

Water from the Rock

Chris & I were recently reading in Exodus 17 - the story of Moses at Mount Horeb in the Sinai Desert. The LORD told him to strike the rock with his wooden staff so that water would gush out for all the Hebrew people dying of thirst. We visited Mount Horeb a few years ago. It was 50°C and completely barren. We felt this story was a word of encouragement for all of us involved in Krasif Aid and the work in Bulgaria. God provided all the water needed for a nation in the middle of a desert. It happened when Moses stepped out in faith and obedience and did something new with his wooden stick. The challenge for us is to know what new thing God might want us to do in faith. We value your prayers!

We give thanks to God that, throughout the recession, we have been able to maintain our regular monthly financial support of the Blue House. Many of you have helped make this possible. However, the last few months have been increasingly difficult - not helped by a worsening exchange rate. At our Board Meeting in February we had to make the difficult decision to reduce our level of support by about 20% for the next three

months. We are encouraged by all those who have responded to our 10th Anniversary Appeal and have pledged £5 per month, more in some cases. If you would like to help in this way, then please follow the instructions here:

THE BLUE HOUSE 10th ANNIVERSARY APPEAL ONLINE:

1. Visit our website at www.krasifaid.org.uk and click the 'DONATE NOW' button
2. Next REGISTER (top right of page) with BT My Donate.
3. Then set up your monthly gift, which can also be Gift-Aided if you are a tax payer.

OR OTHERWISE:

Just phone, email or text us (our contact details are on the back page.) Thank you!

As you read on, you will see that the needs in Bulgaria today remain real. We remain committed to bringing God's love, care and provision wherever we can.

With Many Blessings,
Brian & Chris

MISSION POSSIBLE

At the very heart of Krasif Aid is our desire to see God's people equipped and mobilised for missions. Teams from the UK impact Bulgaria, impact the participants and impact the churches and other groups from which they come ... a circle of blessing both for Bulgaria and for Britain! Over the years we have seen many people take up this challenge. Here is news of a few more ...

Pauline Woodhall from Aldridge in Walsall joined a painting team in 2007 to work at Kermen Children's Home. When she first saw the babies there, she said, "This was the moment my life was to change!" She saw a child tied to a cot by a pair of tights, while underneath the cot was another child covered by a blanket. Pauline was an 'Early Years' education professional and was greatly upset by what she saw. In prayer she knew that God was saying to her, 'You have the knowledge, do

followed by valuable times of discussion with parents, many of whom felt isolated and lacking support.

Four visits over two days were made to care homes where she was able to demonstrate the things she had taught. The results were incredible, with children loving the experience of responding to texture, colour and various art and craft materials, all of / ...

something about it'. Her vision was to go and inspire the staff to work in a meaningful way with the children. Pauline prepared several seminars on 'Stimulating Play' and 'Managing Their Day'. She delivered them the following March (2008) at the Blue House, returning that July with another team and yet again for similar teaching in 2010.

Autism Seminars

Last Autumn she was asked to lead seminars on Autism - not one of her favourite subjects. But she got 'stuck in' and was able to inspire parents and care workers alike over three full days,



which were cheap or free, basic and natural. Each centre was left with a starter pack of materials. As she reflected on her visits, Pauline recalled that God was with her every step of the way and that family, friends and church members had been praying for her and supporting her. In the same way, she appreciated all the support she received from the team at the Blue House. You can see Pauline at work in our latest eleven minute video, 'The Blue House - Ten Years On'. Do ask us for a copy if you have not seen it.



We are always looking for people with professional knowledge and transferable skills who would be prepared to deliver seminars to their eager to learn Bulgarian counterparts. If you are such a person, please do speak with us.

Eye Tests - October 2012

Eye care remains a luxury, unaffordable item for many in Bulgaria, so it was great news to the people when Board members, Alan and Gillian Winsor, led a team consisting of the Wolffsohn family, James, Rachel and Peter (who was only 9), plus Lee Hall with a



view to providing eye care. James & Lee, both optometrists, spent four days at the Blue House giving eye tests, examining eye health and providing the closest prescription from discarded spectacles collected in the UK.

