

2 0 0 7 O C T O B E R

HOPE *for* Children

T +371 67289646 MOB +371 29180879
A/K 576 RIGA LV1050 LATVIA, HOPE@HOPE.LV
WWW.HOPE.LV



✧ DAY CENTRES and FAMILY SUPPORT ✧

One of the young girls who attend our day centre is typical of many in that both her parents are alcoholics and she has to live in tiny, dark and dismal surroundings faced with frequent violence at home. Because her parents were both not working she and her family recently had to move house, yet again, because of debt.

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GREETINGS FROM US ALL AT HOPE FOR CHILDREN!

Isaiah 58:10

...If you spend yourself in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.



In many places in the gospels Jesus makes it quite clear that he came to minister not to the 'healthy' but to those who were 'sick' and needed a doctor, to those who were scorned by society. With this same love and compassion we are here in Latvia to minister to not only the children who have suffered so much because of problems at home but also their parents, those who are very lost in alcohol abuse, violence, and other traps. It's true that many over the years have

struggled to understand why we serve such families; it would seem much easier, fairer and nicer to help those who are 'deserving' but if we really want to see Latvia change for the better we must faithfully follow Jesus' example. And we have many examples of not only children and teenagers whose lives have changed for the better but also parents.



more on pg. 2



Greetings from us all at Hope for Children!

from pg.1

As we face the daily challenges of our work amongst such families in Latvia we regularly thank God for the faithful support of those of you who are not indifferent to the needs of others. Many of you have prayed faithfully for protection of us all in this ministry and for good fruit to result from our work, many of you have provided the means by which we can be free to minister to those in great need, and some of you have been able to dedicate some weeks or months to serving our children here in Latvia or in your own homes. May the Lord bless you and reward you for your personal sacrifice and may the news below encourage you to continue in your support.

Helen Vipass, Director

✘ DAY CENTRES and FAMILY SUPPORT ✘

from pg.1

For her our centre is something close to heaven, a bright, warm place where she can truly rest, do her homework in peace, unburden her worries onto caring, listening staff, receive encouragement and direction. But what about her parents? It took practically daily phonecalls and much time before mum actually began to trust us. She later confided that she really believed we only befriended her to be able to later demand something from her. When we took her by car to our shelter where she could live for a time if she became homeless she apparently thought we were really going to take her somewhere else where she would face harm. This poor woman had never experienced such kindness in her life and was sure everyone was out to only hurt her! We are glad to say that although there is still much work to do and much to pray for, with our support this mum has separated from her violent husband, found somewhere to rent and been able to begin to put her life in order.



Just one of many of our children who can boast of better grades in school this year. Thank you for helping provide all our kids need for school!

One child in our central Riga day centre has changed homes (and dads!) so frequently over the past years that she told us that the only constant and secure place she had in her life was our centre. Every home she moves into now she sees as temporary and she even prefers to keep her belongings with us, something many of the kids we help prefer to do. Another child shares a room with mum and two other adults in a flat that has been without electricity for the past three years; only her grandma there has any regular income but this is just a small pension.

Skrunda

New accomodation for Skrunda children's day centre, is now very close to being finished. It has been a big task to completely renovate the second floor of a local church where the centre will operate from December onwards (all being well) but it has been quite exciting to see it all come together.



Swedish school children raised money for the heating system, twice a team of workers from the USA have given up precious holiday time to fly over and fix the bathroom and plumbing, an Irish charity founded to support children in Latvia has covered the cost of the fire escape and kitchen, a church in Virginia USA has funded the furniture and fire alarm system and several individuals have been so generous to make this centre happen.

Homes

We met Lolita when she was 9 years old and hadn't yet set a foot inside school. Since we took her into our



care she's managed to finish 12 years of school and successfully graduated this year. She is now working and 15 September married a fine young man from her church in

Riga. Lolita was happy for us to share a wedding photo with you and is so grateful to God for how he reached out to her and changed her life around. Andris and his wife Iveta, Natalia and Maiya all continue to foster children in our apartments. We are so glad that some of their fostered kids have found loving adoptive families over the past year but a free bed never stays empty for long!

Volunteers

We are so grateful to Maria from Sweden for giving up two months this summer to help out at our Bolderaya children's day centre and at the summer house we rent by the sea. School holidays are three months long here and with the shortage of staff we have been suffering she seemed truly like an angel sent from heaven!



Rita, one of our day centre carers, with Surhan who she now fosters. They, with many more of our kids, had a wonderful fun time by the beach this summer.

Anyone with a servant heart, a strong faith and a love of children is warmly welcome to join us for the Christmas and summer holidays, or even longer!

We'd also like to say a big thank you to those families who received our children in their homes this summer in Sweden and the USA. One of the teenagers said she'd never in her life received so much love and attention, another spoke of her host as being like a real mum to her. Our children really don't experience much of the love and attention that normally children receive and being welcomed in such a way, being made to feel so loved and special meant so very much to them.

Latvia

The Child and Family Ministry is still working hard to better the fate of many children who are without parents of their own. Thankfully the number of local people adopting children is slowly increasing but still we have many families in crisis being evicted from their homes and still we have thousands of children living in State care. We have been shocked by the heartlessness of many landlords who rent out rooms then evict families onto the street with practically no notice. Many of our families who are struggling financially are

given no period of grace if they can't pay on time and it's a great relief that we now have a shelter where at least some can take refuge until they can find another place to live.

It is good that there is now lots of work to be found in Latvia due to the mass exodus of workers leaving for other European countries and this is also forcing employers here to pay better salaries. Sadly though increases in salaries are greatly lagging behind the increases in the cost of living. One single mum for example was asked to pay 100LS for rent out of a salary of 240LS (approx \$460) per month, and the price of basics such as milk and bread have practically doubled during the past year or two. Another downside of the exodus of workers is that very many organisations, including ours, cannot fill vacancies therefore, again, we warmly welcome volunteers!

For those of you who pray

Please pray for:

- ★More children to be adopted from Latvia's orphanages, more families here to open their homes to foster children. Much blessing for those who have adopted or are fostering, they often face difficult challenges.
- ★Healing and more protection for all children facing abuse here, that the Lord would increase their self-esteem and feeling of worth and being loved.
- ★Finding children and families who are most in need of our help.
- ★Our hard-working staff who face many emotionally exhausting tasks. They need much encouragement and protection.
- ★A smooth and speedy end to repairs at the new Skrunda day centre.
- ★Development of a holiday base for the kids on the land we have by the sea. We have just given up the holiday home we rented for many years and are so hoping we can have as much fun by the sea next summer!
- ★More families to receive our children in their homes during the holidays.
- ★Latvia's government, for it to be more compassionate towards the poor and take action to alleviate their burden.

For those of you who can give

If one of you says to him, "Go I wish you well; keep warm and well fed" but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? James 2 v16

Thank you so much for your financial support over the years. It means a lot to us, and the Lord, that you act to provide for children in need rather than just 'wishing them well'. Right now with the high inflation we are suffering an increase in support would be particularly appreciated, and if possible on a regular basis.

Bank transfers can be made to our bank in Latvia:

SEB Unibanka

SWIFT: UNLALV2X

Address: **Pils iela 23, Riga, Latvia**

Account name: **Hope for Children**

Account Nr: **LV93 UNLA 0002 0054 69960**

Alternatively, cheques in any currency can be sent to:

Hope for Children

A/K 576,

Riga LV1050,

Latvia

Please address the cheque to *Hope for Children*

If you live in the UK:

We can recover tax on your gift through The Dove Trust. Please call them on 0845 130 3683 and ask how you can make a donation to Hope for Children.