



## FRIENDS OF UKRAINE ORPHANAGE FUND ANNUAL REPORT 2010

### OVERVIEW

It has been a very good year for the fund.

The fundraising campaign has gone very well. Many thanks to all of you.

Moreover a Ukrainian company called Slavutich has agreed to match all the money we collect up to a maximum of \$10,000. They are already spending large amounts on each orphanage.

I estimate that in 2010 we mobilized from various sources more than £10,000.

At a charity fair we attended in January it became apparent that we are now one of the largest Scottish charities working on child care in Ukraine.

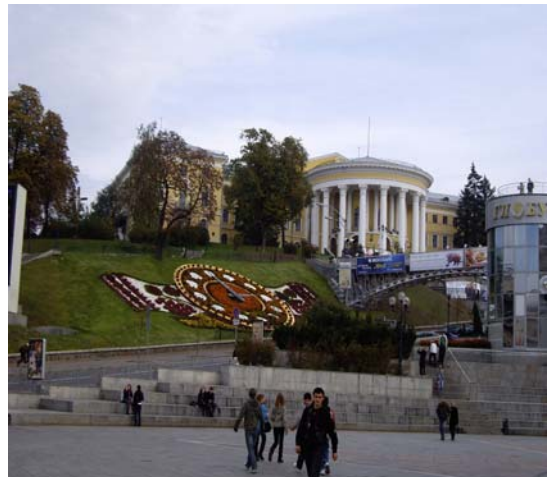
In January 2010 we were honoured by the Ukrainian government for our work in Ukraine at a ceremony in the City Chambers in Edinburgh.

At the request of the Ukrainian Consulate in Edinburgh we have added a further home to our list. We now operate almost all over Ukraine: in the capital, the north, the west and the east.

### FRIENDS OF UKRAINE

The Friends of Ukraine was set up as a registered Scottish charity in 2005. As a Russian speaker and someone who had worked there I was a natural to be a member of the Board. The Friends operate in a number of areas - cultural, educational and social. When responsibilities were allocated I took on the orphanage work and over time this has become the main ongoing strand of the Friend's activities. Past actions in which the Friends have been involved in other fields include the setting up of a floral clock similar to the one in Edinburgh in Independence Square (centre of the Orange Revolution); educational visits eg to the Royal Highland Show; and publication of a Ukrainian translation of the works of Robert Burns.

The floral clock in Independence Square, Kiev



### RECOGNITION BY THE UKRAINIAN GOVERNMENT

In January 2010 the Friends were awarded an honour by the Ukrainian Government in recognition of their efforts to promote cooperation with Ukraine. The award was given to the President of the Friends, Baroness Elizabeth Smith by the acting Consul General of Ukraine at a ceremony in Edinburgh City Chambers.



The orphanage in Sumy. The buildings are basic but clean and the staff are committed to the children. State support provides the basics but what is lacking is money for the “extras” of childhood or for major expenditures.

## OUR ORPHANAGES

I started the Friends’ orphanage work in 2006 with one orphanage in Kiev and now operate in four situated all over the country from Kiev the capital to Slavutich in the north, Sumy in the east and Volodimir Volynsk in the west. This wide geographical spread accords with the Friends’ approach of cooperating with the whole country and not just the capital Kiev. It is highly desirable but it does make contact with all the homes more complex because of the distances involved. In the homes/schools there are in total about 250-300 children. They range in age from ten months to 17 years old. Many of the children are suffering from some kind of disability from impaired vision to Downs syndrome to the effects of Chernobyl (which by the way is a Ukrainian town just to the north of Kiev). In each case I have a local helper who maintains regular contact with the homes and makes sure that our money is being well spent.



Children from the Kiev School for the Blind in Ukrainian costume

## AIMS AND ACTIONS

Our aim is to ensure that the children do not lose their childhood - a time which passes so quickly. We therefore concentrate on giving the children the childhood things they miss and which state support simply cannot provide. These include events like visits to the cinema, to MacDonaldis and to the circus, Christmas parties, gifts, puppet shows, theatre visits and donkey rides. We also of course provide basics such as clothing medicines and educational materials. In addition we finance costly medical procedures when these are vital, assist with the upkeep of buildings, and the purchase of capital equipment.

