

**BETHANY SOCIAL SERVICES
ST. PETERSBURG RUSSIA
2005 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 St. Petersburg and Leningrad area.”

Throughout the years, Bethany St. Petersburg has built its programs, along with a positive reputation, and has become well known in the Leningrad area. Agreements are signed with government and non-government organizations and four projects (three in the Leningrad area and one in St. Petersburg) were implemented in 2005. Bethany’s team consists of 7 full-time employees, 19 contract employees, and 20 consultants.

A letter signed by the head of the Committee for General and Professional Education of the Leningrad Area, Z. G. Naidenova stated:

“The Committee for General and Professional Education of the Leningrad Area sincerely thanks Bethany Social Services St. Petersburg for the fruitful cooperation in the past seven years, based on professionalism and devotion to work. Our active partnership has demonstrated the possibility to create and provide social services aimed at supporting the orphans and orphanhood prevention. We see it promising to continue our cooperation with Bethany and to develop new projects aimed at services addressed to children and families in need.”



PREGNANCY COUNSELING PROJECT (GREEN PROJECT)

The Green Project provides comprehensive, medical/social support to teenagers and young pregnant women. The goal of the project is to improve the reproductive health of young people, to offer counseling and support to young mothers and pregnant women, and to prevent the institutionalization of their babies. This project is implemented in partnership with the State Healthcare Establishment “City Children’s Polyclinic # 68” of Krasnogvardeysky District of St. Petersburg. This polyclinic is a model in the region for the medical and social services it provides to pregnant women, teenagers, young mothers, and their born and unborn children. The City Children’s Polyclinic # 68 serves a district of St. Petersburg, with a population of 400,000.

The Green Project began in 2000.



Accomplishments in 2005:

- Forty-five (45) teenagers received medical treatment and training on reproductive health.
- Sixty-eight (68) pregnant women received counseling, medical care, training for delivery and baby care, and material support.
- Fifty-five (55) young mothers received counseling, training on baby care, and support.
- Seventeen (17) children were born to the clients served by the project and are being raised by their families.
- Eighty-eight (88) food sets were distributed to pregnant women and young mothers.

A letter signed by the deputy head of the Administration of Krasnogvardeysky District, S.A. Kullarova, dated January 31, 2006, states:

“The administration of Krasnogvardeysky District expresses its sincere thanks for the organization of successful activity in the implementation of the program for medical and social protection of teenagers and pregnant women of young age, aimed at social orphanhood prevention. Due to Bethany’s assistance, the inhabitants of Krasnogvardeysky District are getting highly professional, quality, and complete social services. The district administration hopes to continue the cooperation for the development and improvement of the social services provided in the area of family and child protection.”

EDUCATION PROJECT

Reform of the child welfare system identified the need to ask Bethany to train orphanage staff, including the orphanage directors, social workers, psychologists, and teachers. The project proved to be a success, and the Committee for General and Professional Education of the Leningrad Area requested that Bethany continue this program.

The orphanage directors reported that the quality of life and care for the institutionalized children improved due to this program. A network among these professionals was created, and many professionals continue to stay in touch after graduating from this program.



Accomplishments in 2005:

- In May 2005, 25 orphanage assistant directors from the Leningrad area completed 80 hours of training and graduated from the education program, which will help them improve the quality of education and care in an orphanage.

In September 2005, another group of 25 students began a new training course. The course curriculum was developed by Bethany in cooperation with the Leningrad Area Education Development Institute and is intended to develop the professional skills for social workers and educators working in orphanages in the Leningrad area. As a part of this course, 64 hours of training were provided for these professionals.

A letter sent on January 25, 2006, by the rector of the Leningrad Regional Institute for Education Development, S.A.Lisicyn, stated:

“The administration of the Leningrad Regional Institute for Education Development thanks the managers of Bethany Social Services St. Petersburg for their effective assistance in organizing and delivering the qualification courses meant to improve the skills of the educational staff of the Leningrad Area orphanages. They provided organizational, informational, and methodical materials contributing to the growth of the professional skills of the orphanage managers and teachers, thus helping to modernize the educational process.”

