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In the next issue:
Local governance



Conference principals meet the press

Message From Open World Board Member
Ambassador James F. Collins

Open World's Alumni Outreach Program (Otkrytyi mir – vypusknikam) ended the year on a forward-looking note by hosting a conference on the future of NGOs in Russia and the United States. Held in Golitsyno, outside Moscow, the conference gathered alumni from central European Russia, members of Open World host organizations, and Open World staff to share strategies on delivering health and social services, developing youth programs, and building women's leadership. As conference host, I would like to share with you my thoughts on the discussions and conclusions.

The first point is that there was consensus among both Open World alumni and those of us from Washington that there are very large areas of civic duty and need that are not being met, and will not be met, by government or the private sector. This leaves open a space that can only be filled by nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations. I think it's worth underscoring that point, because there are those who question whether such a third sector is needed, and there are those who try to have it become an arm of the profit-making world or of government. What I heard in Golitsyno is the conclusion that the NGO/nonprofit organization must exist separately from both government and business — but work with each.

My second point is that this part of a democratic polity and a market economy is now the foundation for much of civil society. These noncommercial, nongovernmental organizations are critical intermediaries between the people of a society and the other two sectors, which tend to have specific approaches to their responsibilities. Government is in the business of regulation and organization. Commercial enterprise is in the business of making profit. Both have their own dynamics.



James F. Collins

It is the nonprofit, nongovernmental side that has as its goal, essentially, the making of a better life for every citizen. That is what our NGO alumni are about. They both conduct their day-to-day business and work for that goal directly, but they also often serve as a facilitator between the private, profit-making sector and the governmental sector for the people who cannot do so effectively alone.

The third point is that the development of successful nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations depends very much on the ability of these organizations to connect and communicate with the people they serve. This dimension is as important as talking to fund-raisers, donors, or government officials who will decide on legislation that will govern NGO work. If you want to talk about youth policy, it is critical today to talk to young people. If you want to talk about health care, it is critical to talk to those people who need the care. I believe that it is in this kind of work, and in this kind of role, that nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations have a unique capacity to help shape both governmental and business policy as well as to improve the lives of those they serve.

Finally, as my fourth point, a word about Open World: I do believe that this is a program that is opening doors to greater understanding between America and the Russian Federation, and between our two peoples. The discussions at the Golitsyno conference about the work alumni are doing, and the kinds of social issues they are addressing, left me with the strong impression that our nations have many, many things in common. We have narcotics problems, we have health care reform that is coming, and we have to think about problems related to pensions and an aging population. All of these things are issues that, in the United States, are very much in the world of the nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations for a very simple reason — the government and the private sector do not fully take care of them and people look to the NGO nonprofit sector to add critical elements to the discussion and management of these subjects.

The Russian Federation probably will not be all that different, because there are certainly questions for the modern democratic, pluralistic society that government cannot address and business will not because it is outside the organizing principle of the private sector. Here is one of the areas where Open World and the alumni of our program can

have a very strong role in developing a shared sense of opportunity and prospects, which I believe is very important.

I hope that we can continue to count on you, the alumni, to help us both to improve the Open World Program and to make it even more meaningful. I hope also that you the alumni, among yourselves, become a force for multiplying your experiences among your fellow citizens. And if we can together build a better society for all of us, then Open World will have accomplished its aims. I am very, very encouraged and, I must say, very thankful for the kinds of things that alumni of the Open World Program are doing.



James F. Collins
Member
Board of Trustees
Open World Leadership Center

Conference
materials and full
texts of articles in
this issue are located
on our website:
www.openworld.gov

OPEN WORLD ALUMNI BULLETIN

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Founded by the U.S. Congress in 1999, the Open World Program has enabled more than 8,900 citizens from all of Russia's 89 regions, Lithuania, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan to see the U.S. democratic process in action and to exchange ideas with their American counterparts, thereby building mutual understanding between Eurasia and the United States. The Open World Program is conducted by the Open World Leadership Center, an independent legislative branch agency, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of State and other U.S. executive and judicial branch agencies.

To sign up for free electronic program bulletins or to be removed from mailout lists, please visit www.openworld.gov. In Russia, the *Bulletin* is mailed to alumni without access to e-mail.

