

THE TATTLE- T A E L NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERUS EXCHANGE

АМЕРИКАНСКО-РОССИЙСКИЙ ФОНД ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНЫХ ОБМЕНОВ

Volume 1, Issue 2

ROSI TRANSLATORS—KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL EXCHANGE



Four of the ROSI interpreters in 2006

When people of different languages and cultures meet to discuss important topics, the interpreter becomes the most important ingredient for concocting success and mutual satisfaction. A brilliant American educator may be full of important and truly creative ideas, but if the Russian audience cannot understand the American's words then the ideas are lost. Similarly a Russian presenter may wish to convey the essence of her culture to her American audience, but if the interpreter can only translate the words but not the emotions being expressed, then the audience will never reach a full understanding of the presentation. Therefore, (cont. pg. 2)



DATES TO REMEMBER:

Educators, business people, service and medical professionals, consider joining THE AMERUS EXCHANGE 2008 trip to Russia. Your skills are needed to help build the peace.

Need a passport? Get it now! Visit your local post office or go online for details.

Prior to December 2007, think about this opportunity. Contact us to get more information.

Visa invitation information must be sent to Kursk by T A E L. **Dec. 1, 2007**

Send your passport, 2 passport-type photos, visa application, visa fee to T A E L. **Jan. 15, 2008**

Pre-trip briefing **Mid-Mar. 2008**

T A E L TRIP TO RUSSIA (includes Moscow, Kursk and St. Petersburg) **April 2008**

NEW FACES ON THE T A E L BOARD

On January 1, 2007, **Darlene Cardillo**, former Representative of THE AMERUS EXCHANGE, LTD, began a three year term as a Board of Directors member of the organization. Darlene is an experienced participant in T A E L's Russian- American education exchanges. She also created the organization's web and blog sites.

As director of technology for the Albany Roman Catholic Diocese, Darlene brought the exchanges to the attention of the teachers of the diocese recruiting several as exchange participants. She also was responsible for the collection and display of Russian student art work in Albany and diocesan student work on display in Russia. Darlene now works as the Instructional Technologist for Albany Law School. Hopefully she will help to build connections between that University and the law faculties of Russian institutions.

The new year also saw the arrival of **Jim Faranda** as a Representative of THE AMERUS EXCHANGE, LTD. Jim brings to T A E L a wide background of experiences in higher education. He has already begun to research the problems of helping Russian students gain acceptance into American colleges and universities. A key segment of his work is to find methods of financing the education of exchange students. Helping American students interested in studying in Russia is another part of his efforts. Jim has already made contacts in several universities and is introducing these schools to the mission of THE AMERUS EXCHANGE, LTD.

The addition of these two talented and effective people to the executive levels of T A E L should serve to strengthen the organization's growth, innovation and fundraising capacity.

ROSI TRANSLATORS (CONTINUED)

(cont. from pg. 1) it is absolutely necessary that an interpreter not only have enormous vocabularies in both languages but must also understand both cultures thoroughly.

In the work of THE AMERUS EXCHANGE, LTD, it has been the organization's good fortune to have developed a strong relationship with THE REGIONAL OPEN SOCIAL INSTITUTE in Kursk where interpreters possessing the language and cultural skills necessary for success have been routinely trained from the inception of that university. Interpreters for TAEI's exchange groups have been the keys to success. ROSI authorities have consistently assigned caring, hard working, intelligent students who love their country and its culture and who also have a unique interest in the language and culture of America. These young people have won the hearts of the Americans who have participated in TAEI exchanges to the point that past participants have continued over the years to correspond with and send gifts to their former interpreters following their progress through university, jobs, marriage, life. Reunions of past exchange participants find the conversation invariably turn to anecdotes about this or that interpreter and the kindness, caring, small gifts and tearful railroad station farewells experienced. The success of TAEI exchanges might very well hinge on the skills of the fine interpreters trained in the Kursk University known as ROSI- THE REGIONAL OPEN SOCIAL INSTITUTE.



