



# St Gregory's Foundation

*Helping vulnerable children and families in the former Soviet Union*



## In This Issue

PHYSICAL  
REHABILITATION

THERAPLAY HELPS  
LIZA AND LIDA TO  
BOND

NEWS FROM  
MKURNALI

OUR FINANCES  
AND HOW YOUR  
DONATIONS HELP

## KEEPING UP THE GOOD WORK

Welcome to our first colour edition of the newsletter! We hope you like the new format and the pictures sent by our partners which speak for themselves about the remarkable and much needed work of our projects.

Our hearts and prayers are for the swift end of the devastating crisis in Ukraine. We see how excruciatingly painful every day is for people in distress, without security and how unspeakably difficult it is to rebuild a life. We are helping them as best we can in these difficult times.

Spiralling inflation, rising unemployment and the fear of financial insecurity in Russia make the lives of the children and families we have been supporting increasingly difficult and they need our help now more than ever. We don't want the charitable sector in Russia to be entirely isolated once again. St Gregory's has always been able to support best practice and the professional growth of our colleagues and facilitate international links which are deeply valued by both sides. We are investigating the legal avenues to fund our projects and are determined to continue with our work.

REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1002469

PATRON: HRH PRINCE MICHAEL OF KENT GCVO



## PHYSICAL REHABILITATION GOES FROM STENGTH TO STRENGTH

St Gregory's has worked with Ekaterina Klochkova to improve the care of disabled children since our beginnings as a charity. In recent months, Physical Rehabilitation, the charity she founded in St Petersburg, has developed significantly, allowing them to serve more families.

A new website allows staff to track children's progress more easily, saving a great deal of time. It also allows parents to book appointments and communicate with staff, and makes information more accessible to the public. Sadly, their excellent new Instagram page is no longer accessible in Russia.

With Facebook also shut down, their social media is moving to Telegram.

The children's parents are now represented on the organisation's board, giving them a chance to help shape their services.

A new occupational therapist also joined the team in September. Diana Shurygina worked under supervision while completing her studies. Since the start of this year, she has been working independently with families.

Lastly, our colleagues have acquired a 3-D printer, which allows them to create personalised equipment for their children cheaply and easily. A series of workshops for parents is planned. In these they can learn how to use 3D-printed buttons to adapt toys and electronic equipment so their children can use them. Other workshop themes include recipes for children with difficulties swallowing and adapting the home to allow more independence.

We are delighted for the families and children who will benefit from these changes.

# THERAPLAY HELPS LIDA AND LIZA BOND

Emotionally stable parents seem to know naturally how to play with their children. The parents Sunflower supports grew up in children's homes and they need to learn this essential skill.

Lida's childhood was marked by multiple traumas: alcoholic parents, time in a children's home, and several failed adoption placements before she was successfully placed with her present family. She now lives in Lensovietsky, the suburb featured in our last newsletter, where Sunflower has recently set up a support group due to the high number of care-leavers in the area.

Her daughter, Liza, was a year old when they started coming to Sunflower's support group. She found it very hard to settle. She didn't seem to react at all to her mother, until Lida tried to stop her doing something. Then she would have a tantrum.



Lida was rather passive and would just say, "you see, she doesn't listen to me".

The Theraplay method involves repeating the same simple games. This means that it is easy for the child to learn the rules and for the parents to concentrate on their child.

Sunflower had a breakthrough when Liza's dad also started coming to sessions. He too grew up in a children's home and came from a family of alcoholics. He is rather jealous of Lida's relationship with her adoptive family, and this makes it difficult for her to get support from them. This puts a strain on her relationship with Liza's dad.

Theraplay has helped bring the three of them closer together. Lida values the sessions now and is keen not to miss them. She chats to her daughter and gives her cuddles. In return, Liza will ask her mama for help and also does what she is told more often. It's obvious that Liza really likes playing with her mama and papa now. She particularly likes being swung in a blanket.

Sunflower continues to work despite the very difficult climate. With foreign funding from many quarters disappearing and local funding also drying up many local charities have had to cut services. Sunflower continues to support **21 families in crisis, including 30 children.**



## NEWS FROM MKURNALI



Mkurnali continues to serve vulnerable young people in Tbilisi, despite Nino's illness. Recently, Nino and Jemal have been distributing food parcels to local families in need. St Gregory's Foundation has also funded a new motorbike for them, to help with their outreach work.

Food parcels are just one way in which Mkurnali continues to care for young people once they have moved out of their shelter. For many of the young people, Mkurnali is the closest they have to family, and, like a family, their care is not limited.

Keti is a very good example. A former beneficiary of Mkurnali, she left school at 14 and had always wanted to continue her studies. Mkurnali helped her enrol in college to study HR Management. They helped her find an internship with the municipal authorities. They also helped her continue her studies while working.

Keti worked hard and found a good job straight after graduating. She soon progressed to a prestigious role within the same local authority.