Aleksin's Programs Improve the Lives of Children

*Yuriy Mikhaylovich Kostev
Aleksin, Tula Oblast
City and District Administration of
Aleksin
Deputy Chief of Administration*
Program Year: 2000
Theme: Federalism
Host City: San Diego, Calif.
Host Organizations: Rotary International*

What especially amazed me during my participation in the Open World Program was the fabulous work that is being done in education and social services, and the people themselves — open, considerate, supportive of those in need, and full of purpose. Two of my colleagues also visited the United States under the Open World Program: Mayor (and Head of District Administration) Aleksandr Yermoshin and Yuriy Sukhoruchenkov, Deputy Mayor for Legislative Liaison. I believe our visit has greatly affected our work in municipal development.

1. The implementation of child-nurturing programs is a main component of our municipal social policy, particularly programs focusing on health issues. One of the major successes of our administration was the opening of a maternity hospital with modern equipment, highly qualified staff, an intensive care ward, and a family planning office. As a result of this facility, newborn deaths have decreased from 16 in 2002 to 10 in 2004.

Local educational institutions are very actively involved with our health programming for children. With their cooperation, we have created a customized educational system that provides health care for 37 percent of our kindergarteners. We are also working to help children with health problems, developmental

delays, and speech impediments. Our efforts have helped reduce illness among preschool and school age children by 18 percent and grades are up by more than 4 percent. The introduction of physical education and movement classes promotes a healthy lifestyle for children. In our sports clubs we have 5,500 children participating in 19 different sports.

2. Another very important effort has been our work with orphans. In 2003 and 2004, agencies dealing with child neglect identified 152 children in need of help. Fifty-two of these children were moved to orphanages, 62 were provided with guardians, 23 were adopted.

An important area of our work is assisting children living in dangerous environments. In 2003 we opened a juvenile social rehabilitation center called the Isle of Hope to serve them. Federal, regional, and local grants were all important in opening this center, but even more remarkable was the more than one million rubles [\$36,417] received in private donations. In 2004 the center won a federal grant to offer a sports-based summer camp, Rusitch (Russian).

3. During the year 3,587 children, or 51.5% of children, took advantage of recreational or therapeutic activities, an increase of 2.8% over 2003. Rest, recuperation, and recreation of children living in dangerous environments and those needing government assistance took priority in the healthy lifestyle campaign. Thirty percent of children served were in this category.

4. Additionally, we have been working with municipal educational institutions to recruit teenagers for temporary employment. A total of 363 adolescents worked part-time during 2004. An important component of our crime



Yuriy Kostev at the NGO conference

prevention program is arranging constructive activities for adolescents to engage in — nearly 6,000 teenagers participated in our sports and cultural programs in 2004.

5. We have also opened a special center called Lad (Harmony) that provides psychological, educational, medical, and social services for youth at risk. Professionals from different backgrounds meet the diverse needs of the children at the center.

6. We also pay special attention to addressing the needs of children with disabilities. Social and medical rehabilitation services are made available to the 266 disabled children that live in our city. We offer a program for parents of children with disabilities where they can consult with regional social service entities, health agencies, and municipal representa-

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HEALTH

The discussions began with a look at the current state of the healthcare sector in Russia and at proposed legislation that will affect the healthcare system. In attendance were doctors, health officials, hospital administrators, and the department head of a medical insurance company. The group was quick to recognize that NGOs could provide Russian citizens with health services, but very few health-related NGOs exist in Russia today. The medical specialists do see these non-governmental healthcare organizations as a threat—Russian citizens expect the government to provide healthcare and those gathered want to preserve the vertical structure of government, but they also see the advantages: flexibility to provide treatments the public requires and the ability to fundraise.

Although the group fears that the public will not patronize health-care facilities that do not provide free services, they are willing to lobby for and to promote healthcare NGOs in Russia.

They would like American healthcare organizations to share their know how with their Russian counterparts. They would also like to see American and Russian professional healthcare associations educate the public on government health reform and the resources for healthcare in the community. Once healthcare professionals in Russia learn how to establish and manage healthcare NGOs, they will be able to develop the resources needed. One healthcare provider stated in his conference evaluation: "[I could utilize] the experience of NGOs in healthcare. With volunteer involvement I hope to launch non-profit/non-governmental prevention programs in the field of health."