## OUR FUNDING

The sources of our funding are divided almost equally between the contributions you make and cooperation I undertake with a major foreign charity in Kiev, the Kiev Lions, and with a Ukrainian brewery firm, Slavutich. Slavutich has agreed to match any funds I raise in the UK. I have to apply case by case to the Lions but without your base funding I would have no credibility; so far I have been reasonably successful in having applications accepted. I estimate that in the past year we have “mobilized” more than £10,000 from all these sources. I tend to use your contributions for small scale ongoing support to the orphanages and to approach the Lions and Slavutich for large one-off items.

## KIEV SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

The school has around 100 children aged from 10 to 17, all with vision impairments. It is situated in a beautiful but in parts dilapidated building near the centre of Kiev. Among the items we purchased this year was a massive lego set which enables the children to build a fairly large scale model of London. The Directress chose this because it is tactile and is educational. She had wanted to buy one for years. One of the advantages of our support is that it is good not only for the children but also a big morale boost for the staff.

Not only do they feel that someone cares but they are given extra money which enables them to give the children an occasional treat which raises the morale of the whole home. Other items we have purchased included a visit to the music theatre for a presentation of the Wizard of Oz, some sledges so that the children could enjoy sledging in the grounds of the school (which have some very interesting and tempting slopes) and some traditional leaving gifts at the end of term.

Slavutich has done some vital remedial work in the school grounds (another long term wish of the Directress) and donated gymnastics and dance equipment, and reading machines for the visually impaired. The Lions donated £2000 which allowed most of the children to be kitted out with remedial spectacles. These actions show the catalytic value of the contributions made by you as Friends sponsors. Moreover The Tartan Army made a special visit in March 2010 to hand over a substantial donation of several thousand pounds.

### SLAVUTICH REHABILITATION CENTRE

The disabled children rehabilitation centre in Slavutich is home to 28 children of all ages with a variety of disabilities.

We only started working with the centre in August 2010 at the request of the staff of the Ukrainian consulate in Edinburgh but have already provided them with a huge range of toys and have repaired their washing machine. Slavutich is situated to the north of Kiev across the Dnieper river from Chernobyl. Incidentally the name has no connection with the Slavutich brewery with which we cooperate. It is linked to the name of a nearby river.

[Some of the children from the home in Slavutich](#)

### SUMY



[Children in the Blind School playing with the London lego set](#)



The home in Sumy looks after 100 very young children at the beginning of their involvement in the child care system in Ukraine. We started to work with this home in early 2008. Our funds have been used to buy clothing, toys and educational items for the children; to finance a visit to the puppet theatre; and to put new windows in the playroom to make it usable in winter. The Lions purchased an expensive orthopaedic chair which allows immobile children to sit upright for some time of the day. This protects their vital organs from damage. Slavutich has installed a new playroom

[The orthopaedic chair purchased by the Kiev Lions in action in Sumy. The chair cost around \\$3000.](#)



Valery Fen, my assistant in Volodimir Volynsk, hands over a laptop computer to the children in the home. Within minutes 10 of them had installed the computer and were watching Micky Mouse films and playing computer games.

## VOLODIMIR VOLYNSK

A care home of the family type. This is a new initiative in Ukraine in a move away from the past institutional system towards a care in the community approach. 17 children of all ages living with a house mother in more of a family environment. Volodimir Volynsk is situated on the Polish border.

Our first donation financed a new computer so that the younger children can play games and the older children can have access to the internet. The home is quite well supported by the local community. The main problem is overcrowding. The 17 children all live in three rooms. This means for example that four adult teenagers (two boys and two girls) have to sleep in one room. Another problem is the pressure on the house mother although she is supported to some extent by the adult teenagers. I visited the home for the first time in June 2010 and was impressed by the family atmosphere which had been created. Slavutich arranged and paid for an outing to Lviv, the regional capital, which was a major experience for the children.

## DNIPROKIDS

In addition to my work with the Friends of Ukraine I am also on the Board of the Dniprokids Appeal a charity run by Hibernian football supporters which operates in two orphanages and a TB sanatorium in a single town Dnipropetrovsk, in south east Ukraine. Dniprokids was set up in 2005 and they quickly asked me to join their Board because of my experience in the field and my knowledge of Russian. This charity goes from strength to strength and collects more and more each year. It is now the largest single Scottish charity working with children in Ukraine. I was responsible this year for conducting a fundamental strategic review of the charity's operations. I recently stepped down as Vice Chairman to concentrate on my work with the Friends but remain as an Honorary Member and Adviser to the Board.

The Directress of the home in Slavutich gives the children some drawing materials we bought for them.

## FUTURE WORK

I look forward to continuing our work in the future. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me. If you use email and would like to receive updates electronically in future, please send me your email address.



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