A total of 121 patients were seen, of whom seventeen were young children and thirty or so were physically or cognitively disabled. Forty seven patients were given glasses for reading and forty one for distance. Fifteen were encouraged to seek assistance for cataracts or glaucoma. Many of the patients were from the local care institutions in Sliven. Throughout the week, craft activities were offered to all the children who arrived for eye tests. Some good relationships were established through this work with both children and staff and some parents who accompanied them. ■

Thank You ...

An important change takes place in the Krasif Aid administration in April. After five years of dedicated service, Colin Tyne, our Director of Finance, is hanging up his calculator! Colin took the major role in the formation process of the charity and has managed our finances, as well as carefully guiding us over governance issues. We remain very grateful for his skills



and experience and wish to record here our sincere thanks. Colin and his wife Frances will continue their involvement and support as Board members. We are delighted that another local accountant, Jonathan Loescher, has kindly agreed to become our new Treasurer. It is good to welcome him as part of our team.

Jonathan is married to Elaine and they have two teenage sons.

HAPPY FACES

Two very full pallet loads of gifts shipped out to Bulgaria in December made this last Christmas especially memorable for many children in the Sliven area - just look at the smiles! Gifts were donated by many, including children from Great Bridge Primary School in West Bromwich. The School is twinned with the special



needs school in Sliven. A "Warm Hug" appeal at St Thomas' Church, Aldridge, provided new towels, toothpaste and brushes and many more presents were bought, thanks to the funds raised



by the 'Young Krasif' craft group there, and also from Church Lane Evangelical Church in Stafford. All of the Christmas blessings were distributed to schools, institutions and church contacts around the Sliven area through our friends and partners, Genka at the Blue House and Iuri & Plamena at Sliven Baptist Church.

You can send a pallet from your church or group for just £150 at any time. We will advise you of the items to collect, and help you with the arrangements. Please contact us for more information. ■

POTTERY PLEASE

Pottery is popular in Bulgaria, but the quality is often poor. Thanks to a donation of £2,500 from the St James Place Foundation we are shortly to add another 'cottage industry' to those already undertaken at the Blue House.

This will see the production of pottery items using stronger stone clay rather than the 'biscuit' variety more common to Bulgaria. We will soon be shipping out a kiln with all the initial tools and supplies. Chris Clarke and other 'arty' team volunteers will carry out basic training. Items produced are primarily to be sold in the charity shop on site, although it is envisaged that some items may be brought to the UK for sale through our network of UK churches and supporters.

The significance of these skill training initiatives cannot be overstated in providing new opportunities for work, building confidence and self-esteem, and the dignity it brings to those in need. The picture shows Frances Dalton from the Foundation presenting the 'large' cheque to Chris & Brian Clarke. ■



Important Information about Gift Aid

The Charity Commission has made a change to the Gift Aid Declaration for 2013 onwards. If you are one of our financial supporters who gift aid your donations, then you need to agree and comply with the statement below. It is not necessary to sign a new gift aid declaration, but please let us know if you have any questions.

"I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify." ■

We are convinced that all the family will quickly succumb to the 'Bulgaria virus' ... that incredible feeling that has changed the lives of so many who have been out to BG with a Krasif Team. Time will tell.



& Welcome

Whilst the Bulgarian Government Policy is to close all Children's Homes by January 2014, it was hoped that the facility at Burzitsa would avoid that fate by adapting its amenities to those of a Family Unit Centre, so ensuring its future.

The Sword Still Hovers

by Peter Barnes

However, at the time of going to print, the 'Sword of Damocles' still hangs over the Home because the results of a recent suitability inspection have not yet been clarified. This sense of uncertainty is not new to Bulgaria and especially Burzitsa but, however long or short the future life-span of the complex is, teams from Devon, Surrey and Norfolk have committed themselves to improving the quality of life for staff and children there alike. Without making very costly structural developments, the teams were able to refurbish, redecorate and improve the existing real estate and make it more than fit for purpose.

However, 2012 won't be remembered for the building work. In the hearts and memories of the fifty plus volunteers will be the joy, if not the privilege, of bringing light, sunshine and fun to the young lives at Burzitsa. Whilst the real battlefield was the rough concrete football area, the most significant and long term benefits were



small groups of all ages using craft and play activities which demonstrated that somebody loved and cared for them.