Transforming Communities by Changing People

Marina Vitalyevna Rodkevich

Moscow

Psychologist, Art Director

Same as You (Moscow Region Charity for the Disabled)

Open World 2004 (Health)

Host Community: Akron, Ohio

Host Organizations: Academy for Educational Development/Institute of World Affairs

My deepest impression from America is the difference that exists between Americans and Russians. Even before my trip, I assumed that we are different partly because of the different relationship between the individual and the state, and the individual and the community, that exists in our two countries. To put it more precisely, there is a difference in how one sees oneself as a citizen.

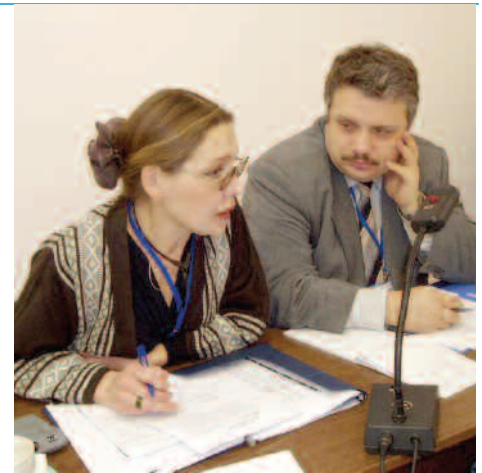
The notion of how we were different first occurred to me over dinner with my host family. As usual, we spent the evening chatting about all sorts of issues. My very hospitable hostess, Fran Satina, shared her memories of watching the wall coming down in Berlin. I tried making a joke when I told her, "Be honest, it was you who made the first attempt to break down the wall between East and West! Now I know who really sets policy in the States and the entire world!" My joke failed. Fran responded, "Yes, I set policy, and not only for the U.S."

She told me about her experience campaigning, meeting congressional representatives and senators, participating in charity auctions, fundraising for and contributing to her favorite organizations funds. Fran brought a stone from the Berlin Wall home and gave it to the library at the University of Akron. This 75-

year-old woman stunned me. What makes an average person so sure of their ability to influence politics? She feels necessary to the future of her country and community, and is absolutely sure that the future of the United States rests on the shoulders of every American. It occurred to me that this would be the most crucial lesson from my trip to the United States. This small episode completely altered my attitude toward a great deal of things, including the work to which I've devoted 10 years of my life.

In the early 1990s, I became acquainted with the Moscow Down Syndrome Association. The organization is mainly composed of parents of disabled children — many of the "children" are already adults my age. The parents joined together for mutual support, as the government offers little assistance to them and their children. The government considers such children to be learning disabled; hospital guidelines instruct medical staff to inform such parents about their right to disown the child. Once removed from their parents, children with Down syndrome are placed in special asylums where they are treated like vegetables.

In light of this, it is not surprising that there are parents who fight for the right of their children to live a normal life, despite the challenges and obstacles involved. The main reason for these challenges and obstacles is the general attitude that says, "You chose to take care of the child yourself, you figure out how to do it." These children are not allowed to attend kindergartens, schools, or vocational training centers. It would be unthinkable for parents to manage by themselves and so they had to combine efforts with other parents.



Marina Rodkevich and Yuriy Voronenko

At first the association was similar to a youth club attempting to organize a Sunday school. The office of the association was the chairperson's apartment. Volunteers conducted lessons, and I was one of them. For quite some time we considered our work to be nothing more than a private initiative for the benefit of a small group of people, or so we thought until we looked at the results. Today the association includes more than 300 families with disabled children. It sponsors arts and crafts, sports, and a volunteer group called Mercy that supervises children with disabilities living in special dormitories. Children from our sports teams have participated in and won at the Special Olympics World Games. Our history and outcomes show that it is possible and crucial to work with children affected by Down syndrome. The sooner the work begins, the more effective the rehabilitation will be.

