

ThePromise Post



ThePromise has been set up to help children with special needs living in Russian orphanages. Our first project is to pilot an internationally acclaimed pre-school education system called 'Portage' in one 'baby home' in Ryazan. **ThePromise** is wonderfully supported in this vision by a growing band of fundraisers called 'Ellie's Angels' named in memory of Ellie Settelen, who helped inspire the birth of **ThePromise**.

For further details of the work, please visit our website at www.thepromise.org.uk

Hello Everyone

Welcome to the Christmas 2004 edition of **ThePromise** Post. It has been a really exciting six months for us, as we have now reached our fundraising target of being able to fund a full year's worth of programme activity in Ryazan - a total of £47,000. This means that we can now turn our

efforts to the task of setting up our operation in Russia. We have been consistently overwhelmed by your generosity, in both the donations that you have made, and also for the time and energy so many of you have given in helping us reach our target so soon.

Thank you all for your support - we know that you will be as excited as we are that our vision is now moving so fast towards becoming a reality for the children in the baby home in Ryazan.

We wish you all a peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Vika

ThePromise Ice Ball

ThePromise held its inaugural "Russian Ice Ball" in the 'The Rose Room' at the Twickenham Rugby Club on October 2nd this year.

Sandra Hey and Phil Thurston transformed the room into an ethereal icy splendour with muslin, blue lighting, candles and stunning table decorations which set the scene for a truly memorable evening.

Guests were welcomed with champagne and the wonderful music of the Azia String Quartet before enjoying a noisy round of 'Heads and Tails' which raised £1,100 for us.

Russian flavour, entertainment was provided by roving Russian entertainers, and then by Alex Prior, an 11 year old boy, the strength and beauty of whose voice defied his age.



David Palmer then led the auction, towards which so many of you had donated such fabulous items and the bids raised an extraordinary £11,000!

Some of you even got to your feet once the scheduled auction items had been completed, and offered up further auction items! It was a wonderful display of warmth and enthusiasm, which helped make the Ball the success that it was.

Finally, our guests crowded the

dance floor as Derek DeSouza's 'One Foot in the Groove' disco rounded off a fabulous night.



And the total raised?

A staggering £20,500!

Our thanks go to Vicki Brown and her amazing Ball Committee, who worked tirelessly to make the Ball the success it was. Not only did it enable us to reach our target, but they succeeded in creating a really magical occasion.

Our thanks also go to all of you who so generously donated raffle and auction prizes, and also to all of you who dug so deeply into your pockets in your bidding.

Shall We Do it Again?!

As our inaugural Ball was such a success, we are keen to organise another one within the next 18 months, so if any of you feel you have the time to commit to being part of the next Ball Committee, we would love to hear from you! Special skills are not required - just your time and enthusiasm, so if you are interested, please contact us via our e-mail:

post@thepromise.org.uk

Perhaps you could even persuade a couple of friends to join you too!

ThePromise Story Video

is available on request for any fundraising events either as a DVD or VHS Video.



During a delicious three course dinner with a distinctly

Programme Progress

Thanks to you and our fundraising success, we are now in a position to start developing our project at the Ryazan baby home. We have had an excellent response to our advertisement for a Project Development Manager, and interviews will be conducted during the middle of December 2004, with a view to our new recruit taking up their role sometime before April next year. Our Project Manager will have the

task of setting up the project in Ryazan, registering us as a



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Russian charity, establishing our office administration

procedures, recruiting local staff and organising their training and liaising with the local community groups, relevant authorities and funding bodies. A large part of this role will be to monitor the pilot project and disseminate the results as widely as possible at the end. It promises to be an exciting year and we will keep you fully informed of our progress!



Fundraising Thankyous

Very special thanks must go to **The Barbara Ward Children's Foundation** who awarded us a grant during the summer of £5,000. This has given us a huge boost to our confidence and, along with the success of our Ball, has helped to achieve our fundraising goal. We are enormously grateful to the Trustees of The Barbara Ward Children's Foundation for listening to our vision so carefully and sharing our desire to bring it to fruition. We look forward to sharing lots of positive feedback from Ryazan with them over the coming months. A big thank you to them!

We must also thank **GlaxoSmithkline** for a grant of £250 from their "Making a Difference" scheme, and to some of the members of **UNISON** who were so moved by watching our video at one of their Branch Seminars, that they raised £260 on the day from those attending. Also thank you to the Partners and Staff at **MGI Midgley Snelling** who made **ThePromise** one of the two charities they are supporting instead of sending out Christmas cards this year. And a big thank you to **all of you** who continue to share **ThePromise Story** video with others and fundraise so selflessly on our behalf.

School, Churches and other Community Groups

Most schools run fundraising events throughout the year for charities that are often nominated by the children and parents. It's a great way of raising the awareness of our children to the situation of other children all around the world who experience life very differently.

We would be thrilled if you and your children were to nominate **ThePromise** as your school charity, and would be

happy to come in and talk to both staff and children about **ThePromise**.

Our video is suitable for assemblies and powerfully shows the lives of the children in the Baby Home in Ryazan, explaining the vision we have for them.

We also expect to be able to record the developments in the baby home over the coming year and should be able to return to schools to show the children what their efforts have

helped to achieve.

Or it may be that you are a member of a church, or other group or organisation that also raises money for charities - we have already presented to, and have the support of churches, ladies groups, coffee mornings and home sales mornings and would be happy to come and talk to yours!

If you are interested, please contact us via e-mail: post@thepromise.org.uk

Misdiagnosis

Did you know? - The charity "EveryChild" recently conducted a survey amongst disabled children living in Russian orphanages. They looked at 450 children who the Russian medical teams had categorised as being 'severely disabled' and found that only 150 of these would have been similarly diagnosed by the medical teams in the UK. This means that a staggering 300 children in this sample had been misdiagnosed, and will

be sent to an orphanage for severely disabled children with



Lena

no hope of education or therapy of any sort - their futures will be

very bleak indeed. This sort of misdiagnosis is widespread in Russia and once these children have been given a classification, it is very difficult to reverse. Charities working with disabled children in Russian orphanages such as **EveryChild** and **ThePromise** will be working hard to try and reduce the incidence of misdiagnosis wherever possible.



A Special Thank You!

We would like to thank **Iona Sutherland** for the enormous contribution she has made to **ThePromise**.



Iona and Pasha

It was as a result of Iona's and Sarah's visit they made together in the summer of 2002 that **ThePromise** was born. Iona has since worked tirelessly supporting Sarah and setting up the financial systems and the database, totally voluntarily. Thank you Iona! We wouldn't have got as far as this without you!

Calling all Bookkeepers!

We are seeking to recruit a part time book keeper, who would also be able to maintain our database. We anticipate that this would require approximately 1 days' work a month. We have prepared a brief job description, and will offer the going rate for your professional services, so please contact us via our website if you are interested.

Annual Report

Our first annual report is now completed. If you would like a copy, please contact us via e-mail: post@thepromise.org.uk

Don't forget...

.....the fundraising faithfuls:

UshopUgive - do your shopping on line and donate to

ThePromise at the same time

GiveAsYouEarn - donate directly from your salary - very tax effective!

Affnicom - support **ThePromise** through your phone bill - visit our website for more details.