

# **New Project to help Orphans with severe learning difficulties**

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We continue to help orphans who have severe learning difficulties. The best form of assistance for them is to be part of a family unit, but for these children this is a rarity. In fact, who wants a very troubled teenager with a preschooler's level of intelligence.

Their main trouble starts as soon as a child turns 18 years of age, or at the completion of training in a professional institution. At this point, state support is terminated, as he is considered capable for providing for himself. As a result of this he is left on his own, sent out "floating free".

Without his familiar environment, which he has known from childhood, where educators and social workers made all the decisions for him, and provided a hostel to live in while studying at a vocational school. He is now left completely on his own; not wanted by anybody. And, to this, we must add the great mental problems.

By law, children who are not registered with their parents are provided with housing by the government. Otherwise, it is the parents (usually drunken) who should provide children with housing. Nevertheless, even the children recognised by the state to be in need of housing, very often find themselves on the street.

It often happens that the authorities promise to provide an apartment but in the long term. They are not doing so, year after year. It turns out that the teenager is unsettled. This results in occasional work, which then leads to theft, alcohol, drugs and criminal company.



According to the Prosecutor General's Office, 10% of graduates from state orphanages commit suicide, 40% are criminals, 40% become drug addicts and alcoholics, and only 10% find their place in life.

Recently, Alexei came to one of our rehabilitation center's for people with drug and alcohol dependence. He is 26 years old. He is

a former graduate of the correctional kind of boarding school in Siberia. He was not provided with any housing and for eight years he lived rough on the streets of Moscow. In the winter Alexei's feet became frostbitten, this has resulted in tissue necrosis, and he now has difficulty in walking.



Despite very poor health, he stayed with us only for ten days before returning to the street, as he could not live without alcohol and being homeless... For Alexei, we can no longer do anything, but there are children we can help.

These children need support to get housing, and social pension for mentally retarded. The procedure of getting the pension is quite complicated and the

children can't get it without help. They also need help getting employment and resettlement.



Ksenia Smykova, was a pupil at the orphanage in Rzhev a couple of years ago. Today Ksenia is a single mum with a one year old child in her arms. Last year she had to leave the school for child care. As a result she lost the right to stay in school's hostel, where students live. They were driven out.

Ksenia is recognised as being in need of housing, but the authorities are only saying that maybe in 2017. But if you are 18 years old and have no education, no housing, no work, no loved ones, and in addition have a small child in your arms, what can you do? What now is the probability that her daughter Yana will not end up in an orphanage?



Every year, 26,000 pupils are discharged from Russian orphanages. According to the Russian Ministry of Education, over the past 15 years 90,000 of orphans who had rights, were not provided with housing. That means that 25% of all graduates have found themselves being homeless.

The general statistics are for children who for the most part do not have mental disabilities. What then are the chances for children who have severe learning difficulties? Negligible...

Of course, these children have a variety of needs, health, education, work and so on, but the paramount issues are housing and help with getting medical pensions.

We are looking for sponsorship to start project to assist graduates of boarding school in Zelyoniy (Tver region) with getting housing and disability pensions. For the pilot project, we need to raise \$6,000 to help orphans who currently live in the city of Rzhev.

Many blessings in the Lord Jesus!

Andrei Blinkov

<http://newlifekids.ru/english>