ROSI interpreters entertain children at the Cancer Hospital 2006

TAEI'S UNPARALLELED PARTNERS IN MOSCOW

Upon arrival at Moscow's Sheremetyaeva Airport, the American "first timer" experiences emotions unlike any felt before. Here the visitor is deep in the "evil empire" of the late Cold War between the USA and the Soviet Union. Ears are bombarded by a strange language; eyes observe but do not understand the weird alphabet displayed all around. Seemingly unsmiling foreign faces are on all sides, but wait, there in the center of the dark throng crowding the custom's exit are several joy filled faces calling greetings and hugging and kissing your veteran TAEI Exchange companions. Who are these happy people suddenly hugging you, taking your luggage and guiding you and the others to a waiting bus?

"Some Exchange participants have likened the experience to being greeted by family when returning to one's European roots."

You have heard of this phenomenon in your pre-trip briefings. This has to be what everyone in THE AMERUS EXCHANGE calls "Our Friends in Moscow." These are the intrepid Russian friends who for many years gave freely of their time and talents to help those American educators who eventually became TAEI. Now these Russian educators have left their socialist origins behind and have joined the free world's entrepreneurial spirit by organizing and operating a travel assistance organization.

Now the first time traveler to Russia meets these "legends:" Galina- teacher of art, architect- commissioned to design a new Russian Orthodox church, interior designer, decorator of the Russian Pentagon and organizer "par excellence;" "Tatyana- teacher of music, expert on Russian music and culture, able to get tickets to the best of Moscow's performance venues, and task-master who keeps everything running on schedule; finally, Helen-University professor of English, interpreter and phenomenal tour guide to the City of Moscow.

This tremendous trio meets TAEI Exchanges at the airport and then takes over, assisting, guiding, suggesting, comforting and caring for the needs of their American friends until the group is returned to the airport for the homeward journey. Some Exchange participants have likened the experience to being greeted by family when returning to one's European roots. "Our Friends in Moscow" quickly become our family in Russia. That must explain why every veteran whips out some small gift carried across a quarter of the globe for each of these women. Each veteran knows that before leaving Moscow, the "Friends" will be giving each participant a souvenir of this trip.

As teachers in one of Moscow's state schools, these three met and developed a long friendship with the members of those early exchanges that grew in time into THE AMERUS EXCHANGE, LTD. It would be safe to say that TAEI would not exist if it had not been for the trusting relationship that created the reliable travel process that is the hallmark of our exchange experiences. The authenticity of the Russian experience and the deep knowledge of all aspects of Russian culture that these "Friends" contribute make participation in an AMERUS EXCHANGE education trip a memorable lifetime experience. Thanks to "Our Friends in Moscow," getting to the education seminars is as much a part of the adventure as the presentations themselves.



At the airport with our Moscow friends in 2002

PHOTO ALBUMS FORGE FRIENDSHIPS



Leonid and Nellie Panyukov, host parents for Darlene Cardillo 2002, 2004 & 2006

If you plan on visiting Russia, bring at the very least your toothbrush, a change of underwear and a photo album. With these few items, you will be comfortable, healthy and will make new friends everywhere. Veterans of TAEI Exchanges have brought much more in their luggage than those three items, but of everything in the bags, nothing has been as valuable as those family pictures in immediately making a connection with a host family. Moments after exploring the American album, host and guest will begin the survey of the Russian album(s.) From this mutual sharing of life's captured moments, a lasting friendship will begin to grow. This has been the experience of every TAEI participant.

Living with strangers is not the magnet that draws most people to a trip to Russia. Usually a person has had a long term interest in the country, its history and its culture. Some people want to walk where world leaders have walked; others are entranced by the romance of tsarist times and still others want to learn or perfect a language that has attracted them. For whatever the initial reason a person wishes to be a part of THE AMERUS EXCHANGE, LTD education seminars in Russia, living with a host family is not on the top of the list and may even be considered an uncomfortable nuisance that needs to be put up with like the ten hour airplane ride. In fact, it has been TAEI's experience that living with a host family is one of the very core elements contributing to the authenticity of the organization's Exchanges.

Sharing photos of family, pets, homes, gardens, loved ones, weddings and holidays has been the cement that binds guest and host. Both see the similar human qualities that are shared regardless of language or custom. There seems to be an innate curiosity in all people to find out how others deal with life, death, love, caring and those other emotions that make people human. Therefore it should come as no surprise when during dinner in your Russian host's home that he toasts "first to the beautiful family in your photos" and you, moments later, toast his. From this basic recognition of one another's humanity will eventually develop knowledge and an appreciation of one another's way of life.

