

The Promise Post

Winter 2014/15



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**

To all of you who know and already support the truly wonderful work of The Promise and to those of you who have yet to hear, I would like to encourage and ask you all to join us and help make this coming year even more successful and life changing than before.

I have been **Patron** of The Promise for quite a few years now and I have seen with my own eyes the incredible transformations made to the lives of hundreds of children and their families by The Promise across Russia.

During my visit to one of the projects I will never forget spending time with **Andrei**, a boy of fifteen but only as tall as a six year old. Andrei was blessed with incredible rhythm and a smile which lifted the soul. As we sat together and played the 'drums' on anything to hand enjoying each other's company and his excitement I was struck at just how precious consistent one to one time is to these children. Not much to ask you might think but without The Promise

and the remarkable Portage workers, they wouldn't feel individual and they wouldn't progress. The Promise is simply transforming their lives.

All those years ago when Sarah first made the heart breaking short film "**Promising Children a Future**" in which she talked of her wishes and dreams of changing the appalling conditions in which the children were then living, she may not have imagined the heights of the achievement being made by The Promise.

Of course this is happening because of the generosity and dedicated hard work of some **incredible people**, who are so many that I can't possibly name them all here. But I would like to mention the wonderful Portage Teams in Russia, who on a day-to-day basis bring Portage to children like Andrei, and with it hope to all that they work with. I would also like to thank **YOU** because without **YOU** attending fundraising events, sponsoring people doing extremely challenging things in aid of The Promise –

such as rowing 22 miles down the Thames! none of this would be possible, so **THANK YOU** from the children and from me. I very much look forward to the future with The Promise!

*My very best wishes
and thanks,
Barbara*

Barbara Flynn
Patron



P.S. Please don't forget **The Big Give Christmas Challenge** which is fast approaching. A chance to make your helping hand so much more! Let's all be at our computers at **10am on the 4th December** ready to give our Christmas presents to the children, our Promise doubled!



The Great River Race - Well Done!



On a sunny day in September, the '10 Duffers' took to the River Thames and paddled 22 miles from Millwall to Richmond in London's annual Great River Race. Despite very little practice, and a last minute crew member joining on the morning of the race, they finished in 3 hours, 5 minutes – a very respectable time and a huge achievement for a 'veteran' team. The '10 Duffers' raised over

£1,400 for The Promise and The Royal Marsden Hospital and they had so much 'fun' that they are thinking of entering again next year.

If you are interested in joining our **crew in 2015**, entering your own team next year or know an organisation who would like to **sponsor our boat**, please contact Jo jo.pritchard@thepromise.org.uk



Ever have trouble finding the right card for that special occasion? Well we might just have the answer!

Giving Cards is a new charity card company providing personalised greetings cards in aid of The Promise.

Simply visit our page www.giving.cards/?AC=THE9 create a unique card for someone special and Giving Cards will donate a minimum of **20p per card** to The Promise.

Masha's Story

Masha started Portage in 2011 at the age of 4. A genetic condition means Masha has difficulty seeing and a developmental delay. Masha is a very outgoing and loving little girl who likes to communicate and spend time with people, and this made establishing a relationship with Daria, her Portage Worker, quite easy. Daria and Masha worked on goals to develop self-help and language skills and after just one year of Portage visits, and a lot of support from her mother, Masha had achieved over 25 goals. She was able to greet people, say 'thank you', follow the rules of a simple game and started playing with children of a similar age.



Masha learning letters with Daria

Thanks to Daria's contacts she was able to assist Masha and her mother to access additional Speech Therapy at a local Children's Centre. After just a few sessions Masha's mother noticed that she was starting to understand more words and also attempting to say them herself. Masha's vocabulary has

continued to expand and she is currently at the expected level for a child her age.

Part of Masha's condition means she experiences abnormal weight gain, which was beginning to impact on Masha's health and ability to participate in everyday activities. With advice and support from a volunteer Dietician working with ThePromise, Masha and her family are able to manage her weight and improve Masha's quality of life.

Recently Daria has left the project to start a career as a Speech Therapist but Masha has quickly built a relationship with Anastasia, her new Portage worker, and now knows 14 letters of the alphabet. Masha is showing great progress in her writing and counting and her parents are hoping she will be able to start some sessions at a local special school next year.

Anastasia says 'Masha is a pleasure to work with, she tries so hard and gets very excited when she succeeds. The sessions are always different and very exciting.'

Masha's mother says that Portage sessions are extremely valuable for Masha and she would like to thank everyone for their help and support.

Thank You

One of our youngest supporters, Michelle who is just 7, and her family have asked all their relatives and friends to donate to ThePromise this Christmas instead of buying them presents. Having already raised over **£490** Michelle is hoping her idea may encourage others to donate to ThePromise this Christmas so we can give more children the present of Portage all the year round. If you would like to support ThePromise and Michelle please visit www.justgiving.com/MichelleChristmas/



'Like' us on

ThePromise – for Russian Children with Special Needs



Save the Date

ThePromise's second annual **Winter Morning Walk** will be on **Sunday 1st March 2015** in Richmond Park. Suitable for all the family. Dogs welcome. Wheelchair friendly. More details to follow!

We are also very excited to announce that we are in the early stages of planning a **party** for next year. Details coming soon but be assured you **won't want to miss it!**

easyfundraising Don't forget to log-in every time you are shopping online. **ThePromise** has already received over **£190**—Thank you!



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.

theBigGive.org.uk
helping your donations go further

The BigGive
Christmas Challenge
4th - 6th Dec 2014

Thanks to a number of generous supporters, the pledges are now in and we are all set to participate in the 2014 BigGive Christmas Challenge.

Our target this year is to raise a total of **£4,000**. If you were thinking of making a donation to ThePromise this Christmas, please consider donating via the BigGive so that your donation will be **doubled**.

The donation matching starts at 10.00 am on Thursday 4th, Friday 5th and Saturday 6th December.

To make your donation simply go to <http://new.thebiggive.org.uk/project/thepromise2014> It only takes a few minutes to make a donation by debit or credit card. If you need more information or help, please contact Jo jo.pritchard@thepromise.org.uk

Thank you!

Christmas Cards on Sale now!

Order your cards by emailing Jo at jo.pritchard@thepromise.org.uk



Snowmen Family
£3.50 pack of 10 (+P&P)

ThePromise Candles
£4.50 pack of 10 (+P&P)



Postage will be calculated per order