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Nursery at Isani IDP Shelter Offers Calm Amidst Calamity

In May a nursery opened as part of the kindergarten run by AFG in the Isani Collective Center.

Isani is one of the biggest IDP Center in Tbilisi giving shelter approximately 700 internally displaced persons. These IDPs are suffering the loss of their homes and villages in South Ossetia as a result of the war with Russia last year.

The sum spent for the nursery rooms repair was covered by the TBC bank. AFG would like to be able to purchase beds and other needed items, as well as finding sponsors to fund operating needs. As of today the nursery is operating with 10 children.

We need more sponsors to support the nursery. Approximately \$700 a month is needed to operate the nursery. Costs include baby food, diapers, sanitary supplies and medical equipments, teachers' and nurse's salaries (they are employed refugees).

Today the kindergarten with 45 children is a real cultural and rehabilitation center.

It is a full day program: children stay until 5 pm (education, entertainment, rest, three meals a day). In addition the teachers cooperate closely with the parents (helping them with questions of upbringing and providing psychological consultation). In order for the parents take part in the program, they take turns preparing a favorite dish for the kindergarten and bringing it to the class. In the evening, supervisors meet and discuss future plans with parents.

The kindergarten head, Ms. Nino Aghapishvili, arranges various theatrical performances, entertainment, and cognitive programs for children. Actors from a local puppet theatre and clowns visit the children in the kindergarten. She also organizes excursions to the Zoo.



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IDP Children Celebrate International Children's Day

AFG organized charity performance in Gori Theater devoted to IDP children on 1st June. The Shadows Theater "Budrugana Gagra" gave a matinee "Tsa Lajvarti" (Blue sky) delivered especially for children from Tbilisi.



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The Theater "Budrugana-Gagra" is unique. The actors perform using only their hands and shadows. It is also interesting to notice that actors themselves are children refugees from Abkhazia.

The children attentively watched Bear Lazare's adventure with other animals in the forest, but they were mostly interested in the transformation of figures shown on the screen at the end of the performance. To satisfy the children's curiosity, the actors invited them backstage to watch how they bring the characters alive with their hands, accompanied with music of Bizet, Gershwin and Manhattan Transfer.

It was an impressive moment when the children, along with the actors, tried to copy the duck, wolf, tree or bird, but it turned out not to be easy to do. This interested the guests who included the Head of US Embassy PR office Ms. Cynthia Whittlesey and her assistant Ms. Nino Gagua and representatives of the Gori Municipality who took an active part in this performance.

In the lobby of the theater there were snacks and drinks provided for children who were astonished by the event.

"It was an unforgettable day for us"- said Maja Javakhishvili, a refugee from Khurvaleti settlement who helped us bring IDP children to the performance.



Medicine and Computers Arrived!

As part of our long-term cooperation with Project Hope, AFG received two containers with medicines, medical equipment and 20 computers destined for our partner organizations: Childrens Republic Hospital, the Cancer Preventive Center and Monastery Mercy Center.

The computers were distributed to Dzevi and Bediani Orphanages, Mkurnali Association, Giorgi Mtatsmindeli secondary school, Axalkalaki secondary school and the Refugee Resource Center in Khurvaleti settlement.

"I have to say many thanks for taking care of hospice patients and their families"-said Dr. Soso Abesadze from the Cancer Prevention Center. "You know that these people have few happy events in their lives and when we told them that the American



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people sent this medicine especially for them, they were very thankful and happy. Infusion fluids and equipment are very useful because they are costly and our team spends a lot of money on them from our limited budget. Also our team started providing home care, which is why we were very happy to see so much moisture creams and washing materials, as well as individual sterile sets for different needs. Thank you very much and God bless you for your kindness."



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From Women to Women

The International Woman's Association (IWA) gave a grant of 5000 lari to AFG to continue the IDP sewing workshop. After the war, the sewing workshop placed in Isani started sewing quilts however the workshop ran out of funds earlier this year. This grant gave AFG the chance to purchase wool and coarse calico for 150 quilts and pay the IDP women working at the workshop.

AFG has a long record of cooperation with the IWA. Ms. Judy Yalowitz, a former president of IWA, is now a board member of AFG. Nana Dvali, a founding member of IWA, said "The work of AFG has been known in Georgia over the years. This NGO has a strong, positive record and achievements. It is known for its honesty and devotion to working on social problems." During the presentation, when she described AFG's project, she mentioned "I personally spoke with some IDP women at Isani and they are happy to be able to work-so we are happy to give them the chance to continue to make blankets and at the same time provide other needy people with them."

