

Report of the trips

to Torzhok correctional boarding school

for orphans and children left without parental care,

and with disabilities of type VIII

Zelyoniy village, Tver region

April and May, 2014

"What can one person give to another, except a drop of warmth? And what could be more than this?" Erich Maria Remarque

Indeed, what could be more important? Psychologists say that hugs are needed for a person just to survive. On the one hand, we realize how limited our ability is to help every child, while on the other hand we try, as volunteers do also, to do everything in our power to help the children «warm» their attentiveness and care.

In April and May we twice went back to our friends with different activities and games. Decorated Viennese waffles with mascarpone cheese, strawberries and bananas.

"I've never seen wild strawberries grow to such proportions. And where do you pick them?" - asked Tahir, who is 14 years old. We said: "These are not wild strawberries, wild strawberries are different berries all together." His face showed surprise: "And where do they grow at this time of year?" "In Egypt, they were brought to us, but we have them growing, too, they just ripen here later, at the end of June." He was even more surprised. Many children of 15-16 years old have never seen strawberries (that are not the wild variety at least) and tried them for the first time.



For the kids we offered lessons in manufacturing applications. Small Pavlik couldn't do the task that was set for him and he started to get annoyed and crumple the colored paper. Then the lady leading this activity, Natalia, went up to him, sat down, and calmly explained and helped him glue the buttons on. As a result, the boy was happy and content with his success and calmed down.





And with the girls there was a very heartwarming “all-girls do” with the manufacture of jewelry and fruit picking.

Of course, all the children enjoy the gifts, but it is not the most important thing for them. We found that most of all they are waiting for us to speak to them, for news from us and for attention.



Some of the children got into this boarding straight from secondary schools, and among themselves they call such schools as “large-scale”. Those who are fortunate enough to live in an orphanage and learn in such large-scale schools remember with nostalgia their time there and talk about it as the best time in their lives.

Now they are in an institution where there is no Internet. Of course, they have TV's and DVD-players with discs, but these provide them with little knowledge as in no time at all they will have watched everything to the point of boredom. Even the diagnostics prescribed for them and the school program for children of special needs type 8 do not suppress their thirst to learn something new.

The children there read books, but not enough, as some of those that “graduate” from the orphanage do so with a poor command of reading skills. But they are incredibly happy with magazines, old MP3 players, camera,s illustrated books, with all that can expand their little world a little.

"On the last trip I gave him a bookmark for books, and then he promised that he would start reading. This time he said he had read a book about green dinosaurs and shared with us a new version of the theory of evolution: "Earlier in the land there were a lot of dinosaurs, and then they all died. One of the dinosaur's tail

reached 18 meters long. Then the dinosaurs died and bald green monkeys appeared, from which we came, human beings." I am very glad that he kept his promise and he again gave his word that would read a new book.»



«Each of them tried to show us “look here, I'm trying, I'm trying my best to be good or better. What do I need to do in order for you to draw your attention towards me?» They crave this, they lack affection and warmth." Anna B., volunteer.

Although he was 16, he looked as if he was just 10. Small and thin, from birth he was alone. I asked him: "And would want to be in a family?" "You bet" - he said. With each falling star I used to make make a wish that someone would take me. But the stars do not have any dealings with me."

He got into this boarding school of type 8 after being at a children's home for the first grade of ordinary school. This was as a result of not coping with the school's program, and there was no one to get help from. I was amazed by his retentive memory — he figured out in about ten minutes how to work with a semi-professional mirror chamber camera. I asked where he had learned to handle such a camera. He said that seven years ago, Alexander in another orphanage showed him how to take pictures.

We must pay tribute to the teachers and mentors who are trying to compensate for a deficiency of love. "At first I could not understand why the kids called their teachers "mom" and thought that they really were their mothers. They brought them treats and said - this is for my mom." Natalia, a volunteer

The mentors are also trying to help the children develop - encouraging sports and athletic achievement and participating in vocal competitions. Now they are ready for action and a trip to the "City of Friendship" Russian Festival on May 16-18. The children will go to Moscow for three days, and will not only perform, but go for walks around the city and go on excursions. We really need the help of volunteers to accompany children on their trip, as well as sponsorship to pay for transport from their village to Moscow and then back again.

We also sincerely thank all those whose financial support makes our projects and programs possible and help orphans and graduates of orphanages.

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