LIFE SKILLS PROJECT IN LOMONOSOV (TEEN PROJECT)

Bethany St. Petersburg adapted the curriculum developed by Bethany Christian Services in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and began this project in 1998 with 20 youth. The government specialists evaluated the results of this pilot program. Because of the obvious positive results achieved, the Committee for General and Professional Education of the Leningrad Area decided to develop this initiative. The “Teen Center for Children Aging Out of Orphanages in Leningrad Area” was begun.



Bethany participated in the rehabilitation of a dormitory building at the trade school “Center for Teens,” where 50 orphan-youth could live and receive education every year. Some youth will live here for 1-3 years, until they complete their vocational training (the government decides for how long the youth will stay in this Center). While the government was responsible for providing the vocational training, Bethany trained these youth in life skills. *This project is the first initiative in Russia where a trade school is also providing special support and life skills training to the orphan-youth.*

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

Life Skills Project Statistics

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Number of youth who graduated	34	24	34	18	22	22
Youth employed	32%	63%	79%	72%	55%	46%
Youth who continue their education	9%	17%	14%	22%	18%	14%

Youth attending mandatory military service	11%	4%	7%	6%	14%	27%
Youth who have a place to live	82%	92%	93%	94%	100%	91%

Bethany staff working with these youth reported that they saw how our program increased the self-esteem of these youth and reduced their aggressive behaviors. Government staff recognized that Bethany made a difference in the lives of these youth.

The youth enjoyed the classes and stated that the information provided will help them in so many ways:

Alexander: *"It was interesting that the classes presented information not only about the biological development of a person but also the need for the person's spiritual development..."*

Anne: *"I liked all the classes, I learned a lot about life, about men, about forming relationships, about various diseases and how to prevent from getting them, how to survive through life crisis situations, etc. All of these will help me in my future independent life..."*

Sergey: *"I was surprised to find out that a child needs to be cared [for] since birth and that the way this care is provided may affect his entire life..."*



The manager of the Teen Center, Galina Pavlova, in a thank you letter addressed to Bethany St. Petersburg:

"The team of teachers from the "Teenager Center for Social Support and Professional Training for Orphans and Children without Parental Care" sincerely thanks Bethany for [their] many years of partnership. Together we were able to develop and successfully implement psychological and social rehabilitation, and social adjustment programs for orphans. In the past seven years of cooperation with Bethany we learned to properly carry out the multi-profile activity in the area of after school activities for orphans. All the graduates of the "Teen Center" are able to integrate to independent life without major problems. Most of them are working successfully, they are able to build proper relationships with people around them, they create good families, and some continue their education. We appreciate your continue[d] care for these orphans, assistance in preparing them for independent living as capable, law-abiding, citizens with equal rights in Russia."

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 nurturing that only a family could provide, along with some health or mental issues the children may have from birth, are some causes for these delays.

The main goal of the project is to reduce the long-term effects of institutionalization for 25 children living in the Riabovo orphanage. This will be achieved through a multitude of services provided to children including, art therapy, speech therapy, music and dance lessons, recreational activities, role playing, and games designed to increase the children's cognitive performance and gross and fine motor development. These services are offered to children by a multidisciplinary team consisting of a psychologist; speech therapist; special education teacher; educator; dance, music and drama teachers; and Bethany's manager.



This project began on December 1, 2005, and is partially funded by the CATERPILLAR Company in St. Petersburg, Russia.

ORPHANAGE SUPPORT

Bethany Social Services St. Petersburg also supports a number of orphanages in the Leningrad area. Through donations from individuals in the United States and Russia, these orphanages receive clothing, shoes, medication, toys, and practical equipment, such as washing machines, water heaters, mattresses, etc.

In 2005, through Bethany's involvement, a group of U.S. volunteers renovated part of the orphanage in Kingisepp. In addition:

- A playground was also built for the orphanage in Riabovo
- Twenty (20) children from the Dubrovka orphanage received individualized presents.
- Different items were purchased and delivered to the children living in five orphanages.
- Various equipment and educational games were purchased for six orphanages.