

## All Clear for Summer Holidays at Last! UKBA responds to Media Pressure

Children are now starting to arrive for their recuperative holidays with our groups in many parts of the country. But it has been touch and go this summer as to whether some of them would be allowed to travel

You may have seen an article in the Independent on Sunday 'Chernobyl's Children refused entry to the UK' on July 11th, describing the unprecedented refusal visas to Chernobyl charities by the UK Border Agency this summer. Families have been receiving early morning phone calls asking about the children coming to stay with them. The caller - who might be ringing from Kiev, Minsk or Moscow - then asks 'Will you look after the children properly?' or perhaps 'Will they be eating with your family?' These questions are supposed to ensure the safety of the children! And in cases where the Border Agency staff have not felt happy with the answers, or perhaps could not get hold of a family at all, they have simply refused the visa often doing this at the very last minute before the child is due to travel.



Our teenagers and mothers travelling from the children's cancer charity 'Children in Trouble' have been subjected to far more rigorous checks than ever before. But thankfully we now have all our visas, with some of them this week being issued within 24 hours. We just wish we had secured the media coverage a bit sooner!

Children from Terekhovka are already enjoying a holiday in Mid Essex; mums and young children with cancer are in Evesham; another group of children with their mums will arrive to stay in Glossop on Monday 19th; and over the next couple of weeks children in remission from cancer will arrive in Liverpool and West Pennines, with a group of older teenagers going to Endon; diabetic children will stay in Buxton & Longnor; a group from Svetlagorsk Orphanage will come to Solihull; and children from villages will holiday in Monk Fryston, Catterick, Gloucester and Rugby. We hope they and their host families will all have a wonderful summer.



## CHANGING ATTITUDES – ORPHANAGE DIRECTORS SEE A DIFFERENT SIDE TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

One of our main aims is improving the lives of people with disabilities in Belarus, and we took another step towards this by holding another educational visit for the Directors of two large orphanages for children with learning and/or physical disabilities.

CCP hosted Directors Victor Rudenka (Rechitsa) and Natalia Zychkova (Zhuravichi) along with our brilliant interpreter Ira Prakhapovich from our office in Gomel. They spent a week in the North visiting special schools and looking for new ways to work with their children in Belarus.



They are seen here at the Royal School Manchester, run by the Seashell Trust. Ann Goughe (recently voted UK Special Needs Teacher of the Year) talked to them about communication with children who have profound learning disabilities.

They also visited; Lancasterian School in Didsbury, Rodney House in Burnage, the David Lewis Centre at Alderley Edge, Inscape in Cheadle, Bridge College in Offerton, Pictor School in Timperly and Spring Hill, a Barnardos school in Ripon, finishing with seeing Residential units for children and young people with disabilities and a foster family.

They were very envious of our great resources and the quantity of staff, but most of all they were impressed by the attitude and approach towards children with special needs. We hope they went back to Belarus with enthusiasm and drive for improving the lives of children in their orphanages.

### Another Special Visit

In June we had another visitor when Sasha Kurilenko came to Britain for some rest and recuperation. Sasha is a bright and capable man who lives at Duyanovka, one of the institutions for young people with disabilities where we are currently working to improve quality of care for the residents.

Sasha grew up in Zhuravichi children's home and didn't have the greatest start in life, to say the least. He was discovered by CCP around 15 years ago, and went on to live at our 'Family Home 2000' for a few years, before moving to Duyanovka.

He recently went through a very low period and we decided to invite him for a visit to Britain. It was his third visit and he enjoyed spending time with old friends Freda and Jim in Gloucestershire before coming up North to Glossop. He did all kinds of activities such as riding an adapted bike, going to a rock gig and visiting plenty of pubs! We then took him on a trip down South, stopping in Birmingham to see Cirque du Soleil and then to Southend to visit old friends at Keymed. He kept us entertained with his never-ending stream of 'Russian proverbs' for every occasion, and we hope he returned to Belarus full of energy and happy memories.



## CCP Volunteers Get Ready For Belarus 2010

Our first group of Sanatorium volunteers are getting ready to fly to Minsk on Monday. Each group will spend 11 days at Ptich camp with children from Zhuravichi and Rechitsa orphanages. The volunteers have spent months fundraising, collecting toys and crafts and learning Russian phrases in preparation of the camp! This year there are lots of specialists going over; special needs teachers, nurses and physio-therapists, who we hope can spend some one-to-one time with the children who all have some form of physical and/or learning disability.



Some of them will also visit Zhuravichi orphanage to give some much needed attention to those who are unable to come to the Sanatorium. They will spend 5 days there and then move on to Vikov, an institution for adults with learning disabilities. They are planning to focus on creating ways for the staff to communicate with those who are non-verbal, such as making picture reference cards to point at so children can explain what they want.

## Making a Difference in the UK

For the past ten years, our Teesdale group has been coordinated wonderfully by **John Lowles (on the right)**. He has really done a fantastic job organising the hosting of groups of young children with cancer and their mums every summer.

John is a Russian speaker and has been to Belarus several times over the years to visit many of the mothers and children who have stayed with him, or with other members of the group. We would like to thank John for all the hard work and effort he has put into CCP, which is most appreciated by the mothers and children who have benefited so much from the holidays. We wish the new co-ordinator, who will take over from autumn, all the best for the future running of our Teesdale group.



## What Happens After The Orphanage?

A team of our Sanatorium volunteers are planning a 50s themed ball complete with a 3 course dinner and live rock'n'roll band.

It will be in aid of young people living in institutions in Belarus. Many of our volunteers watch the children grow up at the Sanatorium and want to keep in touch and help them as they move into an adult institution.

So, get your rock and roll on and keep your diary free for **October 16<sup>th</sup> 2010** in Manchester. More details will follow!



On the left is a picture of Dr Rosemary Newton, one of our medical consultants, on holiday in Peru using her CCP bag on the trek to Machu Picchu. We're setting up a page on the website where people can display their CCP bag's holiday snaps, so don't forget to pack it and send us your photos after!

We mentioned in an earlier newsletter our fantastic supporters, Alex and Liam, who are walking from Land's End to John O'Groats in aid of CCP. They are well into the walk, having completed the first phase of the walk through Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Gloucestershire! They have been lucky so far and not had to camp, as willing people and B&Bs have put them up for the night, including Freda and Jim in Gloucester who fed them well and gave them extra for the road! They have raised over £1800 so far and have a target of £3000. We wish them the best of luck and will be following their progress at their online blog, <http://www.walkonethousand.blogspot.com/>