I wanted to work with such children; this is why I've continued my education. I became a professional art therapist, and I have developed my own therapeutic methods for Down syndrome and have successfully applied them

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SOCIAL SERVICES

Even though the participants in the social services section come from all three sectors and work with NGOs, they discovered that their field of expertise differs dramatically from person to person. Common elements were: their definition of community services as a contribution of one's time, labor, and resources (financial and material); and their commitment to core human values and social justice. Their conclusions covered NGOs in general and not just those that provide social services. Services provided by NGOs are in great demand – governmental entities either cannot fill this niche or do so ineffectively. NGOs can be flexible in their approach to issues. They predict that cultural institutions such as libraries and museums will become non-profit/non-governmental entities. Irregular tax laws on business funding of social services, mistrust

of grantees' use of funds, unstable political and economic conditions causing businesses to become opaque, and "redistribution" of mass media are all perceived as threats to NGOs.

Representing the government sector, Salavat Begushev [author of the article on p. 7] concluded, "None of the three sectors – NGO, business, and government – can exist while working in a vacuum. We should encourage close ties among the three." Viktor Voronenko, TNK-BP, Kiev, Ukraine added: "Business is aware of the importance of its own participation in nonprofit sector activity. Moral values are one of the major incentives. Our wishes include not only business and market development, but also participation in NGO programming on different levels in different spheres. The problem is educating business. We do not have the right contact with NGOs; we need to understand how we can cooperate."

My Political Life

Lyudmila Kimovna Komogortseva
Bryansk, Bryansk Region
Bryansk Regional Duma Deputy
Human Rights Activist, Environmentalist
Open World 1999
Host Community: Detroit, Mich.
Host Organization: National Democratic Institute

I was invited to participate in the Open World Program in 1999 while I was serving as the head of the Bryansk regional chapter of the Democratic Choice of Russia party, and also as a member of the party's central council. Our group focused on regional political leaders, and although five years have passed since that trip, I still recall it vividly.

The two-week-long late summer trip was a time of sun, roads, and many meetings. We began in Washington, D.C., where we were acquainted with the U.S. Congress, various foundations, nonprofit organizations, and political parties, after which we flew to Michigan. We stayed in a wonderful hotel and a roadside motel, and with host families. We dined in restaurants, fast food shacks, and family kitchens. Our trip included visits to the Great Lakes, the Gillette Sand Dune, General Motors, Michigan State University, a hospital, a radio station, a fair, and an entertaining

“Made in America” exhibit [at the Henry Ford Museum] in Detroit. We explored the roads and met a wide range of people in the open and hospitable country. We found that America has problems, too. Reduced production and strong competition from Japanese auto manufacturers has greatly hurt employment in the auto-producing state of Michigan. However, we were quite taken with the success that social services had achieved in facing unemployment, and were astounded by the quality of the roads. Everything was interesting!

I am still not sure if my participation in politics has been a natural outcome of my trip, or simply a coincidence. In 1999, I came in third out of 12 candidates in a campaign for Bryansk deputy to the State Duma. In 2000, I was invited to work for Vladimir Putin's presidential campaign in the Bryansk region. This experience was a factor in my successful campaign for a seat in the Bryansk Regional Duma. Four years later I won a second time in a one-district mandate [i.e. election] in Bryansk city, and I now chair the Permanent Committee on Environmental Issues and Natural Resource Allocation. I believe my having met with U.S. members of Congress encouraged my success.

In addition to my political activities, I have founded two different nongovernmental



Lyudmila Komogortseva

organizations and work with mass media on three fronts: regional policy, the environment, and the protection of human rights. My work with these NGOs helped me to implement ideas before I had been elected to any political office. In 2002, having left party politics, I began to work more closely with human rights activists. Although I no longer belong to a political party, I remain a visible figure in the community and in political circles.

Some would say that constant hard work leads to success, and they are correct. However, success also consists of happy coincidence, luck and a wish. My trip to the United States was like a shooting star landing on the shore of a big lake named Michigan.

WOMEN AS LEADERS

The common factor in this section was gender, the issues diverse. In their professional lives the women in attendance advise women in management, deal with social problems on an international level—Europe, defend human rights in Bryansk while serving in the Bryansk Duma, write for women's journals, and deal with victims of rape and domestic violence. The main concerns among the group were the advancement of women in leadership positions and the promotion of gender equality and tolerance. The most popular method of achieving these goals is to lobby influential women to support the advancement of women in government and appeal to Russian society to promote a culture of peace and nonviolence.

