

# BIG FAMILY

Mission to Children

January 2006

*“Worship that is pure and unblemished in the sight of God the father is this: to visit and help and care for the widows and orphans in their affliction and need....” James 1:27 (AMP)*



***Kolia with soccer uniform and ball***

Our Big Family team at Kommunar reports that the children were “in shock” when they received their Christmas gifts. “In shock” because the gifts were such a wonderful blessing to the children. Each child was allowed to choose a “big gift” item (like Kolia’s soccer outfit and soccer ball) and also received a set of personal items like shampoo and soap, toothbrushes, etc.

The children at Kommunar celebrated with volunteers from the church, including “Ded Moroz” (father Christmas) on the right, and his granddaughter “Snegurochka” on the left. It is a Russian tradition that father Christmas and his granddaughter bring Christmas gifts for children. Christmas parties were also held at Luga and St. Petersburg, but as we write this newsletter, the purchase of Christmas gifts has not yet been completed because of other commitments by our volunteers there.

We hope to have more about the Christmas gifts at Luga and St. Petersburg in our next newsletter.

## ***Looking at 2005 and the year ahead***

January’s newsletter is a bit late for a variety of reasons. We have decided that the New Year is a good time to look back at 2005... and look forward to the year before us. We would like to share from our hearts some of the events of 2005, some of the things we have learned during the past year, and some of our heart’s desires for 2006.

Big Family Mission received a huge blessing in 2005 when two more churches allowed us to share with their congregations the need to care for the orphans of Russia. We praise God and thank Him for the open doors and warm welcome we received at the Word of Faith Family Church in Springfield, Ohio, and the Slavic Pentecostal Church in West Springfield, Massachusetts. We had hoped to do at least 12 church presentations in 2005, because we see how loving and caring for orphans really blesses church congregations.

Please pray with us that we will have more opportunities for church or Sunday School class presentations in 2006. And, for those of you who attend churches where we have not made a Big Family presentation, will you ask your pastor or Sunday School teacher or your Mission Board about allowing us to present Big Family Mission? We can tailor our presentation to fit your needs: it can last just 5 minutes or as long as 45 minutes.

We see how God is working in Russia, and we would like for many others to be blessed by participating in this mission outreach.

## ***Here are a few other highlights of 2005:***

- The number of children we are ministering to in Russia grew!
- The number of Russian church volunteers who are working with orphans grew!
- The number of our Big Family Friends grew!
- We started life (birthday) celebrations in each of the orphanages where Big Family ministers!
- We continued to provide fruit, socks, underclothing, and personal items for Big Family children!

- We partnered with MIR to become “official” in Russia!
- We officially organized in the U.S. as a mission society of Lighthouse Community Church!
- We got our website up and running (and have changed it three times already)!
- Our foster home family grew from two children to three children!
- We made two mission trips to Russia, including one with Vickie and Carol!
- We sponsored a summer church camp for orphans!
- We were introduced to the concept of “transition homes”!
- More Big Family children started going to church!
- The children at Luga began to smile more, and they enjoyed singing Christian songs!
- Through the hard work of Bible School children at Fellowship Christian Church, bunk beds were provided for the Kommunar orphanage!

Through our experiences in 2005, God has underlined for us just how important it is to focus on getting orphans into foster families or “family transition homes” in order to give them hope and a future. Through churches in Russia, Big Family continues to minister to children at the orphanages, but for 2006, we hope that we can have more opportunities to support foster families and transition homes for orphans. What chance do the orphans have without opportunity to be in a family? Nine out of 10 will end up in prison, alcoholics, on drugs, prostitutes, or victims of suicide and violent crimes.

As announced during 2005, Big Family Mission is now using about 1/3 of donated funds to support and encourage foster families and mentoring programs for orphans. Several special gifts have been received to help with our Big Family foster home, and we greatly appreciate those who are helping with God’s work to “set the solitary in families”. (Psalm 68)

### ***What’s ahead for 2006?***

Looking ahead to 2006, we are hoping (if it is God’s will) that we:

- See an increase in number of Family Friends;
- Get involved with transitional homes in Russia;
- Find more Russian families who are willing to be foster parents;
- Find partners in the U.S. who wish to support foster families and transition homes with their prayers and giving;
- See more Family Friends travel to Russia on mission trips;
- Have more opportunities to present Big Family Mission to churches and other groups.



***Children enjoy the swing at summer camp 2005***

### **Summer mission trips planned**

Big Family Friends are organizing two mission trips for the summer of 2006. If you would like to join Pastor Al Zentner and Family Friends at Lighthouse Community Church as they minister in a summer camp for orphans, you can find more information on the Big Family website, or you can contact Pastor Al, cell (610) 334-3337 or e-mail [ZentnerAl@cs.com](mailto:ZentnerAl@cs.com).

Family Friends at Gettysburg Baptist Church are exploring the possibility of traveling to Luga for a week in June to minister to the orphans there and to help with repair and maintenance work at the orphanage. If you are interested in this mission trip, please contact Vickie or Bob Felix, telephone (717) 334-7134 or e-mail [rmefxs@pa.net](mailto:rmefxs@pa.net).

### ***More news enclosed***

Please see Carol’s reflections on her first mission trip to Russia, and a list of prayer requests enclosed.

### ***Contact information:***

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**Big Family Mission is an inter-denominational mission outreach of Lighthouse Community Church, Lyon Station, Pennsylvania.**