

CHERNOBYL CHILDREN'S PROJECT (UK)

ПОДДЕРЖКА ДЕТЯМ БЕЛАРУСИ

www.chernobyl-children.org.uk Registered Charity No 1059832 SUMMER 2009

All Clear for the Summer Holidays at Last!

It has been touch and go over the last few months whether the children would be able to come for Recuperative Holidays this summer at all. Following an incident where a child remained in America beyond the length of her invited stay, the Belarusian government issued instructions that no children could be invited by charities to go abroad, until intergovernmental agreements were reached.

This has taken months of negotiation between UK Border Agency, the British and Belarusian Embassies and various parts of the Belarusian Government. In late May the agreement was eventually signed and the children can now travel. *Unless the spread of swine flu brings about a fresh ban on travel from Belarus to Britain.*



Sadly the agreement forbids children over 13 to travel on charity invitations. This is tragic for the teenagers with cancer and other serious health problems, and the orphanage teenagers like those from Svetlagorsk who usually come to Solihull. We are very much hoping that this decision will be reversed in time for next summer. Our Buxton group will as always host children with diabetes and this year for the first time, Gloucester will have a group of these children too. Young children in remission from cancer, with their mums will stay in Evesham, Glossop, Teesdale and South Manchester. Liverpool will host children with cancer, as will West Pennine who will be sharing their children with our newest group in Cornwall.

Endon and Stoke always have teenagers with cancer so this year, because of the restrictions, they have invited 18 year olds, whose holiday will be divided between local families and Cicely Haughton School in the Staffordshire countryside. For many of these young people who have been ill in their teens this will be their first trip abroad. Solihull will take younger kids from Svetlagorsk Orphanage who will stay at Springfield School in Knowle and children from villages who will stay with families. Children from contaminated villages will also stay with our groups in Rugby, Monk Fryston, Leeds and Mid Essex.

Launch of New Website!

You can read more about all our projects and stories from this newsletter on our website at www.chernobyl-children.org.uk. Roy Holland of our Monk Fryston group created the site and has looked after it for the last ten years. We are very grateful for all the time and energy he has devoted to this and he has done a wonderful job.

But it is now time for a change and in August we will launch a brand new website. Like the present site, it will contain information about the Chernobyl accident and all our projects, plus lots of photographs. However, it will be in an entirely new format; each of our groups will have their own page which they will be able to update themselves; there will be opportunities for visitors to the site to sign up for e-newsletters; and we will make sure that there is something new to see on the site every week.



You can raise funds for us every time you make a purchase on the internet. It's free!
Go to your favourite on-line shop via www.easyfundraising.org.uk/chernobylchildren



Plans for Ptich Holiday Camp 2009

Over 30 volunteers from Britain will fly out to Belarus in July and August to help provide a memorable holiday for over a hundred children with disabilities from Zhuravichi Orphanage and Rechitsa Boarding School. The children spend over 3 weeks at a Holiday camp in a clean part of Gomel Region and volunteers spend twelve days organising arts and crafts, sports and games, music and dancing. It is the highlight of the children's year and is just as important for the young adults we take.

The children's holiday is paid for by the state but once they reach 18 all holidays stop so we sponsor as many as we can of these young people living in institutions so they can have a fortnight of fun and new experiences. We are very grateful to Victor Mizzi and Chernobyl Children



Lifeline for once again sponsoring some of these young people. 20 Belarusian teaching students will also be working with the children and developing their skills for the future.

Some of our volunteers have been 3, 4, 5 or even ten times to the Camp! The happiness it so clearly brings for the children keeps drawing them back to offer their services for another year. Many thanks to them all for their dedication. Let's hope the new volunteers are infected with the same enthusiasm after their experience this summer!



New Fund Raiser

Jan Baxter has been co-ordinating our group in Newark for the last five years. She has organised some great fund raising events, including a ball this spring which raised a stunning £12,700. Jan has now volunteered to be our Fund Raising Co-ordinator. She will be in touch with all our groups offering them advice, ideas and materials to boost the brilliant fund raising which most of them already do. Besides supporting initiatives from groups, she is also hoping to be able to increase our support from companies and grant making trusts



Groups Support

Julie Gater, who with husband John has run our Endon and Stoke group for 12 years, took over the role of Groups Co-ordinator three years ago. She keeps the groups up to date with what the charity is doing nationally; liaises with them about the children who come for recuperative holidays; makes sure they have the materials they need; feeds ideas from the groups to the Trustees of CCP(UK); and is in daily contact with our office in Gomel and our National Co-ordinator

Training Programme in Parenting Skills

In April Dr Lorena Cecchi, Highly Specialist Clinical Psychologist from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service in Harrogate, North Yorkshire and Kirsty Hill, Senior Manager in charge of Family Centres in Leeds, delivered a 4 day course in the Principles of the Webster Stratton Parenting Programme. The programme is aimed at improving relationships between parents and children and is the first step in helping the Belarusians to set up a tier 1 prevention and early intervention service which prevents children from being received into state care and admitted to the baby home and subsequently institutions such as the psychiatric hospital and children's homes.