The participants shared their approaches in promoting gender equality. Tatyana Lysenko, chair of the Tula Committee on Women's Issues and Demographic Policy, mentioned that she had organized a university-level two-year program for women in poli-

tics. One attendee mentioned that in her organization they developed a horizontal system and eliminated the vertical so that everyone had an opportunity to advance on his/her own merit. Another attendee mentioned that the Ryazan governor told her, “Why should we promote any of you [women] in government? You do not know how to unite and come to a consensus. You do not know how to promote yourselves.” In 1999, Lyudmila Komogortseva learned to promote herself. She traveled on Open World as head of the Bryansk branch of a national political party. Meeting with American politicians made her aware of the importance of leadership qualities and professionalism. She is now a two-term Bryansk duma deputy. Her story is above. Tatyana Chertoritskaya, co-discussant of the section, stated that defending oneself, one's family, and raising a family of leaders is essential for Russian women. Elena Morozova added that Russia has the necessary laws for defending women, but they do not work.

Continued from page 4

in courses for affected adults. In 1999, I was invited to lecture at the Moscow Institute of Open Education's Department of Behavioral Psychology and Special Education Instruction. I now had the opportunity in a college setting

to train specialists to work with children with disabilities.

The Moscow Down Syndrome Association split into several independent NGOs based on their programming focus. I am an employee of these organizations, and have

never felt my work to be more pertinent than it is now. People need my knowledge, my skills, and my experience. Thank you, U.S. citizen Fran Satina! Thank you for many things, but especially for giving me the confidence to change life in my country for the better.

Another Chance to Find a Better Life

Irina Nikolayevna Voznesenskaya
Ryazan, Ryazan Region
Consultant

Interregional Extracurricular Studies Center
Open World 2004 (Youth Issues)
Host Community: Washington, D.C.
Host Organization: National Peace Foundation

I've been working with young people all my life. The main goal of my work is to help give each one a chance to discover his or her path to happiness and success. Unfortunately, a lot of internal and external factors often prevent young people from finding their calling. And without that, they can't achieve personal well-being and recognition. That means they need an effective system of support and assistance that will encourage positive action and discourage negative behavior. Providing this kind of help is the central purpose of our center. To achieve it, the creative and enthusiastic professionals on our team work to help our children overcome difficulties and celebrate their successes.

We have always been curious about our colleagues working in Russia and other parts of the world — how do they approach these concerns, what sort of cooperative methods do they use, what sort of methodologies do they find effective, and how are they supported in the community? These and many other questions led me to the Open World Program.

Our host, the National Peace Foundation, prepared a very intensive and diversified schedule that allowed us to learn about many aspects of working with young people in the States. Our meetings with a multitude of organizations helped us find common ground in understanding youth issues; directions in which

to work on these issues; and new organizational development strategies. Also, our host coordinator, Marsha Blakeway, brought an air of relaxed, open conversation to our meetings.

We saw in America a very serious approach to assessing situations, forecasting trends, and evaluating program effectiveness. We were very interested in the types of support that social and educational youth nonprofits receive in America, and we became quite envious of the widespread volunteerism and the effective system of recruiting, training, and using volunteers that exists there. Our explorations didn't stop during the evenings, either; I found similar professional interests and cooperative possibilities with my host, Kathryn Liss.

Last December I happily accepted an invitation to participate in an Open World international alumni conference at Golitsyno, just outside Moscow. Half a year had passed since my return from America, my impressions of the trip had begun to dull, and I realized I needed to reexamine how I could apply my experience there to my professional activities in Russia. How could I do this? Had other alumni managed to apply their experiences? Are there joint projects? Having learned the American approach toward various issues, I had become more interested in the work of Russian NGOs. The Open World alumni conference gave me an opportunity to discuss these important issues with like-minded colleagues.

The conference was a wonderful opportunity to become acquainted with a wide range of



Irina Voznesenskaya (top row, 4th from left) surrounded by Youth Issues section participants

nonprofit organizations working in several different areas, each with its own view of the NGO sector and future development trends in this sector. At the plenary session of the conference, we discussed how to address youth issues. Our discussions in the youth policy workshop focused on what our priorities should be in addressing youth issues and on the issues faced by organizations working with young people. The conference was an excellent opportunity to make new contacts, and I was extremely excited to meet Sarah Harder, President and Chair of the Board of the National Peace Foundation, and Olga Bessolova, Chair of the Board of the Institute for Social and Gender Policy. Our plans now look to the future of social development and programming for youth.

