

# ThePromise Post



**ThePromise** has been set up primarily to support the needs of disabled children housed within the Russian orphanage system. The first phase of **ThePromise** is to introduce an internationally acclaimed pre-school education system called "portage" to one "baby home" in Ryazan, to help change the course of these children's future. **ThePromise** is wonderfully supported in this vision by a growing band of fundraisers called "Ellie's Angels", so called in memory of Ellie Settelen, who helped inspire the birth of **ThePromise**. For further details of the work, please visit our website [www.thepromise.org.uk](http://www.thepromise.org.uk)

## Hello Everyone

A very Happy Christmas to you all, and a big welcome to our first edition of **ThePromise Post**! We hope to be able to publish this regularly throughout the year to keep you all up to date with the progress of **ThePromise**. We've had an exciting year and have been really overwhelmed by your generosity, your pas-

sion, and your ability to embrace the same vision as ourselves. Without your help, we would never have been able to mould this vision into a reality as we are doing now. We are hoping that finances and personnel will all be in place by April 2004 and that the children in the Ryazan baby home can then start to

benefit from the wonderful one-to-one attention that the portage system will bring. There is still much to be done before then, but with your help and support, we know we'll get there. Have a very peaceful Christmas and remember the Russian children on the 7<sup>th</sup> January as they celebrate their Christmas!



Some of the children from Group 6

## Ellie's Angels

Thank you so much for all your wonderful support so far. All your efforts have raised over £13,000! Fantastic! Some of our Angels have really got the bit between their teeth! Amongst them are Sophie and Tom who recently completed a sponsored 2-day walk over Exmoor, raising £240. At 10 years old, we reckon Sophie had picked the

short straw in the rucksack stakes!. Well done Sophie and Tom! Jane Poulter has recently held a swanky underwear sale, with a donation going to **ThePromise**. She raised a fantastic £170. And Phil Thurston is not only going to run the London Marathon for us next year, but is also holding a Christmas party and charging his friends for the

pleasure of attending! We hope he doesn't have too lonely a Christmas! Please print off a copy of Phil's Marathon sponsorship form from our website (the "Fundraising" page) or contact us and we will send it to you.

Please keep your fundraising ideas coming in, and let us know if there is anything

Huge thanks have to go to our corporate sponsors. We have been staggered by the kindness of **TeddyMatters**, an internet-based business selling antique teddy bears. Diana Offen has been regularly donating the proceeds from some of the bears she sells and has raised an astonishing £2,900 so far.

Please visit her website at [www.teddymatters.com](http://www.teddymatters.com) and check out the gorgeous teddies!

### We must also thank:

Circuit Vision Ltd  
The Elena Trust  
Midgeley Snelling  
for their valued support.

## Child Labour!

At 10 years old, we reckon Sophie Nash picked the short straw in the rucksack stakes!



## UshopUgive.com

If you can do some of your Christmas shopping this year on the internet, please visit:

**UshopUgive.com** and select **ThePromise** as your chosen charity. A percentage of all purchases made through this website will then come to us. Many high street retailers are featured. Tell your friends!

## Did you know?

...the difference your support will make? A donation of £50 will pay the salary of a portage worker in Russia for one month.....Sometimes it doesn't take too much to make a big difference.

## Programme Support

We are very lucky to have the support and enthusiasm of Mollie White, who helped bring Portage over to the UK from America nearly 30 years ago. Mollie has offered to train our locally recruited Portage workers in Russia and to help us establish a system of evaluation so we can analyse the project's effectiveness. This will be really important in the future when developing the project further and raising funds.

She has also agreed to be a member of our Advisory

Board. Thank you Mollie!