In early 2020, the leadership of the municipality changed. The new boss asked Keti to resign from the position and promised to transfer her to another one. The reason was that he wanted Keti's position for his relative, and to justify himself, he said he could not trust a stranger in that position. Keti refused to resign. After that, they started harassing her and arguing with her on every issue.

Eventually auditors examined Keti's work over the years, revealing several violations that led to her being fired. Keti said it was all fabricated and that she had not done anything illegal during her tenure.

It was difficult for Keti to find a lawyer willing to defend her against a state institution.

Fortunately, Mkurnali were able to step in. They examined the audit and supporting documents and found that Keti's allegations were true. The initial court overturned Keti's dismissal but because they referred the case back to the auditors, Mkurnali appealed to a higher court. At last Keti's former boss agreed to testify.

After deeper examination of the case, the court concluded that Keti was not guilty, and that the conclusion of the audit was based on fabricated facts, was biased and lacked any legal basis.

According to the court decision, Keti was reinstated in the job and the municipality was ordered to reimburse her for loss of earnings, which was a considerable sum (from January 2020 to April 2022).

Once again, Mkurnali have been able to provide a legal defense for someone who would otherwise have been undefended. Since the start of the year, Mkurnali's lawyer has defended 15 cases in which 7 defendants have been totally acquitted. All have avoided the long prison sentences that are frequently handed out to vulnerable young people.

You can help Mkurnali keep more young people out of prison and off the streets today. Your donations can give them the support they need to get through these difficult times.

## NEWS IN BRIEF



On 9th May our Patron, His Royal Highness, Prince Michael of Kent, met our long-standing supporters Svetlana Savelyeva (third left) and Yulia Kozlova (second right) from Help Impact. joined by Countess Alexandra Tolstoy-Miloslavsky (far left) and the SGF team: Nicholas Kolarz, Chairman, Tania Illingworth, Director and Julia Ashmore, our Executive Secretary.

Help Impact, a small UK charity has partnered St Gregory's for three years, helping to co-fund our projects in St Petersburg and Moscow. Alexandra Tolstoy-Miloslavsky has been our most active supporter over the last few years. Together with her father Nikolai Tolstoy they have recently raised over £11,000 towards St Gregory's work with orphanage-leavers and she has been a wonderful help in publicising our work to a wider public.

The visit highlighted St Gregory's current work and plans to support our projects amidst the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and was greatly encouraged by HRH.

### FUNDRAISING FOR SAVE THE CHILDREN

Last March at our fundraising dinner at the Mercers' Hall we raised over £19,000 - half of this amount went to the Save the Children for Ukraine to help children and refugee families. The other half was allocated to Sunflower's work with orphanage-leavers and parents who grew up in orphanages. We are most grateful to everyone who donated.

SUMMER 2022

### Announcing our AGM

**30th August 2022 at 6.30 pm on Zoom**

All the members of the charity are warmly invited. Don't miss your chance to virtually meet up with our partners and other supporters!

**Not a member and would like to join us?**

Send us your annual membership for £30 (waged), £20 (students) and your details as shown on page 7.

Wish to renew your membership?

Contact Julia - our details are on page 8.

### SUMMER PREPARATIONS



Mkurnali are all set to retiling the roof of their house. Because of Nino's illness they had to postpone it and in the meantime the roof was damaged even more as the recent weather in Tbilisi has been cold with heavy rain. It's great that things are moving forward and we'll keep you posted.

Volunteers, tutors and young people from Sunflower's 'My tomorrow' programme have been helping to prepare a camp site in Dolbeniki village for the new summer season, clearing rooms and debris outside. Sunflower have also interviewed families and young people who will attend two summer camps in July and August.

### LUKE MONTAGUE MOVES TO YORK

Our Director, Luke Montague, OBE has moved up north. If you live in York or nearby and want to know more about St Gregory's or organise a fundraiser, it is a great opportunity to get information in first hand and meet Luke in person.

PAGE 5

# 2021 - OUR FINANCES AND HIGHLIGHTS

- 2021 marked the 30th Anniversary of the establishing of St Gregory's Foundation by Irina von Schlippe and the late Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh.
- In 2021 we continued to work in the difficult second year of the Pandemic providing funding and encouraging the professional growth of our partner charities.
- Royal Patron, HRH Prince Michael of Kent visited Sunflower Centre in St Petersburg to meet the families and orphanage-leavers who we help.
- Our established partner in the UK, the Help Impact charity, contributed £20,000 to support our projects. A Russian Art Talk and Raffle and Global Giving Year End campaign raised over £20,000.
- Your donations have helped us and our partners to organise:



Outdoor classes, food parcels, school supplies for **17 disabled children** and **10 families in need** in Kondopoga



Training, individual counselling and home visits for **187 orphanage-leavers** in St Petersburg



Individual and group consultations for **115 disabled and autistic children** in St Petersburg and Moscow.



