



Christmas Shoe-boxes

It is not really possible to express how grateful we are to everyone who lovingly prepares a shoe-box for children here in Belarus. For many of them, it will be the only present they receive and for some it will be the first present they have ever received!

You cannot imagine the joy on their little faces, when they open the lid. I wish we could capture it and send it over to you.

Thank you so much !



Some highlights from 2009

As we look back over the past year and search for photos to include in this newsletter, there are so many happy memories, of special times with the children; the foster families; and the people who have been to visit.

Foster Families

It has been good to build relationships with the families and to be there for them, through the challenges and the celebrations. One of the hardest things we had to do this year was to reduce the amount of support we distributed so that it matched the amount of sponsorship being donated. It was a very difficult decision to make, because all of the families are worthy of support and it is a big help to them. We really need more sponsors for the families and if you can help then please complete the support form and return it today.



Home Improvements

With the help of kind donations, we have been able to help three families with home improvement projects this year. In each case basic village homes have been upgraded so that more children can live in a loving family.

It's fantastic to help the families in this way and many of our visitors have helped with the practical work, especially the team from Gloucester. They came over for ten days and worked really hard. When we asked the mother if she would like to have eight people, helping with the renovation work for a week, she was so overwhelmed that she started to cry.

Visitors

It has been good to receive all of our visitors and they have been a great blessing, in many different ways. One of our mothers said recently, that she finds it amazing when people travel from the UK to visit their families. It's a great encouragement to know that people are willing to give their time and share in the lives of the orphan children.



Sponsored events - going the extra mile!

We are massively grateful to everyone who supports TOP Kids! but we need to say a very special 'thank you' to those who have literally 'gone the extra mile!'. Two girls entered a marathon; Four young people cycled an 850 mile round trip, from Torquay to Paris and back; and another group of young people, walked about 12 miles from Bristol to Glastonbury. We are so proud of you all and thankful for the funds that have been raised. Your efforts enable us to provide the kind of emergency support that is needed from time to time. Recently, we went out and bought a whole load of food for a family in need and some winter boots to replace the ones that had worn out. All of these things cost money and it was great to know that we had the funds available!

If you can help
please complete
the support
form and return
it today

Contacting us:

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TQ1 9AW

info@top-kids.org.uk

www.top-kids.org.uk

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Charity No.1109294





Family Centre

We probably all know the phrase that says, 'good things come to those who wait', well at the moment, we are still waiting for the family centre but hopefully the waiting will be worthwhile and sometimes we have to be patient.

We want to make sure that we get the right place for everything we are planning to do, so we are not anxious, but it would be very nice to secure a place in the near future.

We look at other options and each time we feel that the place in our hearts is where we need to be.

We will definitely let everyone know when we have our centre!

From Andrew & Avril

Some of you have specifically asked us to report more about ourselves personally. It is very kind of you and we are happy to do so, because we very much appreciate your love and concern.

Recently, we were visiting a family and I was telling the foster mother that when we return to the UK, people suggest that we are some kind of hero's but we always say that the hero's are the wonderful foster parents who care for the children! She was quite overwhelmed by such encouragement but for us, it's the truth and we consider it a great privilege to be able to come alongside such amazing people.

We are not working on our own. We have a small team of key people working with us. For our first nine months we had to manage without regular translation but in the summer we were able to employ a brilliant young lady called Masha, who is a bi-lingual secretary, as well as being very creative. She loves children and she is a great blessing.

Thankfully, we are both well and adjusting more with every new day. We have been living here now for just over one year - how time flies - but there is still lots to learn. Avril is busy taking on the challenge of learning the Russian language, with the help of a very kind young lady. I need to improve my linguistic abilities but unfortunately I don't have the spare time necessary at the moment. I can make myself understood in a lot of situations but it's still a great challenge.

I remember reading a phrase once that simply said, 'It's amazing what you can learn to do, in

a year, when you set your mind to it'. I must admit, it really made me think.

We are very happy in our flat. People have made us so welcome and we're networking with people who also have a heart to help the orphan children.

Some things never cease to amaze us, especially when it comes to driving in the city. Drivers are so selfish and they regularly cut you up, drifting between lanes, just so that they can get ahead. Jumping red lights is very common and if you stop on amber the chances are someone will ram into the back of you.

Buying things in the shops can be fun. It's fine if you know what you're doing but when someone asks you a question, that's when it can all fall apart. Often the staff will look at you as if to say, you must be foreign.

This year, it has been particularly encouraging for us to receive visitors.

Some we knew very well and some we'd only met briefly before but after working together and having fun along the way, we can say that you've all been a great blessing to us. Most visitors have said that they want to come again and that is music to our ears because we know that Belarus has found a place in their hearts. We are looking forward to receiving lots more in 2010.

There are so many things that we would like to see accomplished and time goes by so fast. Our heart is to be a blessing to the people of Belarus and especially the children.

We are so grateful to everyone who supports us. We know this is where we need to be and we miss you all but it's great to know that you're thinking of us.

Thank you so much, with much love, A&A



Support Form

Your details:

Name:

Address:

Post Code:

Email:

Tel:

I would like to give £

Monthly Today

Towards:

Sponsorship Staff in Belarus Projects

If monthly - please complete the standing order

gift aid

I am a UK tax payer and I would like my donations to be Gift Aided

I understand that I must pay UK tax above the amount that will be claimed by Top Kids! If my situation changes, I will inform the trustees of Top Kids!

Signed: Date:

Bank - Standing order form

TO: THE MANAGER, NAME AND FULL ADDRESS OF BANK / BUILDING SOCIETY

ADDRESS:

POST CODE:

YOUR BANK SORT CODE:

YOUR ACCOUNT NO.

NAME OF YOUR ACCOUNT:

PLEASE PAY: TOP KIDS. HSBC BANK PLC, HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON, WC1V 7BZ
SORT CODE: 40-03-27 ACCOUNT No: 31691635

THE SUM OF £ EACH MONTH

STARTING ON: / / UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

SIGNED: DATE:

Please return to: Top Kids, PO Box 446, Torquay, TQ1 9AW

Top Kids! UK Charity No.1109294