness and a fear of the future prevailed amongst young people. Drugs are also among the problems that are part of everyday life in today's Russia. It can seem that the authorities have forgotten young people altogether, as they are not today's taxpayers or voters. The Pentecostal Union Bishop said last year: "**We have mainly three types of young people in our society today; unemployed, drug addicts, criminals**". Because of this, authorities

who care and are responsible for the new generation know that the only hope is God. The Director of Serova camp said a few years ago, "The only hope for the Russian children and young people is God, there is no other hope."

In 1994, we met a football club manager with the Zelenogorsk soccer club. Our discussion went on to the reason why we had come into Russia and our faith in God and Jesus. This man, with tears in his eyes, said to us, "**We thought that we had a good and solid foundation for our lives that we lived on, but it collapsed. Now we need a new foundation that will not collapse – but I don't know what that is.**"

Dear friends, we know that foundation that will not collapse is Jesus.

Since 1992 the doors have been open in Russia to the ex-pioneer training camps, and we have been able to share the gospel with tens of thousands of young people as well as many thousands of adults.

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LAST NIGHT IN BLUE LAKE CAMP

It is a sad night for my wife and I. Our time at the children's camp is coming to an end. Now two months after arriving here at "Blue Lake" we have reached our last night. Having been here last year you would think we would be ready for the emotional rollercoaster

ride that you go through. But we find that we are not. For the last two days we seem to have said goodbye a thousand times. The little orphan kids that you have been working with cling to you like glue every chance they get; the sad little eyes of 9 year old Yasha when

he says "Only one sleep then you leave us". Then he gives you a hug with tears in his eyes and you feel like you can't hold back your own tears. Two sisters Lena and Katya run up, "Is it true that you are leaving, can't you stay a little

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My time in Camp "Iskra" was amazing!

I didn't pray with any Russians.

I didn't see any salvations.

I didn't do everything I thought I'd do.

BUT...

I did see Jesus use our simple message for His glory.

I did see seeds sown and fragile plants watered.

I did see people receive the love of Jesus through me.

I did pray for the Russian people.

And I did do God's good work as he appointed and anointed in His wisdom.

I came to Russia with an unsure heart.

But I leave Russia with a heart full of love.

Thankyou, "Iskra"!

Kiri Oliver

Victory Baptist Team

(**Blue Lake**, from page 1) longer?" and the look of disappointment on their little faces when you tell them you have to go. And the goodbyes go on. We try to tell the kids that we hope that God brings us back next year but the teary eyes still seem disappointed. A boy like Yasha is one of around 3000 kids who came to the camp this year. From the first time we met Yasha his wide smile and happy nature won us over. Maybe that is why it's so hard to see him cry. As I write this and look out the window I see a mound of earth outside and remember just 2 nights ago when I saw Yasha standing on it trying to raise something up. Just as I called my wife to the window, wondering what Yasha is up to, he finally drags up a two-meter high cross. As he stands there holding this huge cross he yells, "Pekka, Sirpa ya ponimayoo, ya ponimayoo", [Pekka, Sirpa, I understand, I understand]. He has come to understand the

message of the cross and come to know Jesus, who died on the cross for his, mine and your sins. He makes sure we see and hear him. Then he gives us a smile and a wave and runs off, back to his play. Yasha wanted to let us know in his own way and so it can't lose anything in translation, that our being in Russia has made a difference in however a small way, God only knows. We have been seeing God perform miracles in the lives of these little children time and time again. Yasha is just one of many who have heard that Jesus loves him, maybe for the very first time during this summer. People have asked me if it's worth the trouble of coming here and everything that that involves. My answer is yes, a thousand times, yes. I cannot put a price on a precious little soul like Yasha, and others who like him have heard the "Good news" this summer. I'm thankful to God for his grace in allowing us to be



Pekka and Yasha at Blue Lake camp

part of his plan to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the kids of Russia.

A point to remember; Man's way leads to a hopeless end! God's way leads to endless hope! May God bless you with His endless hope.

Pekka Hietanen

God is so good, the door is so open at the moment I would ask for more people to please come and help us as the harvest is ripe and ready, so pray and ask God to send you. – Tom Moxey, Tumut

(**It's time**, from page 1) Many have accepted Jesus into their lives as Saviour. Praise God for this result. But sometimes I feel and I pray, "But God, why so few?" There are still about 150 camps in St. Petersburg, and about 40,000 across Russia with five million children attending each year that we haven't been able to reach, the reason being the lack of workers. We need Christians who would give two weeks to

three months of their lives to change the life of a little boy or a girl forever.

Another amazing thing is that we have received an invitation to provide a systematic Christian teaching programme in the curriculum of three universities in St Petersburg. This invitation has resulted in a signed agreement to proceed. The topics that they have asked for are: Parents' responsibility to raise children in Christianity and the State's responsibility to raise a new generation to Christianity.

The time to act is now.

Now, we have a chance to change that nation forever by reaching children and young people with the word of God. I truly believe that if we can change the

new generation then we can change the future of the whole nation, so that it will never be the same again. There is nothing to stop us! God has opened doors and hearts in Russia. He wants to restore His Fatherheart to her and give back more than has been taken from her.

Just recently when a fire destroyed a television tower in St Petersburg, the second highest structure in the world (there was a danger it would collapse altogether), President Vladimir Putin said, "**The tower describes the state of Russia today.**"

Kari and Marja-Leena Lehelmä



Kari and Marja-Leena Lehelmä

DEAF CHILDREN IN CAMPS

For many years our teams and workers in Russian youth camps have come

across deaf children. One such camp is "Blue Lake" where Pekka and Sirpa Hietanen from Canberra have worked for the last 2 summers. That camp has some 200 children with a hearing disability attending each year, to whom Pekka and Sirpa have been a real blessing. But when I look in to the sparkling eyes of those lovely children that are not able to speak, or impress their feelings to us, it has left a real burden and challenge on my heart to do more for them.

