

The Promise Post



The Promise works to improve the lives of disabled children in Russia. We do this by promoting a system of support (Portage) for disabled children in partnership with families and carers and by encouraging a more positive attitude to disability. The charity was founded in 2003 in memory of Ellie Settelen. **For further details of the work, please visit our website: www.thepromise.org.uk**

Hello Everyone

It's hard to believe we're coming to the end of another year, one that has seen as many challenges as successes. Our teams have been hard at work both here in the UK and in Russia. Most significantly, our Russian partner charity "Obeshenye" is now fully registered and up and running. Much fun has been had with international "Skype" meetings with the Board of Trustees of both charities!



Award Winners in Moscow

Although young, Obeshenye can already boast a string of successes, not least most recently winning an award for the All Russia Festival of Social Assistance Programmes. There were 1,500 nominations in all categories,

and Obeshenye won the 'Social adaptation of invalids and their families' category. Well done to all at Obeshenye, particularly **Armenui Gevurian** for her tireless work on our behalf.



Natalia (centre) with some of her team

We welcome a new Senior Portage Worker for the community project, **Natalia Kvashenko**, who is doing a great job at supporting her new team. She is currently putting plans together for Christmas party for all the children on the community programme. We hope you all have a lot of fun!

Here in the UK there are lots of interesting fundraising developments. Keep your eyes peeled for news of our up and coming Ball on Saturday 10th March – this is always a sell out so get the date in your diaries soon! We are also taking part in the Big Give Christmas Challenge for the first time this year which is very exciting and offers a different way of supporting us. More details of this below.

Our fundraising has been experiencing challenging times recently, along with so many organisations and we are grateful for having access to a wide range of different activities. Some of our supporters undertook a night walk along the Thames recently and many of you continue to offer your support in lots of ways, some more sedate than others! Thank you to all of you for giving us your time and effort in this way. It's greatly appreciated. I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and thank you for all your continuing support.

Best wishes

Jash 

Programme Update

Nutrition and feeding are a continual issue for many of our children and in March **Sue Williams** and **Himali de Silva** volunteered to work with the parents and carers to assess the children receiving Portage and then run a workshop for on best practice in feeding disabled children for our Russian team. Sue is a Dietitian working in Lewisham and Himali is a Speech and Language Therapist working in Lambeth.



Himali presenting at the Feeding Workshop

29 people attended the workshop from Ryazan, Yelatma and Moscow and the feedback from both the individual assessments and the seminar were very positive.

The participants learnt that every child needs an individual approach to feeding, choice of equipment and positioning and they all went away with practical advice for their children which does not require expensive equipment or food.



Arin practising her feeding

Sue and Himali went on to visit **St Petersburg** after working in Ryazan and have made links with organisations who are interested to know more about our Portage programme. Thank you Sue and Himali for your the wonderful work in Ryazan and the skills, experience and practical advice you shared with our team in Russia.

STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS! SAVE THE DATES! 5th – 9th December "The Big Give Week"

We are very excited to be part of **The Big Give Christmas Challenge** this year for the first time. The Big Give week is an exciting way of our supporters making a Christmas donation to us which can then be **DOUBLED** (yes, doubled!) by an external sponsor fund and some wonderful supporters of ours who have already agreed to kick start this campaign with some very generous pledges. An enormous thank you goes to the seven supporters who have made our participation in this week possible..

We are now asking for as many of you as possible to take part in this next stage and help us raise **£2100** in on line donations during the week itself. So please, if you were thinking of making a Christmas donation to us, we would love you to do it this way. All you need to do is this:

**On the morning of Monday 5th December, go to:
www.theBigGive.org.uk**

Make a donation of **ANY** amount to **The Promise**. You can donate anything from £1 to £1000 using a credit or debit card!

For example if you donate £20 this will be worth £45 to **The Promise** (including Gift Aid). If you donate £50 this will be worth £113. £1000 is worth an amazing £2250.

Try and get online as close to 10am as possible. They have a limit of sponsor funds available for matching each day. If you're unsuccessful at donating that day, please try again the following day between 10 and 12 noon.

Thank you so much for helping us to access these all important matched funds. It's a fantastic way of **DOUBLING THE VALUE OF YOUR DONATION!**

Message from a 'Portage mother'

Tatiana is the mother of **Nastya** who has recently finished Portage and is now going to a special school in **Ryazan**. Nastya is now 8 years old and she has Down syndrome. She was one of the first children to receive Portage as part of our **Community Programme** in **Ryazan**. When **Nastya Verzob**, her Portage worker, starting visiting mother and daughter in their home, it was the first time that they had received any help in Ryazan.



Nastya
at the Ryazan Christmas Party
Tatiana tells her story:

"...It's very difficult for me to understand why people say so many negative things about children with Down syndrome like my Nastya. These children are very special, they can do a lot. Why can't people understand it? I think that's because in our country people are not prepared to help each other. I can remember it, clear as day, visiting various organisations to ask for help to organise my daughter's life. Sounds very simple, but the responses to my questions were simple too – there's nothing we or you can do.

Your project was the only ray of light. I was happy to meet people who didn't speak badly about my child. It's very important to be supported. It always seemed to me that my Nastya couldn't do a lot, and I wouldn't be able to teach her anything. When we started Portage sessions, I found out that my child has a character. And what a character it was!