The 150 blankets IDP workshop created with this grant were handed out to the Isani nursery, Mkurnali Association, (for Street children), Bediani Orphanage and to IDP's in Khurvaleti.



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AmCham benefits AFG

The American Chamber of Commerce in Georgia celebrated its 10th Anniversary on Saturday, May 23, 2009. AmCham had the honor to host Ambassadors from 9 countries, 250 high level business representatives, and other leading Georgian and International officials at the Sheraton Metechi Palace Hotel.

The event was attended by Ambassador John Tefft, Honorary President of AmCham Georgia and US Ambassador Kenneth Yallowitz, the first Honorary President of AmCham, the President of AmCham Azerbaijan Daniel Matthews. Guests enjoyed an elegant 5-course dinner to the live music of the Tbilisi Municipality Jazz Orchestra and the Chicago Blues Band. They also enjoyed a live art auction with wonderful art works of well-known Georgian painters and a silent art auction (cloisonné, craft, quilt) and a raffle drawing with wonderful prizes including a brand new laptop computer donated by UGT, a return air ticket to London.

During the event AmCham raised GEL 5,423 , USD 10,135 through the raffle and art auction for charity projects .

Proceeds from the gala, auction, and raffle will be donated to the American Friends of Georgia to help implement two projects: the "Construction of the Parents House for Leukemia Children" and the "Educational and Vocational training program for IDP children, youth and adults".

We cordially thank AmCham and all companies who donated money for our projects and gave \$10, 135 for the completion of the parents house and 5,423 Gel for the Vocational education project.



AmCham member Mr. Clifford Isaak and AmCham staff introduce the auction bids to the guests.





AFG Needs You!

New Needs for Hospice Program

The hospice program operated by the Convent of Transfiguration serves over 30 patients that would otherwise fall through the cracks of the Georgian health care system.

Currently the small center is expanding. The repair services included expanding the Hospice building, integrating two large rooms, providing the toilet and the bathroom with all conveniences, replacing windows and doors and building a washing area. "The hospice expansion gives us the opportunity to shelter more people (up to seven more) and to improve the quality of

service"-said Mother Paraskeva head of Hospice. "To do further repair services we need \$5000."



The facility also includes a two-year nursing education program licensed by the Ministry of Education.



The hospice program operated by the Convent of Transfiguration serves over 30 patients. Expansion at the Hospice Center will allow the program to serve more people.

Funds Needed to Support Environmental Education for Disadvantaged Youth

Institute of Decorative Gardening and Ecology is a professional gardening school founded in 2006 for high school students who cannot afford fees in Georgia's public institutes and for Georgian adults up to age 35 who are unemployed. 100 students per year attend the Institute tuition free. The institute's best students have had the opportunity to study abroad in Western Europe during the summer.

Today the Institute needs \$5000 to build a flower shop. The 20 square meter shop will be located near the gardening school, in front of the main entrance of the Holy Trinity Church in Tbilisi. The shop will not only provide income for the institute but will also have an educational mission in bringing the culture of gardening and the beauty of flowers to the public. In fact, the Institute already has a popular program in which over 5000 cypress have been given to Tbilisi's citizens.



The Institute for Decorative Gardening has a free program in place for students who qualify. The institute plans to sell flowers as part of its efforts to educate the public and raise funds.

Computer Needs

The students at the Institute for Decorative Gardening already have strong classroom instruction in botany and environmental science. They also have many opportunities for practical training in the school's associated garden and greenhouse, as well as Tbilisi's world famous Bukia Gardens.

Now the Institute's director would like to enhance the school's theoretical curriculum by ensuring that her graduates have access to digital and online gardening resources and have all the

same computer based tools for landscape design as their counterparts in other countries. \$7000 is needed to purchase seven computers.

These computers would allow students to study from the school's extensive CD/DVD collection. Currently the institute has garden encyclopaedias on disk which cover such design topics as garden styles, including English and Japanese gardens, as well as landscaping trends. Other disks contain interactive educational programs examining water and topography management, as well as methods of plant cultivation.

In addition, the school has a software based landscaping course which will familiarize the students with computer assisted landscape imaging, one of the fastest growing design techniques in the field. The course will also teach students to develop business plans for a project and manage a project's expenses.

Finally the Institute needs \$1000 for the purchase of a color copier because the school library only has single copies of its text and reference books, so students need a means of making color copies for study purposes.

Please visit our website www.afgeorgia.org to donate for these projects