A personal memory for me was ignited in the baggage collection area at Luton Airport. Standing near to me was a young woman with a dark complexion who had smiled at me as we disembarked from the aircraft and who then greeted me as I collected my case. 'You don't remember me', she said with a big smile on her face. Immediately she said that, I did recall her name and that I had first met her some twelve years earlier. I remembered the bright orphan child at Burzitsa who had great musical ability and had learned to play the recorder within days of being shown the instrument. Now here she stood, a well clothed, excited young woman preparing to take up a position in Milton Keynes as a Children's Care Nurse. I know that many who have been on teams to Bulgaria and who are now reading this story will echo these words of mine, 'This is what makes it all worthwhile'.

Further teams will be going out to Burzitsa this year. Please contact Brian Clarke at Krasif Aid if you would like to be considered. ■

Extracts from Sofia Internet News . . .

Bulgarian Government Resigns - 21st February 2013



Bulgaria's Parliament has accepted the resignation by Prime Minister Boyko Borisov and his Cabinet. Borisov made the shocking announcement on Wednesday that his cabinet is to resign en masse around noon.

The move follows a tumultuous week of public anger over rising electricity prices, corruption and austerity measures which resulted in mass protests nationwide. Twenty-five people were taken to hospital and fourteen were injured after protesters clashed with police late on Tuesday. The Prime Minister stated that the threat of the massive protests becoming bloody made him announce the resignation.

Risk of Poverty increases to 49% - December 2012

Bulgaria had the highest share of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU in 2011. Close on one hundred and twenty million people, 24.2% of Europe's population, were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, compared with 23.4% in 2010 and 23.5% in 2008. This means that they were at least in one of the following three conditions: at-risk-of-poverty, severely materially deprived or living in households with very low work intensity.

The highest shares of persons at risk were recorded in Bulgaria (49%), Romania and Latvia (both 40%), Lithuania (33%), Greece and Hungary (both 31%). Bulgaria's rate appears to have been growing steadily in the last three years, reaching 49.1% in 2011, up from 38.2% in 2008, and 41.6% in 2010.

SEND US YOUR PHOTO

Praying for Bulgaria 2013

Every year, as part of our support for our church partners and the Nation of Bulgaria, we promote a special prayer initiative.

This year we have decided to make it a 'visual' event. We want as many people as possible to send us a photograph of themselves, preferably by email, but a printed snapshot by post is also okay. It's faces that we need, so close-up photos are ideal (not big groups or you in the distance!). Below are some example photos. We will compile these into a large montage poster, copies of which will be sent to Bulgaria.

These prints will demonstrate in a graphic way that many different people in the UK are holding our Bulgarian friends in their prayers. We will send these posters to our various church partners around Bulgaria, and also to the children's homes, schools and other institutions we support.

You might also like to write a brief prayer of your own and send it in with your photo. We will include a selection of these as part of the posters.

And if you would like to send a special financial gift too, then you can do this in the usual ways mentioned in the response slip below. The email and postal addresses to send your pictures and prayers are also below.

Thank you for Praying for Bulgaria!



KRASIF Response Slip

DONATIONS

- **ONLINE: with or without Gift Aid** - Please log onto www.krasifaid.org.uk and click on **DONATE NOW**
- **CHEQUES without Gift Aid**
I enclose a cheque payable to 'Krasif Aid' for £ _____ to be used where needed most for the following purpose [†] _____
- for **STANDING ORDERS** or **CHEQUES with Gift Aid** (minimum £30) Please tick the box and we will contact you.

NEWSLETTERS & PRAYER UPDATES

Please send me news & information by EMAIL ONLY or please post _____ PAPER COPY/IES (please specify quantity)

NAME: _____
PRINT CLEARLY

ADDRESS: _____

_____ POST CODE: _____

TEL: _____ E-MAIL: _____

[†] NOTE: If the project or ministry for which a gift or donation is received has already been fully funded, discontinued or cannot be completed for whatever reason, the Trustees of Krasif Aid will use those funds where they feel it is most appropriate. For legal and accounting reasons, all gifts or donations will be accepted only on this basis.

Please return this form to: Brian & Chris Clarke, Krasif Aid, 32 Daw End Lane, Walsall, West Midlands WS4 1JR
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