Legal support and assistance for **15 formerly homeless teenagers and young people** in the street in Tbilisi

What we received	2021 unrestricted funds, £	2020 total funds, £
Donations & Legacies	158,905	146,363
Other trading activities	3,918	17,938 (fundraising dinner 2020)
Investments	14,983	14,925
Total income	177,806	179,226
What we spent	Year to 31.12.2020	Year to 31.12.2020
Fundraising	29,050	29,948
Direct charitable expenditure	125,623	135,575
Governance costs	9,870	11,991
Total spent	164,543	177,514
Gains/losses	31,492	11,070
Net movement in funds	44,755	11,762
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>	470,252	458,490
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	515,007	470,252

Don't miss our AGM on 30th August to hear more. Our AGM announcement is on page 5.

# HOW YOUR DONATIONS HELP

**£9** will feed a homeless teenager a balanced diet for 3 days

**£18** will fund an online Occupational Therapy session for a group of disabled children

**£24** will buy a monthly food parcel to feed a needy family with two children in Kondopoga

**£72** will provide life-changing support and two months counselling to one teenager about to leave a children's home.

## MAKE A ONE-OFF DONATION

Donate online at

**[StGregorysFoundation.org.uk](http://StGregorysFoundation.org.uk)**

or

send a cheque payable to St Gregory's Foundation to:

Yulia Mesotitsch, SGF Treasurer

c/o 4 Bushy Court

20 Upper Teddington Road

Hampton Wick, Surrey KT1 4DU

## MAKE A REGULAR DONATION

Donate online at

**[StGregorysFoundation.org.uk](http://StGregorysFoundation.org.uk)**

or

return this standing order form to SGF

To the manager of ..... bank

Bank address: .....

.....

.....

Account name: .....

Account No. ....

Sort Code: .....

Please pay into the account of the St Gregory's Foundation, Royal Bank of Scotland

Acc. 12348109 Sort Code: 16-12-53

the sum of £..... starting on ..... (date)

and continuing on the same day

monthly/quarterly/annually\* until further

notice. This replaces any existing order in

favour of St Gregory's Foundation.

Name: .....

Date: .....

Signature: .....

## KEEP IN TOUCH

I wish to become a member of St Gregory's Foundation and enclose my annual subscription of £30 (waged)/£20 (unwaged).

I wish to receive the newsletter by post

I wish to receive news by e-mail

## MY DETAILS AND CONSENT

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Phone:

E-mail:

Signature:

## PLEASE GIFT AID YOUR DONATION

*giftaid it*

I wish to gift aid my donation of £..... to St Gregory's Foundation (single donation)

I wish to gift aid my donation of £....., and donations I make in the future and any donations I have made in the past 4 years to St Gregory's Foundation (multiple donations)

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less income tax and/or capital gains tax than the gift aid claimed on all my donations in any tax year, it is my responsibility to pay the difference.

# Our prayers and thoughts on the Ukranian crisis

As a charity striving to help Russian children and families in extreme poverty, disabled people and orphans for the last 30 years, how do we personally feel about what is going on? Like everyone we are shocked and deeply saddened by this devastating war and humanitarian crisis. Our hope and prayer is that the devastating crisis in Ukraine will end swiftly. However awful the situation, it doesn't change our opinion of our families who are working so hard improve their lives. Nor does it make us think less of our colleagues, all committed and compassionate people. The children and families we help are amongst the poorest. Part of our work is to help them adapt to change and to cope with the stresses of life.

Fundraising for Russian projects has never been particularly easy because there are so many UK charities which are closer to home than Russia. The reality now is that fundraising will be an even greater challenge both physically and emotionally. Nevertheless, we are determined to continue our long-term projects in Russia and to support the remarkable people who work with us. Helping them to pursue their work in these difficult times is even more important than before.

## CONTACTS

### Please send donations to:

Yulia Mesotitsch, Treasurer  
c/o 4 Bushy Court,  
20 Upper Teddington Rd,  
Hampton Wick, Surrey, KT1 4DU.

### For information and volunteering:

Julia Ashmore, Executive Secretary  
Tel: 0203372 4992  
julia@stgregorysfoundation.org.uk




### Online shop queries?

shop@stgregorysfoundation.org.uk

### SGF Directors:

- Nicholas Kolarz, Chair
- Yulia Mesotitsch, Treasurer
- Vivian Wright
- Tania Illingworth
- Hamish McArthur
- Jane Jones
- Luke Montague OBE

### Follow us and share our posts

-  [www.facebook.com/SaintGregs](http://www.facebook.com/SaintGregs)
-  @stgregorysfoundation
-  [www.linkedin.com/company/st-gregory-s-foundation](http://www.linkedin.com/company/st-gregory-s-foundation)
-  @SaintGregsFound

## ST GREGORY'S SHOP

[shop.stgregorysfoundation.org.uk](http://shop.stgregorysfoundation.org.uk)



### Gifts for all seasons



Includes jewellery from the Mkurnali workshop.  
All proceeds help SGF support the vulnerable.