I am very grateful to our Portage worker, Nastya V, who helped us to identify what Nastya could do and had the patience and intuition to help us to cope with our failures. We are not afraid anymore! I don't think my child accepts things very easily. Very often "big" Nastya is trying to think about a new way to get "little" Nastya to do something. It's great not to be alone, to have an objective opinion and multiple techniques and methods to help my daughter. We have learnt a lot. I can hardly believe that not long ago my daughter did nothing but sit and stare. It is upsetting to think of those times. As a result I am even more proud to say: "we are walking! We are saying "mummy"! We can wash our face and hands! We are putting objects into boxes and containers! We are trying on hats! We can take off trousers and coats! We CAN! Together we CAN".

Tatiana, Nastya's mother

To see Tatiana speaking about her experiences, you can watch a short interview on our website: Use this link to watch: tinyurl.com/bq5z8n5

Barbara in Russia



We're thrilled to launch a new video of our patron **Barbara Flynn** visiting our projects. The video tells the story of her experience in her own words and is very powerful. Huge thanks to Barbara for giving us so much of her time, and to Nick Angell and Peter Settelen for helping to make the film. Use this link to watch: tinyurl.com/bq5z8n5

The Strictly Starlight Ball

Saturday 10th March 2012

Hold the date and tell your friends!

It's that time of year again to get your glad rags out and dust them off! **The Promise's** 5th bi-annual ball will be held in the **Live Room** at **Twickenham Stadium** from 7:30pm -1:00am. Tickets will be on sale soon at £85 each, tables of 10, with a few tables of 12 available.

A "strictly" fantastic night will be had by all, so get those dancing shoes on and join us for what promises to be another night to remember!

Along with dance themed entertainment during the night, and a Star Raffle, there will be another fabulous auction with the usual amazing array of prizes, including limited edition artwork by acclaimed Russian artist Svetlana K-Lie and a private flight to France including lunch, to name but two. Many more surprises are sure to in store with the evening culminating in guests being able to let loose on the dance floor to a live band.

Please Email: janet.abbott@thepromise.org.uk if you are able to offer sponsorship or auction and raffle prizes.

Thank you

A huge thank you to everyone who has supported our work over the past year. We are very grateful to all of you who have contributed to our work by either giving a donation, giving your time, sponsoring someone or attending or organising a fundraising event.

Some of you undertook amazing challenges on our behalf during the year. **Olga Kasyanova** raised almost £600 by running the **Reading Half Marathon** and **Toni Gregory** completed all 26 gruelling miles of the **Brighton Marathon** and raised almost £400. Seventeen 'intrepid' walkers joined us on our first **Sponsored Night Walk** from Putney to Tower Bridge on what was the hottest October day/evening on record – raising an amazing £2735 at the last count.



Finishing the Night Walk

Congratulations and thanks to **Alison Snape** (who volunteered in Russia last Summer) and her new husband **Jonathan** who kindly asked their wedding guests to donate to **The Promise** in lieu of presents and raised a magnificent £579.

The **Buckhorn Weston Ladies Group** were busy in the Spring not only raising over £100 in donations but also making a beautiful patchwork quilt and cushions for the

children to play on in **Yelatma**.



Playing on new quilt in Yelatma

Thanks also go to the **Russell School** in **Petersham** who collected £685 in donations at their Christmas Play and to **Real Russia** who recently donated £200 and are working with us as a Corporate supporter. Thanks also go to **Virginia Zubillago** and **Carlos Abella** who donated £530 to Yelatma to pay for the training of one of our Portage workers and seven months of Portage for one of the children. Thanks too for the £120 donated by **Louise Bryant** from her swimming party.

We could not achieve all we do without our volunteers who help in so many ways including organising events including the ball and donating their time and expertise – thanks to **Thomas** from **Media Vision** for all his help with our website, **Nick** and **Lance** who do our graphic design and **Dean** and **Kezia** from **McIntyre Hudson** who scrutinise our accounts.

Our grateful thanks go to those trusts who continue to support us including the **Bryan Guinness Charitable Trust**, **Ian MacTaggart Trust**, the **Souter Foundation** and **Vitol Charitable Foundation**.

Mum on a Mission

Sarah scoops top "Mum on a Mission"

award for her charity work

Sarah was delighted to be awarded the "Mum on a Mission" award 2011 by **Mumpreneurs UK** at their annual Conference and Awards Ceremony in September. The award was in recognition of her tireless work improving the lives of others.



Sarah Settelen with her 'Mum on a Mission' trophy at the awards ceremony in Coventry

Christmas Cards



This year we have once again created an **E-card**, which provides a personal link to our programme as three of our children at the Ryazan Baby Home, **Liliana**, **Valya** and **Kolya**, helped with the design.

Email: alison.mccann@thepromise.org.uk and she'll send you the sample e-card and details of how you can make a donation. This is a fantastic (and green!) way of promoting and supporting our work for the coming year.

Please "like" us on **facebook**



If you're signed up to **Facebook**, please go to our page using this link: tinyurl.com/d93og6p and "like" us. The more people that hear our message the better. **Thank you!**