

Dear Friends,

The Artyom orphanage used to be a dark place where mentally and physically challenged children from all over Far East Russia would come. It was a place with a corrupt director, and angry staff who didn't want to treat the children like humans (their own words) and the children paid them back likewise.

The kids would run away, commit crimes, and abused each other. Orphanages from all over the region would send children to the Artyom orphanage who were not just disabled, but just trouble makers. The kids were aware of what kind of place they were ending up at. A place where they would receive a status of being retarded, and never have a normal acceptance into society, and they rebelled against it the best they knew how.



I came to this orphanage several years ago to visit a few Orphans who were sent there without their consent. I saw a very dark, and worn out building with angry children and staff. The children I went there to visit shared terrible stories about the Orphanage. I taught them to be a Light and to do what Jesus would do. After a while other children joined our conversations and wanted to be visited also. Through this God allowed me to have small spontaneous Bible study each week. One day a very angry staff member called me saying that the Orphanage now had a new director, and she wanted to know who I was.

With a prayer I went. At that time God put only one thought on my heart. I didn't want to be known as someone who just visited the Orphans, but someone who could teach them about Jesus. The new director got very excited and even said that only God could help those children! She shared that she herself wanted to make a difference. She fired a lot of the bad staff and kept jobs only for those who were willing to treat these kids as their own. She allowed me to do a Bible study with a kids, then to take the children out for birthdays, and finally to bring them to my Church in Vladivostok.

Last year my church youth also began to come with programs, and now a lot of our Church children are connected with the orphans. They encourage them, help them through hard times, pray with them, and share their faith with them. Among them our Tanya, Sasha, & Anya from our first HFL home.

Slowly the atmosphere began to change. The orphanage began to change inside and outside. Many children accepted Jesus and began to change. First there were a minority, having to stand for their faith, now the minority are those who still stand against God.

Today we rented a bus and were able to bring 25 children, the orphanage director, and staff to our Church picnic. The children got nervous to find out that the orphanage director was coming to see the mime that they had prepared to show at the church service. It opened a door for us to talk about boldness for God and not being ashamed. The kids did a marvelous job.

The orphanage director asked if she could send the kids to our Church events and the Transformation camp more often. She shared how different many kids have become, how they bring others to Christ, read their Bibles, and how they pray for each other. She asks them to pray for her too. She said that that first conversation I had with her in her office really gave her a vision of how to move forward with these children. She is not a Christian yet but the Holy Spirit is at work all around her. She shared that she absolutely didn't know what to do with Vitaly, an inadequate boy who wouldn't listen to anyone. Now he is the pride of the school. He reads his Bible, prays for other kids, and does great in school.

Masha's biggest dream was to get a phone, nice clothes, and make up. Now she wants to be a missionary, spends a lot of time getting to know our Savior through the Bible, memorizing the Scriptures, making the Word of God alive for the other kids in the orphanage by putting it into mimes.

Twelve children from this orphanage accepted Jesus in the camp this year. Daniel was one of them. He seriously committed his life to Jesus. We are currently studying different characters in the Bible. The kid's hearts are open, their souls are hungry, the doors of the orphanage are open, and the Holy Spirit is working. There are 122 kids in the orphanage right now. The 12 that committed their hearts to Jesus this year and the 10 who accepted Him as His Savior last year are winning the whole orphanage for Jesus. There is a real revival going on in this orphanage. God is awesome, and it is so amazing to be a part of His work!!!

Thank you for your prayers & support!

Many Blessings,  
Zhanna

