

HOPE FOR CHILDREN NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2008

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Yuri was one of the first to turn to us for help after the collapse of the construction industry in Latvia and the onslaught of a major economic crisis “Helen, if anything happens to me and Lois can you look after our three children?” he pleaded over the phone. Faced with death threats because of unpaid debts and having no money to pay for legal help to register their two companies as bankrupt meant that this family would not only lose their home and everything they ever had but also without help would be on the run for the rest of their lives and even unable to work elsewhere officially. Laila and her husband, also raising three children, had both had well-paid jobs and when both were made redundant they could no longer pay the rent. After losing their home they spent some time living with family and friends until they could find a cheaper place to live. Again though they couldn’t manage to meet the deadline for rent and they were turfed out by an angry landlord who confiscated all their belongings until they paid him what he was owed. With only one blanket between the five of them and no food (Laila had even sold her phone to buy food for the children) they turned to us for help.

We thank God that we are still able to be here serving families in crisis like Laila’s and Yuri’s and indeed there was much we were able to do because of the love and provision of God that we see daily in our ministry. We thank you too for your prayers and support without which our ministry would be greatly limited. At present we are running three childrens day-care centres, although sadly we’ve had to seriously cut back the work of our central day centre, two shelters and providing accommodation and other assistance to two foster families. We pray that as the situation worsens in Latvia that we will have the support to help more and not less.

Helen Vipass, Director



Vineta's story

Skrunda Day-Care centre has been receiving children in need for already two years and five months. Before that, as a Sunday school teacher at Skrunda Baptist Church, I met with many children who were evidently missing so much parental love and attention, food and clothing. Seeing how much time they spent on the street was what started a big, beautiful dream of a day centre but, despite authorities recognising the need, all attempts to get support for the project I wrote failed. It was in summer 2004 that I met Helen Vipass who was not only enthusiastic and gave good advice but through Hope for Children began the setting up and running of our centre. At first we rented accommodation but thanks to the wonderful response of good-hearted people we were able to renovate the entire second floor of the church where now we have beautiful, clean and light

rooms with a big, fine fireplace. The children were so glad to take part in the repairs pasting wallpaper and painting walls and since we opened around 30 of the most needy children of Skrunda, from 4 to 18 yrs old, have enjoyed attending the centre.

Of course at the start there was much we weren't sure about and at times it seemed that in our town only I cared about the fate of our children. There have been many adventures and trials along the way and I still have much to learn but I've realised how often directly or indirectly the children through their love and care for me help me understand the best way forward. I've also realised how much God has led me and how wonderful he is for giving me this gift and privilege of having the children's trust and of being able to be together with them through moments of joy and sorrow.

Recently we started a serious battle for families. The children are learning to pray and thank God for their families and for school and we teach the children that they should not feel responsible for their parents mistakes, at the same time telling the parents how unique and wonderful their children are. We have already seen evidence of the healing of scars and the children sometimes express how much they are happy being with us by telling us they would love to live at the centre all the time. For this we thank all those who've helped us materially or by praying so that we would be fed, clean and warm. Thank you so much for the warmth of your hearts and kind thoughts about us.

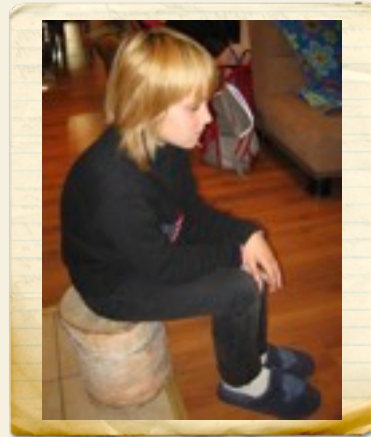
Vineta Tarame





Our wonderful volunteers

Both local and foreign volunteers have helped us enormously in developing and running our centres at Hope for Children. We have had volunteers from the UK helping us entertain the children in summer and good folk from the USA and Sweden helping us do repairs around our day centres and shelters. Locally though we have a wonderful friend who helps us with our IT, another who has put in many hours of labour clearing our land by the sea and a very precious young man from Ukraine called Andrei who has just started outreach to teenage boys in Bolderaya. Thank you so much if you have helped us voluntarily in the past, your helping hand has been appreciated more than you probably realise.



The Land of Frowns

Recent research by the University of Michigan surveyed people in 97 nations asking them how satisfied with life they are. Twelve of the bottom fifteen most unhappy countries were former Eastern Bloc states with Latvia taking 11th place from bottom at number 86. Over 50% of respondents in Latvia had said that they were unhappy and as you walk around Riga it is often very evident in the faces of people you see.



Richard at 7 yrs old is one of our youngest children and attends our central day-care centre. He is one of six children from a problem family and has never attended a nursery or school. He is a very sweet little boy who is a delight to have around as we prepare him to start school in September

About Giving

Recently we celebrated the 18th birthday of a girl who we'd seen growing into such a fine and talented young lady since the age of 11. Like many of our children she could hardly recall a time when her mother gave her a gift or congratulated her on her birthday but if this were all our children had to miss in their lives they would no doubt even say they were lucky. We have children who curl up behind a divan to sleep because they hardly get a wink's sleep at home, children whose parents don't bother to enroll them in school, children who are constantly moving from home to home, children who are so hungry they are

waiting at our doors before we open. We have children praying that their parents would stop drinking and others that come to us when they feel ill because there will be no comfort or medicine at home. We have a group of four siblings who are facing a winter with no electricity, no heat and they never see a warm meal at home. One of our children talked of a rat that jumped out at him as he entered his dilapidated home, another who while praying before eating declared 'and thank you God that we can eat TWO times a day here not just once'. Thank you for helping make it possible to meet at least some of the needs of our children.

Your gifts are so important for us to provide loving, protecting, supporting arms, listening ears, wise counsellor, warm and bright places to rest and study, study materials, excursions and fun. And as we approach Christmas, we trust that because of your generosity we will truly be able to celebrate our Saviour's birth. No gift would ever be too small and we hope and pray that as we commit ourselves to serving these children week after week, month after month, year after year you will also be alongside supporting. May God richly bless you for any personal sacrifice for those who have so little.

97° 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 contact us by mail or email (addresses at the head of this letter) and we will have relevant forms sent to you.