I believe, and our American counterparts have already shown, that we can move forward only by combining our efforts. Nonprofits have a tendency to fly solo into the face of adversity, but I believe that the alumni of the Open World Program can foster cooperation and bolster Russian civil society, and in the end solve the problems that young people face.

YOUTH ISSUES

Chairs of government youth committees and heads of government and non-governmental organizations interested in children's education and welfare, students' rights, and hatching youth entrepreneurs comprised the youth group. They currently see little or no cooperation between government and NGOs in work with youth. A national youth policy no longer exists and past youth policies did not take into account the changing needs of young people. Government funds allocated for education and youth activities are the first to be redistributed in emergencies. Despite the lack of government policy and funding each participant had presentations to share on work with youth in their city or region.

Oleg Kalitin, chair of the Tula Youth Committee has plans with sister city Albany, New York to run a summer camp this year in Tula. Olga Kalachikhina of the Don Lyceum in Moscow spoke of the educational tours she offers students during their school breaks. They visit and study different regions of Russia. Irina Voznesenskaya of the Interregional Center for Continuing Education in Ryazan, author of the article above, was concerned that children only use computers to play games. She invited Intel to come and show teachers how to engage students in computer use for educational purposes. The group's recommendation is for NGOs to show government decision-makers NGO capabilities, the quality of their work, and cost-effectiveness in order to be accepted by government as a partner.

FROM THE REGIONS

In 2005 regional alumni coordinators for the Open World Outreach Program will work with alumni in the following cities and regions:

*Arkhangelsk
Astrakhan
Belgorod
Kazan
Kaluga
Khabarovsk
Kurgan*

*Makhachkala
Moscow
Novosibirsk
Penza
Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy
Smolensk*

*St. Petersburg
Stavropol
Syktyvkar
Tambov
Ufa
Ulan-Ude*

*Ulyanovsk
Vladimir
Vladivostok
Vologda
Yoshkar-Ola
Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk*

We encourage our alumni to create alumni associations and clubs, and actively support and participate in local alumni meetings and events. If an alumni club or association does not exist in your area, then here is some advice from Salavat Begushev in Moscow on how to start one:

Believe in Yourself and Your Friends and Everything Will Turn Out Fine

Salavat Anvarovich Begushev

Moscow

*Head of the Center for Housing Subsidies
Moscow City Government Department of
Housing*

*Member of the Moscow Public Chamber of
the Governor*

Open World 1999

Host Community: Lake Charles, La.

*Host Organization: United Methodist
Church – Russia Initiative*

I have seen countries both north and south, in Europe and in Asia. During my travels I have seen and learned a great deal, but my 10-day trip to Lake Charles, La., with the Open World Program in 1999 helped me understand and rethink a lot of things in my life. Possibly because we were among the first Open World participants, we were fortunate to see the real America through the eyes of its children, workers, businessmen, lawyers, housewives, and policemen. Our delegation met with the state governor, mayors, bankers, prison employees, sheriffs and police officers, and

common Americans. We visited hospitals and factories. We were the first Russians some of these Americans had ever met.

My experience there taught me that the underlying value of America is not in its dollar, scientific achievements, or military, but in its people. Many are friendly, hardworking, patriotic, and religious people from small-town America. The chief characteristic of these people who managed to build this great country is their constant striving for a better life. This is their power.

Upon my return to Russia, I decided to put this American experience into practice, adapting it to Russian life. The Moscow Region Open World Alumni Club was established for this purpose. Those who founded the club with me had already been working for many years in the social sector, and many had already founded various regional organizations.

Our work began in 2000 with trying to identify possibilities for Russian-American collaboration. We spent many evenings in my office, discussed various ideas, and forwarded them on to the Open World Program staff. I learned from my trip that if a community will benefit from a valuable idea, it will be heard and implemented. The foundation of real democracy and real freedom is the possibility to speak freely, and share one's opinion openly and honestly with any government official. I shared these simple thoughts with the alumni. They did not

believe me for a long time, but perseverance eventually wins.

