

# CHERNOBYL CHILDREN'S PROJECT (UK)

## ПОДДЕРЖКА ДЕТЯМ БЕЛАРУСИ

### 'Rodni Kut' our Family Home in Rogachev

When we brought four children from Zhuravichi Children's Home and one from the Baby home in Gomel to the UK for a holiday in 2002 the families they stayed with were all so impressed with their improvements, and had become so fond of the children, that they were insistent that it would be wrong to let them go back into a big institution, even for a short time.

We were able to buy a small house in Rogachev and a small team from the UK put in ramps, accessible toilets and a good kitchen. While we were doing this work, the children all spent some time in a rehabilitation centre in Minsk, then back in the UK, back to Minsk and then eventually moved into the house in



January 2003.



Sergei Gryn worked with the British team to renovate the house. Then, when we were interviewing for carers, he applied to be the children's Guardian. CCP and the local Education Department agreed and Sergei has been 'Papa' at Rodni Kut ever since.

The name Rodni Kut means 'Cosy Corner' and we also had great support in the early stages from Rodney house



special school in Manchester, so it made a link with them. It was quite distressing to find later that half the corner shops in

Belarus are called 'Rodni Kut'!



We employed six carers to work shifts with the children and 4 of them still work in the house today, much loved by Anya, Nazar, Stas and Anton who are all now young adults.



Stas went to school in the local centre and teachers came into the house to work with the other children.



Anton is blind and autistic, due to foetal alcohol syndrome and severe neglect as a small child, and was the hardest child to interact with. Sveta, his teacher, developed a really good relationship with him and he still loves working with her today.



As a little boy Stas loved to take things to pieces, and he was also quite a worry as everything went into his mouth during the first couple of years at Rodni Kut.



He eventually grew out of that but still loves telephones and anything electronic and has always loved water.



of that but still loves telephones and anything electronic and has always loved water. He is brilliant at jigsaws and enjoys taking part in all the activities which go on in the house.



Anya, the only girl in the house, is lucky enough to have a family in the UK as well as her family in Rodni Kut.

She has been coming to stay with Joan Edwards and family since 2002. She grew up with Joan's granddaughter Annie, was bridesmaid at her wedding and is now very fond of Annie's two boys.



Anya loves to spend time watching DVDs – especially Strictly Come Dancing – and playing on her laptop. Since we built a big extension on the house, she has had plenty of space to use her walker to get about the house.



Nazar is the oldest member of the Rodni kut Family, and the chattiest! He has quite severe cerebral palsy and very little eyesight, but has a wonderful memory for names and voices.

This was Nazar on his first visit to Britain when he was nine. He has been back many times for Christmas visits staying with CCP Director Linda Walker, and recently came over to meet her grandchildren and celebrate his 24<sup>th</sup> birthday.





Nazar loves his Papa and like all our young people he is very happy at Rodni Kut.

A highlight of their day is always when Sveta comes to do some games and learning activities with them all.

She often takes them out too, and they also enjoy trips to the swimming pool and the local centre for young people with disabilities where they join in with music and singing.



There were originally five children in the house. Ira came straight from the Baby Home in Gomel. She had deformed feet, missing fingers and a cleft palate. In Exeter she had her feet removed and prosthetic legs fitted, and never looked back.

Whilst all the other children had some level of learning disability, Ira was bright.



She started to attend a mainstream school and soon was asking why she had five mums instead of just one like other children. We soon traced her mother who was delighted to have her back and Ira was very happy to join her mum, dad and sister.

She has maintained contact with her Rodni Kut family and still comes to visit. And Ira holidayed twice a year with Barbara and Andy Marshall in Devon for many years, getting her legs checked and change

