



Perennial Path

Quarterly Newsletter of the Brittany's Hope Foundation

Featured Family

Our Unforgettable Journey To Pavel and Svetlana

By Lawrence Hornbeck

What can we tell you about the most amazing journey we have completed? Do we start over a year ago? When two little faces looked back at us from a computer print out? Do we start even farther back with a newspaper article about adopting "older" children (4 years constitutes old?) We could go back 10 years. That's when we met. What if someone had come up to us that New Year's Eve (1992) and said "Hey, you're going to adopt children..." Yeah, right buddy. Hey somebody take this guy's keys away.

Nevertheless, the journey we have just completed after a year of paperwork, court hearings in Estonia, and waiting for information (preferably correct information) has been a truly amazing one.

Cobblestone Streets in Estonia

Imagine stepping into a storybook setting with cobblestone streets, snow falling and the only structures taller than five stories are Gothic churches. Oh, and we don't want to forget the ancient turrets with cannon slots. This is "Old Towne," a part of Tallinn (capital of Estonia) that we would call home for 9 days. It is November 10, 2002.





Lawrence, Svetlana, Irene and Pavel meet for the first time in Estonia.

We arrive at 1:30 p.m. Sunday via ferry from Helsinki. Jelena of the Romeo Family Hotel picks us up and by 2:00 p.m. we are settled in and anxious about the children we had waited so long to meet. We didn't have to wait long. At 2:30 p.m. Sunday the 10th of November 2002, we met our children. Svetlana and Pavel arrived with the clothes on their backs.

We Meet Pavel and Svetlana.

I remember all the fears I had about crying and looking foolish. I remember wondering should we hug them? Should we shake hands? How do you greet your children when they're II & I3 and you've never seen them in person? Well, we all stood around rather awkwardly. Then we all sat down rather awkwardly. We looked to Igor our main man to get us around, the guy who knew the "ins & outs" of Estonian procedures; the indispensable guy who's worth his proverbial weight in gold. Igor said, "they're a little nervous", as Pavel tugged at hair and rubbed

his eyes, Svetlana smiled and looked down. Then Igor left. Oh, great. Now what?

Snowball Fight!

Solution I: Go for a walk. It's snowing. The kids' shoes are worn out and not designed for the snow, but we go.

Solution 2: Have a snowball fight. I'm fortunate to be married to a brilliant woman who thinks of things I should have thought of.

Ah, yes, there's nothing quite like the universal language of laughter. What a way to break the "ice". The rest would be history except that during those moments we were building our future.

It was not long after this that Sveta called Irene "Mama" and as the snow fell she put her arm through Irene's and leaned against her. What a moment. A young girl became a daughter and a woman became a mother. I was blessed to witness it. Meanwhile Pasha and I traded snowballs and tried not to hit weary strangers.

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Event Feature

"V-o-l-u-n-t-e-e-r-s" Spells SUCCESS!

By Mary Jane Risser, Board Member

Question: What can 100 dedicated volunteers accomplish?

Answer: An elegant Christmas Showcase

House Tour, proceeds of which

provide grants to five special needs

children waiting to find loving homes.

Candace and David Abel and their children opened their home in November, 2002 and volunteers moved in. Twenty Elizabethtown College students volunteered to set up trees. Then came representatives from Donnecker's of Ephrata, Memories Dolls and Collectables, Country House, Floral Designs, Lancaster Galleries West, Mueller's Flower Shop, and Tastefully Simple, all of Elizabethtown. The trees and



Volunteer hostesses in ethnic attire assisted guests at the 2002 Christmas Open House. David Abel is pictured second from left. rooms of the house were soon transformed into a glorious Christmas adventure.

More than 900 guests were welcomed by 80 hostesses, salespersons, and vehicle attendants. One Brittany's Hope adoptive mother drove more than one hundred miles to volunteer and commit hours toward her family's Partnership Pledge.

Brittany's Hope is extremely grateful to all volunteers who offered their talent and time in making the first Christmas Open House an outstanding success. We invite anyone wishing to participate in the November 1st and 2nd, 2003 "A World of Christmas" House Tour to call (717) 367-9614, email Candace Abel at abelc@brittanyshope.org, or write to Brittany's Hope Foundation, 1000 North Market Street, Elizabethtown, PA 17022.

The Starfish

By Candace Abel, President

Once upon a time there was a wise man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach before he began his work.

One day he was walking along the shore. As he looked down the beach, he saw a human figure moving like a dancer.