More than twenty professionals from the maternity hospital and various polyclinics attended the course which was very well received. Galina Shevko, Chief Paediatrician for Gomel attended the course and spoke about it on the radio afterwards. It is hoped to repeat this training with professionals from the Education and Social Protection Departments who also work with families.

Olympus KeyMed visit to Belarus

In May Luke Calcraft made his seventh visit to Belarus! One of the directors of this wonderful company who have been our greatest supporters over the last ten years, Luke first visited the country in 2000.

On a short whirlwind visit he met old friends at Klimovka, the Rogachev Families Association and the Mayflower Centre and enjoyed going to Zhuravichi to see how much has changed for many of the children there since his last visit. He agreed that KeyMed would buy new equipment to support the Children's Hospice in Minsk; donate endoscopic equipment for Zhlobin Hospital; and support the employment of a specialist nurse to develop the urodynamic testing programme in Gomel. All this on top of support KeyMed give us every year without which so much of our work in Belarus would not be possible.



Sharing Medical Expertise

Marie Owen, our Consultant Paediatrician, made her second visit to Belarus this spring. She was looking at how we could optimise our input to the health care of children with disabilities in Gomel Region and catching up with doctors from Gomel who have visited the Paediatric Department of Gloucestershire Royal Hospital.

Key elements of Marie's visit were:

- discussions with urologists in Gomel of ways in which the urodynamic equipment we took out might be used most effectively
- consideration of how assessment and treatment of children with swallowing problems could be started at an early age, so as to establish techniques such as gastrostomy feeding before the children reach Zhuravichi Orphanage
- stressing the need for more physiotherapy for children with physical disabilities, which might prevent some of the deformities of the limbs and spine which are seen in many children in orphanages
- meetings with neurosurgeons in Gomel and Minsk to consider how

best to ensure early assessment of children with hydrocephalus, requiring shunt operations

- a meeting in Gomel on the progress of our latest project which aims to convince the Ministry of Health that rescue medication can be given at home or school for children with severe epilepsy

We are delighted that Marie and colleagues from Gloucester Royal Hospital will be supporting the diabetic children who are having a holiday in Gloucester this summer. Marie was able to review these children, jointly with the Belarusian doctor who will accompany them on their trip.

Promoting Inclusion in Gomel

A beautiful new school was opened in Gomel in January this year. It has a lift, ramps and wide open spaces and is ideal for children in wheelchairs. The staff are very keen to start welcoming



children with disabilities into the school but the whole idea is very new to them and training is needed for teachers, parents of the current pupils, and parents of prospective children with mobility problems. Abraham Moss



High School in North Manchester has been successfully integrating children with a wide variety of Special Needs for over 20 years. Pamela Thompson has been responsible for this throughout that time, and in October she will visit Gomel to share her wealth of experience. We hope that a firm link can be made between the Manchester School and School No 70 in Gomel. The Ministry of Education would also like her to visit schools in Minsk.

Thank You!

We have had some generous donations this spring and would particularly like to thank the Suzette Morfield Charitable Trust for their wonderful support and Lloyds TSB Business Development team for their gift of £20,000, which will be used chiefly to support projects for children with disabilities.

Knowsley Council Activities in support of CCP(UK)

A Chernobyl Essay and Poetry Competition launched by the Children's Services Department has been widely supported by all the schools in Knowsley. The winning entries will shortly be available on our website.

Damian Allen, the Executive Director of Children and Family Services, took part in the Great Manchester Run to support us and raised over £2,000. Asda have been tremendous, placing collecting boxes on all their tills.

On June 14th Mike Fleming, Risk and Compliance Manager for Children's Services, set off to Belarus on one of our convoys. His truck was carrying sports, educational and disability equipment from schools in Knowsley. He sent regular blogs from the trip so that school students in the borough could keep up with his travels.



And in July Mike and his colleagues will be organising a Fun Day in Huyton Village Centre with a car boot sale, car wash, face painting and all sorts of family activities.

Local Contacts

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Ian Fairlie: Consultant on Radiation in the Environment; David Walker, Building Projects Manager

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