Therefore I have been praying that God would send teams of people with appropriate sign language skills from Australia, or even people who have hearing problems themselves, to come and share their lives, difficulties they face, and love of God with those precious children.

I would like you to pray as well. Maybe God wants to send you there for just a few



Jacqueline Bedson (rear centre) with deaf children at Blue Lake camp

weeks or even longer, to change the lives of many deaf children forever.

Kari Lehelmä

"Gods love breaks all language barriers. One deaf girl gave me a gift. Her heart showed love for I know that she made it for herself but sacrificed to me. I sat in a stupor, tears rolling down my eyes because of this love." Love never ends.

*Jacqueline Bedson
Deaf church, Canberra
"Blue Lake" camp*

How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear (or see) without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? Romans 10:14

WHO IS KIDS OUTREACH INTERNATIONAL?

Kids Outreach International Limited is an international interdenominational Christian charity and humanitarian aid organisation dedicated to improving the lot of children throughout the world, particularly focusing on the emerging nations of Eastern Europe and West Asia, and other economically distressed nations. The 'Love for Kids - Russia' project is an outreach run by

Kids Outreach International of Australia in conjunction with Real Help for People Foundation of St.Petersburg, working together with the Finnish Free Foreign Mission of Finland, Mission Russia Outreach and World Missions from USA, and other Christian organisations and churches from Australia and around the world. Associate membership of Kids Outreach International is avail-

able for an annual membership fee of \$27.50 (inc. GST). Please contact our office to obtain an application for membership.

Your financial support is vital. Please tell your friends about this opportunity to be part of this ministry to preach the Gospel to children around the world.

YOU CAN SEND WORKERS FROM THE BALTICS!

This summer for the first time, two teams from Estonia ministered in the pioneer camps. Baltic Christians brought the love of Christ to St. Petersburg children. After years of military occupation, now tears of reconciliation flowed with God's forgiving love between Estonian and Russian children. Both children and camp workers welcomed them. They were able to converse in the common Russian language. Next European summer Kids Outreach International plans to bring teams from all the Baltic nations, their nearest neighbours (only 6 hours

drive!). They know the language and culture as near neighbours. They will be a powerful force to minister in these camps.

You can help remove the only obstacle to their going - pressing poverty. It only costs A\$300 for you to send a Baltic Christian childrens worker to a pioneer camp!

If you cannot come this year, ***release someone from Estonia or Latvia to go for you!***

Harry Leesment



Harry Leesment

On the last day, it was great to see how much both the children and adults appreciated receiving Bibles, and I believe we can claim God's promise in Isaiah 55:11: "My word that goes out from my mouth will not return to me empty but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

*Dorothy James
Victory Baptist Team*

I would encourage committed Christians who are interested in the Russian Mission field to consider and pray about coming with Love for Kids as this is a field that has been prepared by our Lord for the sowing of His seed. No one who ever goes on this very effective Mission for our Lord will ever be the same again. — Ken Stephens, Wodonga



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HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE SAKHALIN ISLANDS?

Be prepared if God wants to send you there.

- ◆ Sakhalin Island is situated in the eastern coast of Russia, north of Japan with a population of 600 000, of which 58% are ex slaves imported by the Japanese before the Russians won the islands from them.
- ◆ 5, 500 children in camps of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk area are waiting to hear the Gospel and receive God's love through you during June-August 2001.
- ◆ Orphanages are also opening their doors for Christian teams to come.

"The most important thing for our children is love – please bring those kind of people to our camps." (General Education Chief, March 2000)

"You do honourable work, you must start in Sakhalin. All good things always happen in big cities like St. Petersburg. We, here in the far east, are always left out. Please come." (Deputy Mayor for Social Affairs, March 2000)

Did something move in your heart? Please contact our office for more information.

VISION 2001+

Our vision and plan for the ministry 2001 onwards is to:

- ✓ Expand the camp ministry, as the demand is always growing.
- ✓ Stage a large youth festival in St. Petersburg
- ✓ Train local youth workers (started in St. Petersburg in 1999).
- ✓ Assist churches to receive young people
- ✓ Plant new mission oriented churches
- ✓ Christian education program in St.Petersburg universities

Young people, adults, mothers and fathers, grandparents to live with Russian children from two weeks to three months, music teams & bands, drama/puppet teams to travel from camp to camp, dentists and dental nurses, English teachers, the deaf and signers to visit deaf children, craft club leaders and helpers.

WITHOUT ABUNDANCE...

Abundance has blinded the eyes of the Western people. It would be beneficial for every Christian to come and stay with the Russian children in the camps here at least once. This would help us to understand who our neighbour really is. We know the story of the Good Samaritan by heart, but how well do we put our theory into practice?

After staying here at the children's camps in Russia, it is impossible to live selfishly any more.

In one of the houses, the director came in and announced that it was laundry day. All but one of the children left for the laundry with their small bundle of washing. We asked Julia,



whether she would like to change her clothes as well, and go and do her laundry. Julia answered, "I do not have any other clothes." We rummaged through our bags and found some clothes for little Julia; so we all went and did our washing.

Another day we were making aeroplanes and helicopters out of pegs. Someone had brought in a 4" nail,

and there was a lot of discussion, who would get to keep the nail once the aeroplanes were finished. Compared to this, it makes me dizzy even to think about the amount of toys the children in the West have...

The older children came and wanted to give their hearts to Jesus. Their young hearts were already full of worry about the future. There is no future. Every child's story broke my heart.

Lord, please send to the Russian children many messengers of Your love!

*Toini Muikku
Orange Team*