He smiled to himself to think of someone who would dance to the day. So he began to walk faster to catch up.

As he got closer, he saw that it was a young man and the young man wasn't dancing, but instead he was reaching down to the shore, picking any comething and

picking up something and very gently throwing it into the ocean.

As he got closer he called out, "Good morning, what are you doing?"

The young man paused, looked up and replied, "Throwing starfish in the ocean."

"I guess I should have asked, why are you throwing starfish in the ocean?"

"The sun is up and the tide is going out. And if I don't throw them in they'll die."

"But young man, don't you realize that there are miles and miles of beach and starfish all along it. You can't possibly make a difference!"

The young man listened politely. Then he bent down, picked up another starfish and threw it into the sea, past the breaking waves and said, "It made a difference to that one."

There is something very special in each and every one of us. We have all been gifted with the ability to make a difference. We must each find our starfish. And if we throw our stars

wisely and well, the world will be blessed.

Adapted from the Star Thrower by Loren Eiseley 1907 – 1977

It is interesting that the "wise man" is actually not the wise one in the story;

rather the young boy. He reminds us that each of us has been gifted with the ability to make a difference in the world. He also reminds us as we "dance" through life, we experience God's grace when we put others before ourselves. It is through such grace that we are able to create our visions and develop the power to make a difference. Brittany's Hope Foundation and the children we have helped is proof of this power that arrives through vision and confidence. Someone believed in YOUR life enough to make a difference in YOU. Make a difference in the life of a child who waits through a donation of time or money.



You Can Plant SEEDS OF HOPE Their future depends on you.

Imagine the life of a child who has never known a home with a family. No mother, no father, no one to encourage and love them. They survive, but do not thrive.

Brittany's Hope Foundation wholeheartedly believes that every child deserves to have a loving family. We are accomplishing that mission, one child at a time, with the help of generous people like you.

Every single dollar of your tax-deductible gift is used to ease the financial burden of families wishing to adopt special needs children. Your help makes a critical difference.

Our board members are all volunteers, and they donate their time and money to cover the costs of running the foundation.

Donations can be made on our website at http://www.brittanyshope.org/contributions.html, or mail your gift to us. In return, you'll get the satisfaction of knowing that you have given children a future of hope and promise.

Feature

Note from Candace Abel

Hello, and welcome to our first newsletter! It is our hope that our newsletter will keep our families and friends informed about our many wonderful happenings. If you are new to the foundation, we hope that it will encourage you to want to be a part of our exciting work; work that truly makes a difference in the life of a child.

I am often asked to tell the "story" of Brittany's Hope Foundation; how it came to be and the young woman that inspired it. I am asked about my personal life as well. People want to understand what motivates someone to adopt 8 children and travel into foreign orphanages to seek out the neediest of children and bring them home. I answer the inspiration behind both is one in the same; love is the inspiration behind our adoptions and Brittany's Hope Foundation is the "story" that this special love wrote.

More than 9 million children wait in orphanages for the gift of a family, 6 million of which are considered special needs or waiting children. Special needs children are frequently abandoned in countries that are poor or ripe with social stigma against the handicap. These children often have no hope at a future without the support of a family and proper medical intervention. Brittany's Hope's mission is to financially aid and advocate for the adoption of special needs children throughout the world. We do this through child specific grants and personal advocacy for special needs international waiting children. A child labeled "special needs" waits for a long time in an orphanage or simply "ages out" and many times is never matched with a

family. Just as sad is a family in search of the love of a child, but simply can not bear the financial burden of the adoption process.

Our work creates a bridge of love that brings these eager families together with children who need the blessing of a family to reach their potential. To date we have granted 26 deserving children, from countries such as Guatemala, Kazakhstan, Estonia, Russia, Korea, Philippines, Vietnam and India. Children such as Sayali from India, born a quadruple amputee, Vietnameseborn Sydney, blind from birth, and Annie, a deaf 9-year-old, have all found homes in the United States

We have been able to do wonderful work one child at a time! It is immensely rewarding when a granted child, after a long year of advocacy and personal prayer, finally comes home. I can not express the joy that we feel as these little ones arrive home and blossom with the love and care of their new families. It makes all the hard work worthwhile

We at Brittany's Hope remain very devoted to our children long after they are home. They are our passion and our heart, and our reason for being. I hope this newsletter helps you to understand how committed we are to all children, especially those who face an uncertain future. Our philosophy is like the "Starfish Story" — we cannot save every child, but we can make an enormous difference, one child at a time.