In 2000 we proposed providing Internet access to Open World alumni. This access would allow us to coordinate continuing professional training efforts. Project Harmony, Inc., and the State Department implemented this idea for U.S. government program alumni in 2001–2003. In 2002 we proposed a bilingual website for the Open World Program, and the following year an updated site was launched by the Open World Leadership Center.

We also had the pleasure of hosting our friends from the Louisiana United Methodist Church in Moscow in 2001. Almost every club member helped to arrange meetings between our American guests and individuals from the State Duma, the Moscow City and Moscow Region dumas, as well as with Moscow Region public administrators.

Our club has many ideas for future projects, and has already implemented a wide range of programming. You can learn about our past successes and future aspirations by visiting our club website at <http://openworldmr.iatp.ru>. We welcome questions and comments, and will happily respond and trade experiences.

Of course, during the past five years we have faced challenges and unpleasantness — but I have always felt a great amount of support from our friends in Louisiana and my fellow club members. Does the club have a slogan? If it did, it would be something like this: “If you believe in yourself and your friends, everything will turn out fine!”



*Salavat Begushev and Jennifer Andelin of Utah:
volunteer coordinators for Open World*

2005-2006 Open World Alumni Outreach Program Calendar

City	Date	Event
<i>Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk</i>	<i>April 15-16</i>	<i>PDW*</i>
<i>Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy</i>	<i>April 22-23</i>	<i>PDW</i>
<i>Vladimir</i>	<i>May 27-28</i>	<i>Conference</i>
<i>Luhansk, Ukraine</i>	<i>June 10-11</i>	<i>PDW</i>
<i>Ulan-Ude</i>	<i>August 12-13</i>	<i>PDW</i>
<i>Kazan</i>	<i>September 9-10</i>	<i>Conference</i>
<i>Vladivostok</i>	<i>October 14-15</i>	<i>Conference</i>
<i>Blagoveshchensk</i>	<i>October 17</i>	<i>PDW</i>
<i>Vologda</i>	<i>November 11-12</i>	<i>PDW</i>
<i>Kiev, Ukraine</i>	<i>December 8-9</i>	<i>PDW</i>
<i>Rostov-on-Don</i>	<i>December 10</i>	<i>PDW</i>
<i>Tambov</i>	<i>January 27-28</i>	<i>PDW</i>
<i>Belgorod</i>	<i>February 17-18</i>	<i>Conference</i>

* Professional Development Workshop

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tives on a regular basis. In addition to this program, we arrange activities at community centers where parents and children can spend time together.

7. Families at risk or living in dangerous environments take part in the same program. The children of these families undergo rehabilitation at the Isle of Hope as either live-in or day patients. During New Year's 2005, more than 200 children attended holiday parties and received holiday presents through the Isle in an effort called Christmas Dream.

8. Gifted children are also targeted for programming. Our educational institutions apply new techniques and offer special courses for talented children. The Aleksin office of the Women's Union of Russia organized a fundraising drive called Addresses of Hope in order to support gifted children from low-income families. The drive raised 246,670 rubles [\$8,937], which gave five children the

opportunity to work with computers, engage in research, attend conferences and other events, study music at a Moscow academy of the arts, and publish their own work.

A steady increase in quality measurements have shown:

- in the 2003-2004 school year ten students won twelve prizes in seven subjects in regional scholastic competitions;
- a local team took first place in the regional contest Young Legal Expert beating Tula city schools;
- 91% of graduates entered institutions of higher learning;
- 42 students were awarded medals (11 gold, 31 silver);
- 450 children of Aleksin study choreography, voice, graphic arts and fine arts. In 2004, a fourth school of the arts opened in the Shakhterskiy area.

Conclusion: *The outcomes of the program are obvious; despite the challenging economic situation our city finds itself in, we are doing everything possible to improve the lives of our children.*

P.S. The official city website (www.aleksin.tula.ru) contains the text of current legal statutes and detailed information about our city and district. The website itself has twice been awarded recognition in the Golden Site for Local Government competition, which encompasses all of Russia. For more information, please contact alexadm@aleksin.tula.ru or kostevy@mail.ru

**The population of Aleksin (city and district) is approximately 77,300. The role of deputy chief of administration for city and district is similar to that of vice mayor and deputy county executive in America.*



Moments from the Golitsyno conference outside Moscow