

# Hope for Children News

## November 2009

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What a very busy year it has been for us at Hope for Children! Many of you must have been wondering if we are still here but I promise you our long silence has been only because of the onslaught of extra need without the extra staff, not because we have nothing to tell.

support which enables us to continue our work and please continue to help us as we help more and more victims of poverty and abuse.

Helen M Vipass  
Director

The very drastic budget cuts in Latvia and the very high unemployment mean that there are very many in poverty here now with few resources available from the State to help the poor. A survey revealed that nearly half of the unemployed had not registered as unemployed (making the real unemployment level to be about 25%) and therefore get no help in the form of benefits. We are horrified by changes in the law which mean if anyone has unpaid loans they cannot qualify for even the smallest of social benefits. One mum who came to us fell into this category and was trying to live on her child's benefit alone, a miserly LS 8 (\$17) a month. Sadly many of our former children who had begun to stand on their own two feet have been forced by circumstances to come back to us for help. One of them had had his baby taken away from him, another, just 18 years old, hadn't any money to bury his mother who'd just died and a third, still trying to finish school, was unable to get a decent night's sleep in a very cold old car which was his only home. All of them are finding it practically impossible to find work.

The children that attend our day care centres and their families also face impossible situations but amongst all the dismay and fear many experience the practical and unconditional love of God, something of his warmth and care through the serving hands of our staff here at Hope for Children. We often get tired but we also get much joy from being able to alleviate suffering and help change lives around. Thank you so much for your



Matthew 1 v 23  
“.. and they will call him  
“Emmanuel” -  
which means  
“God with us”.”

Wishing you  
a blessed Christmas!

## A YEAR OF WEDDINGS

Four of our former children this year were married. One, a girl we had found living on the streets when she was only 9 yrs old, married a young man in the USA. Another, a young man who had suffered so much as a street boy, married a lovely lady from the church he attends here.

Gundars, pictured below, was a young teen working hard on the streets of central Riga to try and provide for his younger brother and sister when we met him in 1994.

He told us recently that apart from one other boy, who also attended our centre, he is the only one from amongst his group of friends at that time that is doing well now. He realises that if it hadn't been for Hope for Children he would most probably have also ended up involved in crime or addicted to alcohol or drugs.



## CHILDREN'S DAY CARE CENTRES

It's such a joy to help children who are just so appreciative of any help. The parents of children who attend our day centres often can't afford the basics and we get hugs, kisses and thanks from the kids even when we buy them nasty-tasting medicine they need!

We're not just meeting the physical needs of kids though and staff at our Bolderaja day centre are so happy at how much more free and uninhibited the children are becoming when before they would shy



Angela, pictured above with her mum, was brought to us by some street boys when, at the age of 9, she was running away from home. She came to live with us and later so did her little sister who was eventually adopted into a loving family in the USA. Angela did so well though when she moved to the UK to work that she was able to eventually seek out her mum and pay for her to go through alcoholism rehabilitation. The wedding in London was such a wonderful reunion with both restored mum, little sister and her new family, so much love and joy abounded!

away and not know how to interact with others. It's so lovely to see them responding to our care in trying oh so hard to behave well, and so encouraging to see depressed and sad kids beginning to smile and sing happy songs. Very often too the kids come to us passive and not wanting to do anything, even play games, and it's great to see them becoming more active and creative. This centre is small and we're really hoping and praying for a larger place so that kids who could hardly get any sleep at home co-

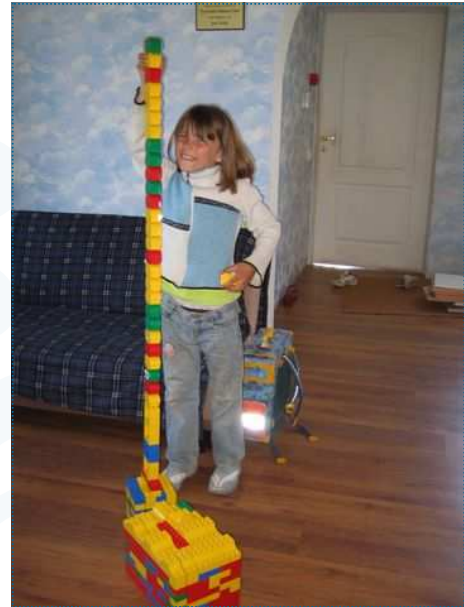
uld take a nap during the day and teenagers could have their own space away from the little ones, but the work going on there and from there is wonderful in so many respects.

In Skruna we may have larger premises but there are different challenges because the town itself is so small and far away from the city. Buying winter boots for all the kids from one little shop and trying to get the kids needed medical treatment is quite a challenge.



When we've ferried children to hospital or clinics doctors have commented they've never met such kind people but it's not always easy to find transport when needed. A recent gift of a Ford Transit minibus therefore was such a big blessing.

*Below left — 6 kids got to go to summer camp in Sweden. Below right — Skruna day centre is fun!*



## FAMILY SUPPORT

More and more families in crisis have been turning to us for help this year. One father came recently and nearly broke down as he told of how he couldn't find work to provide for his family and they were facing eviction with nowhere else they could go. When his wife was unfairly dismissed from her job she couldn't cope and ended up in hospital with a nervous break-down. Some have asked for candles because they can't pay their electricity bill, and others have asked for money to buy food or medicine.

Many will not go to the doctor because even if they

can pay the small fee they won't be able to afford any further treatment needed.

We are channeling out aid in the form of food, clothing and other, referring families to other places they might also get help, befriending and comforting but also, if we have the resources, organising events or excursions.

Valentina, below, lives in a one-bedroom flat with her 6 children, son's wife and their daughter. Four of the children have chronic health problems.



## **NEEDS**

The Latvian government's recent policies to tax the poor more leave the people here wondering who does really care and who will defend the poor and weak. Hope for Children is responding in God's love and strength as much as possible but our hands would be tied if it weren't for the financial support of those who understand that love gives not just sympathises.

We have many mouths to feed, many rotten teeth to fix, many books and materials for school to buy, many to clothe for winter and many distressed and broken people to hear and comfort all of which we do existing entirely on free-will donations with no income from projects or from the government. Over the next year our hopes are to

employ more staff so we can expand our work and take under our wing a struggling church-based project for street children in a very run-down area of Liepaja. We also need to raise money to settle the remaining part of a loan we took to buy land by the sea and to further develop that into a summer camp base. Further to that we are really hoping we can purchase bigger premises for our children's day centre in Bolderaja.

Latvia has taken a particularly hard hit from the economic crisis and our work is on the increase not decrease. Your donations are so vital at this time.

### **Bank transfers can be made to our bank in Latvia:**

SEB banka

SWIFT: UNLALV2X

Address: Pils iela 23, Riga, Latvia

Account name: Hope for Children

Account Nr: LV93UNLA0002005469960

### **For donations particularly towards property needs:**

Swedbank

Bank address: Balasta Dambis 1a, Riga.

SWIFT: HABALV22

Acct name: Hope for Children

Account Nr.: LV36HABA0551015180257

### **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.

### **If you live in the USA:**

We can recover tax on your gift through "Simple Obedience Ministries". Please contact us for more information.



Pavel is one of our older boys who has wisely chosen to go back to finish school while there's no work around.



**We never undervalue your prayers. If you would like to receive our prayer bulletins please do contact us.**