

**BETHANY SOCIAL SERVICES  
ST. PETERSBURG RUSSIA  
2007 Annual Report**

Bethany Social Services in St. Petersburg, Russia, was officially registered as a non-profit organization in Russia on November 11, 1998. The mission of this organization is to “protect and enhance the lives of children and families through high quality social services and through improving the social work practice in the St. Petersburg and Leningrad areas.”

Throughout the years, Bethany Social Services built its programs and reputation and became well known in St. Petersburg and the Leningrad area. Agreements are signed with government and non-governmental organizations, and four projects were implemented in 2007. Bethany’s team consists of seven full-time employees and twenty contract employees and consultants.

A letter sent on December 20, 2007, by the Assistant of the President of the Committee for General and Professional Education of the Leningrad Area, V. M. Soldatov, stated:

*“The Committee for General and Professional Education of the Leningrad Area thanks Bethany Social Services St. Petersburg for its project that is helping the children and orphans successfully integrate in the society. These activities have been implemented in more than 20 institutions and proved that NGOs and the government could work together. We hope to continue to develop this cooperation for the interests of needy children.”*

**LIFE SKILLS PROJECT IN LOMONOSOV (TEEN PROJECT)**

40-50 youths are part of Bethany’s program every year. They receive individual counseling; training on various life skills; personal growth, job placement, healthy lifestyle, and parenting skills; and legal advice. Seminars are organized on various topics, as well as sewing, crafts, and aerobic lessons. The youths attend community events and, because of this project, the local community has changed its perception about orphans.

<b><i>Life Skills Project Statistics</i></b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Number of youths who graduated	34	18	22	22	20	15
Youths who are employed	79%	72%	55%	46%	60%	53%
Youths who continue their education	14%	22%	18%	14%	15%	20%
Youths attending mandatory military service	7%	6%	14%	27%	10%	13%
Youths who have a place to live	93%	94%	100%	91%	90%	93%

A generous grant received through Geneva Global allowed Bethany to serve more orphan youths in Lomonosov and throughout Leningrad Area. Thanks to this grant, Bethany was able to achieve the following results in 2007:

- Provided long-term life skills and healthy lifestyle education to 40 youths from the Teen Center in Lomonosov
- Developed an interactive training called “Tomorrow Starts Today.” 850 youths from Leningrad area trade schools, orphanages, and high schools attended this training and received valuable information on how to live a healthy lifestyle and become responsible citizens and parents.
- Provided post-graduation support services to 25 orphan youths who graduated from Bethany’s program in 2006 and from Tosno region in 2007



The results achieved by the project, as indicated by an external evaluation performed by professor Beryl Hugen from Calvin College, show overall significant increases in all areas of the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment, as well as the Social Skills Assessment.

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
Communication	17%**
Self-Care	7%**
Daily Living	14%**
Housing and \$ Management	33%**
Social Relationships	16%**
Work & Study Skills	19%**
Social Skills Assessment	11%**

\*\*indicates significance at .01 level

In addition to the positive results for these dimensions, all of the demographic variables proved to be statistically significant.

The youths who attended our program enjoyed the classes very much. They stated that the information provided will be very useful to them.



“I learned how to care for myself and my future family, how to resolve a crisis situation and a conflict. I will now be able to help not only myself, but also my friends and close people.”

“We liked this game (interactive training). It was fun and brought us new knowledge regarding family planning, budgeting, and devastating effects a bad habit could have on you, no matter how attractive it could seem to you in the first moment.”

### **THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL SKILLS OF INSTITUTIONALIZED CHILDREN FROM RIABOVO ORPHANAGE**

Most of the children residing in orphanages in Russia are diagnosed with delays in their development. The lack of individual care, lack of love and nurture that only a family could provide, along with some of the issues the children may have been born with (health or mental issues) are some of the causes for these delays.

