

STOP PRESS

The Big Give Christmas Challenge 2012
6th – 8th December 2012
Be near a computer at 10am to help ThePromise raise **£6000!**

ThePromise Newsletter 2012



Dear Friends,

As we approach our **10th Birthday** in 2013, I am acutely aware of how far we have come. We are now witnessing tangible shifts in the attitude towards disabled children by the Russian authorities. This has been demonstrated through our on-going relationships with the Ministry of Social Protection which have resulted this year in receiving funding from them, for the first time, to support an aspect of our work. This represents a breath-taking breakthrough in attitude and is testimony to the patient persistence of our staff in Russia over many years. The Russian Authorities have seen our work with their own eyes and cannot deny the seismic changes in the children with whom we work.

We are excited to be **expanding** the physical reach of our work and establishing relationships with other areas and institutions. One children's centre, near **St Petersburg**, is planning to emulate our community portage service in Ryazan. We have recently trained 4 of their staff and we will be providing supervision and on-going advice to assist their director in establishing this new Portage service. We have also worked with an early intervention centre in **Moscow** who now provide Portage to a group of local families and more recently we have had enquiries from an institution in **far east Russia** who are interested in doing more to help their disabled children.

Despite the difficult fundraising climate, we are still witnessing extraordinarily generous gestures from many quarters and I would like to extend a personal **thank you** to you all. I would also like to thank those people who volunteer their time and expertise, you are invaluable to us.

Many thanks for your fantastic on-going support, on behalf of all our staff and children.

Have a very happy Christmas,

Dash 

P.S. **Save the date - ThePromise 10th Birthday Party, Thursday 20th June, Pembroke Lodge, Richmond Park**

Programme Update

For once the weather was kind to us when we left Ryazan at 7.00am and headed north east in a full mini bus with 6 workers and volunteers from **ThePromise** and **Obshenye**, donations from Russians (food/juice) and donations from the UK (walking frames and toys).

It had been a while since I had been able to visit **Yelatma** and the improvements and changes were visible as soon as we pulled in. There is now a **play area** with artificial grass and a large enclosed summer house where previously there had been muddy puddles.



and 2 therapy rooms!

The old laundry building had been turned into 2 extra bedrooms, a **play room**

Before getting down to our 'real' work – a team meeting, working with the staff and seeing all the children, we drank tea with officials from the **Ministry of Social Protection**.



They fund this orphanage and when I broached the subject of the Ministry funding some of the Portage workers, they listened and **(for the first time ever)** started to discuss details as to how this would work in practice and promised to talk to the Minister. Their enthusiasm is not surprising given what they witnessed in Maria's 'mercy' department.. The children were out of their beds, making noises, walking and **enjoying every minute of their Portage sessions**. The officials could see how much the staff cared for the

children – they said they had never seen such **love** and care in any institution before. The children were delighted to **'show off'** their skills - playing, giggling, crawling, walking. One of the officials could not believe his eyes when he saw Galia happily sitting at a small table with her Portage worker Svetlana, **cutting out shapes with scissors**. Galia has Down Syndrome and was classified as in-educable when she arrived at Yelatma in 2001. By sitting and cutting, she was inadvertently showing the officials all the benefits of **Portage** in a few minutes (and why the project is worthy of financial support from the state). **Thank you Galia** – our youngest Russian fundraiser!



The Big Give Christmas Challenge 6th – 8th December 2012

ThePromise is taking part again this year, and we have set our sights even higher, aiming to raise **£6000!**

theBigGive.org.uk
helping your donations go further

14 amazing people have started us off well by pledging £1500. Now we need **your** help to quadruple that in December! At **10am on Thursday 6th December** the Challenge Phase opens and we need as many people as possible to donate online to help us reach our target of **£3000.**

If we succeed then the money already pledged will be matched by the Charity Champion Fund, giving us an amazing **£6000.**

So make sure you are near a computer at 10am on Thursday 6th December and go to: www.thebiggive.org.uk
A donation of any amount will help reach that magical Christmas present of £6000!

If you are not successful on the 6th please try again on **Friday 7th & Saturday 8th** at 10am as further funds are released.
A donation of £20 is worth £45 (including gift aid) and £100 is worth £225 to **ThePromise!**

Fundraising News

The year started off with our **Strictly Starlight Ball**, which was attended by lots and enjoyed by all. Starlight lit the room and the amazing auction raised the roof helping us reach a grand total of **£23,000!**



In the same month, but a very different location, a very cold Siberia, **Lucy Ward** and **Liam Halligan** ran a half marathon over the ice of frozen

Lake Baikal! Despite a broken wrist Lucy and Liam finished in great times and raised **£5000** for ThePromise so a big Thank You to them.

We held our second sponsored **Night Walk** in October, which this year started in Teddington and took us through some Royal Parks, along the Thames and into Richmond. Thank you to all those who took part making it a fun and enjoyable evening and to those who sponsored us. A special thanks to **Fran Sirl** for organising the walk and to our top fundraiser, **Maria Scott**, who's huge sponsorship efforts helped us double our target and reach **£4,143!**



Thank You's

We are very excited about our first "corporate" Angel, **Blackthorne International Transport Ltd**, who specialise in the movement of cargo between Russia and the UK. They support us financially on a monthly basis but also by putting us in touch with their corporate contacts. We are hugely grateful to Gary and the team for their commitment to us, and thanks to them, Russia House and Albion Overseas Ltd we will be attending the forthcoming **Russia: Practical Solutions** conference on the 22nd November in Newcastle where we hope to meet new corporate contacts.

We would like to **thank everyone** who has given in whatever form, be it donations, sponsorship, time or attending an event. Our **volunteers** are often behind the scenes giving their time and expertise to help us succeed and our thanks goes to them. **Janet** and the **ball committee** did another amazing job with the Strictly Starlight Ball, **Thomas** from Media Vision keeps us online with the website and **Nick** helped revamp our leaflet. Our grateful thanks go to the trusts who

continue to support us, the **Barbara Ward Children's Foundation** who have supported our work in Russia from the outset, **The Bryan Guinness Charitable Trust**, the **Souter Foundation**, the **Ian Mactaggart Trust** and the **CMS Cameron McKenna Foundation**.



Xmas Cards

It's that time of year again so why not get organised and get your **Christmas cards from ThePromise**. Our hand painted card was produced by **Marina** who used to receive portage in the Ryazan Baby Home. She is now living in London with her adoptive family and spends a lot of her time painting and generally getting messy.

Help us to help the children who are not as lucky as Marina get messy and play - **order your cards today!**

Pack of 10 cards just 4.50+P&P
Please contact jo.pritchard@thepromise.org.uk to place your order!

easyfundraising

.org.uk

Do you shop at **Amazon, eBay or John Lewis online?** Then please register with Easyfundraising and raise money for ThePromise with every purchase!



Please use your **envelope** to recycle print cartridges or mobile phones to raise money for ThePromise. If you would like some more just drop us an email!