*"I first came across this method of working with children with special needs in 1976. I count myself fortunate enough to have been invited to participate in a very successful pilot project examining the Portage model in action, set up by the Wessex Health Care Evaluation Research Team. As a result of our confidence in the results achieved by the project, we worked together as a team, over a number of years, to disseminate the approach across the UK where it is now a recognised part of established practice, benefiting many thousands of children with special needs each year. More recently I have worked on projects to establish the service in other countries, and I am excited to be involved in its introduction to the Ryazan Baby Home. I truly believe that it will make a huge difference to the lives of these Russian children".*

**Mollie White**

## ThePromise Progress



**Sarah and Peter Settelen visited Ryazan again in May this year.** They had long discussions with Tatiana Gross, the Director of the "baby home" (pictured centre with Sarah and Iona), who is very supportive of

**ThePromise** and is keen for the children to benefit from the system as soon as possible. The children in the baby home were, as always, delightful and absorbing, desperate for attention and revelling in every cuddle given and moments shared. Sarah also had a meeting with the Assistant Director of the Spe-

cial Needs Course at Ryazan University, who was fascinated to learn about Portage and offered to help in any way she could.



**We are also delighted to have been granted charitable status back in July which**

has opened up all sorts of fundraising opportunities to us. We are now busy applying to Trusts for further funds.

**We've been working hard on the portage programme itself** and are happy that, with Mollie's help, we now have a programme plan that will work within an orphanage setting. Portage is primarily a home-based education system so

**ThePromise** is taking a pioneering step by introducing a portage programme into an institutional setting

## Can you help?

Do you work in a large company or know someone that does? Do you have any connections with Trusts?

If you do, and feel you could approach them for support on our behalf, we would be very grateful. Let us know if we can help in these approaches.

### Lost your donation form?

Don't panic! You can still become one of Ellie's Angels by visiting our website at

[www.ThePromise.org.uk](http://www.ThePromise.org.uk)

Click on "How to help" and then print out Ellie's Angels Pack. If you don't have access to the internet, just get in touch via phone or letter and we will put one in the post to you.

## Tax Returns!

If you or anyone you know completes self-assessment tax returns, you could now support ThePromise by nominating us to receive the tax repayments as a donation. We will be listed on the Inland Revenue's website with our unique code which is **VAL72TG**. This method of giving will only be able to be used for the 2003/2004 returns, the forms for which are issued in April 2004. Please spread the word!



## Angels Race

We're offering up a magnum of bubbly (kindly donated) to the Angel who can recruit the most people to become Ellie's Angels between now and February 6<sup>th</sup> (Ellie's birthday). Please make sure that you ask them to complete the line on our donation form asking them how they heard about ThePromise, so we know which Angel to attribute them to!

## Christmas Cards?

What about encouraging the company you work for to substitute Christmas cards this year for an e-mail instead and donate the money saved to ThePromise? The staff at Circuit Vision Ltd are doing this and are including a link to our website in their e-mail card. Great idea! Thank you!

### Who are We?

**ThePromise** has 6 Trustees including fundraisers, event organisers a commercial consultant and a lawyer,

We also have an Advisory Board, who offer advice as and when necessary:

**Martin Bax D.M.(Oxon) FRCP FRCPCH**  
Consultant Paediatrician

**Lesley Carroll-Few MRCSLT**  
Speech and Language Therapist

**Diane Williams**  
Senior Portage Teacher

**Mollie White Dip.Ed, M.A.**  
Educationalist, Portage Specialist

**Joy Horne B.A. Hons, MSc, AFBPsS**  
Educational Psychologist

**Liz Hindmarch - EHPR**  
PR Consultant

### Martin Bax recently said

*"As a Paediatrician I have had some contact with Eastern European Services for disabled children. I paid a visit 10 years ago to Russia leading a group of paediatricians and obstetricians looking at obstetric services, outcomes and the care of children with disabilities. More recently and on-going I have been carrying out a study of services for disabled children throughout Eastern Europe and know something therefore of the conditions in Russian residential institutions and orphanages. I am quite certain from what I have heard of the Ryazan Baby Home that Portage is an excellent early intervention programme to introduce."*