INSIDE RUSSIAN SCHOOLS

Our trips to Russia have taken us inside many Russian schools throughout a large area of the country. Although there are private schools nowadays, and we have worked with some of them, the vast majority of Russian schools are "state" or government schools. We would call them "public" schools in the U.S.A.

Russian schoolchildren begin at grade one and continue in the same building up to grade 11, whereupon they graduate and may enter a university. Prior to entry into this system, most children have attended a state kindergarten.

At school, the students participate in academic subjects throughout the day. After the mid-day meal, they may attend "children's palaces" for extra-curricular activities until their parents pick them up from work. The "palaces" are special places with remarkable opportunities for children but nowadays with less financial assistance from the state than in Soviet times when they formed part of the regime's ideological training program. This special topic will be covered more fully in a future newsletter.

Like their American counterparts each Russian school has its own culture and climate. TAEI exchange participants have developed a most comfortable relationship with the students and staff at School 27 in Kursk. Tatyana Lvovna Panyovina, the school's director, seems to have created an atmosphere there that encourages creativity and joy in the midst of the hard work of academic progress. American visitors find it especially lively and open. The talents of the children are apparent everywhere one looks. Their artwork is



A student from School 27 in Kursk performs.

on display and in some cases is extraordinary. Perhaps the display of personal work and the supportive efforts of the school's art teachers encourages such talent to prosper?

A vital part of each TAEI visit to this school is the traditional stage performance by the children. These activities, much anticipated by veteran exchange participants, come in two parts. The first to take place is the traditional Russian performance. It includes folk dancing and singing, ballet, recitations and small plays. The second performance is in English for American visitors. Students studying English produce their plays, songs and poems. The dance part is anticipated by the children for this is when they and their classmates display "their" music and dance, the modern Russian equivalent of rock, pop and rap.

Visitors can see the pride of the school's children in both performances. They are equally proud of their traditional culture and eager to show off their modern ways as well.

Sitting in or even teaching a class of Russian students is a delightful experience. Americans find the children to be very respectful and polite. They are eager to learn and are excellent at rote tasks. Spontaneous or hands-on activities appear to throw them for a bit of a loop but once they catch on to the style, they enjoy it. Their teachers also seem quite eager to see how "these American teachers" do things in the classroom.

In conclusion, a visit to a Russian school is a combination of observing and sharing. Each visitor has something to share with their hosts whether one is a professional educator or not.

**АМЕРИКАНСКО-РОССИЙСКИЙ
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**HELP OUR MISSION SUCCEED BY
SENDING A DONATION TO TAEЛ**

**THE AMERUS EXCHANGE,
LTD is dedicated to building
international, cross-cultural
relationships that encourage
the development of
democratic ideas.**

-TAEЛ mission

JOIN US !

HELP BUILD THE PEACE WITH TAEЛ IN RUSSIA

The cold war is over, and the world waits for a warm, friendly peace. Join with **THE AMERUS EXCHANGE, LTD** and the staff of **THE REGIONAL OPEN SOCIAL INSTITUTE** in Kursk, Russia as we share our skills and build relationships with students, educators and families. For two weeks during April, 2008 you can become part of history by helping to create lasting bonds of friendship and professional respect and understanding that just may help to forge a lasting peace between two great countries.

In addition to sharing skills and meeting new friends, you will visit sites that you have read about and seen in movies and TV. You will pass through Red Square in Moscow, the Kursk Battle headquarters and the halls of the Hermitage in St. Petersburg. Your travel through Russia will be guided by friends of TAEЛ. You will come to appreciate that the cost of your experience was kept to a minimum by caring, experienced and trusted friends. Through personal interpreters in Kursk, you will delve deeply into the culture of the Russian people. With your host family where at least one member speaks English, you will have the opportunity of learning just what makes the modern Russian tick.

For information about the cost of this experience or to register for the 2008 experience, please e-mail us at : jmcgurgan@theamerusexchange.org or call **518-392-2589**.



Participants and interpreters in Kursk 2006