The main goal of the project is to reduce the long-term effects of institutionalization on the 30 children living in the Riabovo orphanage. Services are offered to children by a multidisciplinary team consisting of a psychologist, speech therapist, special education teacher, an educator, and dance, music, and drama teachers.

The children were divided into two groups (one group of 19, ages 3-6 years old, and a second group of 11, ages 7-11 years old) who attended a variety of activities. Art therapy, speech therapy, music and dance lessons, recreational activities, role playing, and games are designed to increase the children’s cognitive performance and gross and fine motor development.



### Accomplishments in 2007

- Evaluations performed at the beginning and the end of the year showed significant progress in the children's development, skills, and knowledge.
- All children were involved in the performances that were organized throughout the year.
- The Riabovo Drama Group attended Leningrad Area festivals for orphanages called "Art Theatre Through Children's Eyes" and "Little Stars." This group was the youngest group invited to attend these events.
- The orphanage in Riabovo cared for 32 children at the end of 2006, and at the end of the school year (May 2007), only 10 children were still living in the orphanage. The other 22 children were either placed with foster families or found a placement at a private group home. This speaks volumes about the positive impact that Bethany's project had on the lives of these children. More children joined this orphanage later in the year, who were also served by this project.



A thank-you letter received from the President of The Education Committee of Tosno Municipal Administration of Leningrad Area, Vladimir Makarskiy, states:

*"Our active and fruitful collaboration allowed us to accomplish a very important social project intended to help the orphan children recover from their development delays."*

### FOSTER CARE PROJECT

In March 2007, the government of Leningrad Area launched a pilot foster care program. Bethany was invited to be part of this project and managed the program implemented in the Tosno and Gatchina regions.

Bethany's trained specialists (3 in Tosno and 3 in Gatchina) played a significant role in training and assessing foster parents, preparing children for placement, and providing support services for the foster families and the children with whom they worked. The families received 32 hours of "PRIDE" foster care training. Bethany also worked with the biological children of these foster families.



### Accomplishments in 2007

- 58 people (24 from Tosno and 34 from Gatchina) received PRIDE training to become foster parents.
- 25 children (16 in Tosno and 9 in Gatchina) were placed with foster families.
- 69 child welfare specialists received training as follows:
  - 21 specialists attended the round-table discussions where ideas were exchanged with a college professor from the United States, Beryl Hugen.
  - 25 specialists attended the training offered by Beryl Hugen with the theme "The Child's Best Interest in Social Work."
  - 9 psychologists from Tosno District schools and kindergartens received training on topics that were part of the PRIDE and "Keys of Life" training programs.
  - 14 specialists from Tosno received training with the theme "The Coordination of Different Services to Protect Children and Families at Risk."
- A celebration for Tosno's foster parents, organized in Adrianovo on June 10, 2007, was attended by 5 families, their foster children, and 3 officials.
- A meeting was organized with prospective foster parents and children from Siversky orphanage.
- Bethany's foster care team visited the "Center of Child Placement Services" in Murmansk to learn from their 7 years of experience in implementing foster care programs.
- **Bethany was on the team that worked to create model federal standards for training foster families and support services provided to foster families.**

A thank-you letter signed by the Assistant of the President of the Committee for General and Professional Education of Leningrad Area, Valentin Soldatov, stated:

*"... The implementation of training and support services for foster families helped us address important problems that these families face after placement and allowed us to develop new support services for families."*

**OTHER ACTIVITIES**

In September 2007, a group of 13 U.S. volunteers renovated three rooms in the international orphanage in Gatchina. The group brought supplies for the children living in this institution. They also visited the orphanage in Dubrovka and provided individualized presents to 35 children.

Bethany Social Services St. Petersburg also supports a number of orphanages in the Leningrad area. Through donations from individuals in the United States, 12 orphanages received clothing, shoes, toys, bicycles, playground equipment, equipment for two sewing workshops, and pillows, and were able to cover the cost of one music and one drama teacher who worked with children in an orphanage.