In Peace, Candace Abel



Standing, left to right: Nathaniel, Court, David holding Emily, and Candace.

Seated, left to right: Matilde, Elizabeth, Lorraine, Alyssa and Mai-Lynn.

Seated on floor: Fabienne and Tianna Rose.

Feature

A Small Sacrifice

By Cathy Pressimone, Board Secretary

Every year the school children of St. Peter School, Elizabethtown, look for a service project to do during Lent. The staff and administration look for a charity with a focus that will inspire the children to look beyond their own lives and into the lives and needs of others.

This past season Lent, the Cribs For Kids Campaign was chosen to teach the children about loving others. The children could be encouraged to sacrifice for the benefit of the Vietnamese orphans suffering from AIDS. The teachers stressed to the children that they were to work for the money they donated to the cause. By doing additional chores around their homes or skipping a special treat the children could bring in fifty cents or a dollar towards the goal of \$100; the school population of 75 could raise, by themselves, at least the amount for one crib. This was first and foremost, to be the project of the children.

Building the First Crib

A small doll crib was brought in and each day the monies brought in would be counted and for each \$25 a side of the crib would be put up. The children embraced this project with gusto. Mrs. Johnson, the school secretary, said that many children felt they could raise enough money for more than one crib. They enthusiastically told stories of the chores they did to raise their donations. On the first day of the drive, the doll crib was constructed! In one weekend the children had done enough chores to pay for the purchase of a crib, busy box and blanket for a child in Vietnam.

Seven Cribs!

A new approach was taken to let the children visualize how well they were raising money for the campaign. Every time they raised another \$100, a baby doll was placed in the crib, representing a baby they would never see that would benefit from their kindness.

By the end of the four week project, seven baby dolls were crammed into the crib. The children had raised enough money for 7 cribs! They were so proud of themselves. And the teachers felt that the children had gained so much more. They had learned to look beyond their own comforts, learn of the sufferings of others and step in to help. They learned they could improve the world, with small sacrifices, dollar by dollar, one crib at a time.

Our Unforgettable Journey to Pavel and Svetlana

Continued from page 1

The days passed quickly as we went from Estonian government office to U.S. Embassy and back again etc. Actually it wasn't too bad and we had a fair amount of free time. We went to the zoo. It was snowing. It was freezing. There were no lines. We were the only people there. We really enjoyed the tropical house.

The Farewell Party

Before we knew it the farewell party at the orphanage was upon us. We bought many treats. Sveta and Pasha sorted through the gifts we had brought with us carefully choosing between each item and deciding who should get what.

The party was a happy time with their orphanage group, close friends and caregivers. The children enjoyed the treats (that included bananas and pears). The Polaroid camera was a big hit. That was Friday.

"Mother and Father - Big Love"

Over the weekend by chance and by design we "ran into" Sveta and Pasha's close friends

(plus Gerry, the orphanage's unofficial dog). We hosted the children's friends at the hotel and took them out to eat. It was interesting to see and feel heads turn at the sight of two Americans and six orphans (make that four orphans). Our lives were blessed by their presence. And our hearts were touched when, in the hotel, they asked us to dance to a slow rock-n-roll tune. Their eyes fixed on us. They had only seen this in the movies. Soon they clustered about Sveta as she drew something. We weren't allowed to see what the young artist was creating as each child made suggestions. The result was a drawing of two swans enclosed by two overlapping hearts with the words MOTHER & FATHER - BIG LOVE.

Pavel Disappears, And We Meet Friends

It is Monday 5 p.m.. Church bells are ringing. Commuters are on the move. It is dark. We are walking back from having dinner with Igor and Signe (in charge of overseas adoptions).

Suddenly, Pasha turns and runs. We panic. It's all too overwhelming for him. We could lose him in the stream of humanity that surrounds us. Sveta calms us. She says that someone called him. It is Katia. She is Pasha's best friend.

The moment is so "Dickensian", the small waif barely noticeable. The shadows of trees against

the snow hiding her. "Can Pasha stay and play?" she asks in excellent English. "No, but you can come to the hotel." No sooner do we arrive then another friend, Masha, has found her way into the locked building and to our door.

This would be the last time these children would see each other, if not for this life, then for years. These friends are more like siblings that love each other in ways they don't even understand. Curfew is either fluid or at times disregarded by the children and it wasn't until 9:30 p.m. that the two friends knew they must go.

Who Will Be Their Angels?

Goodbyes were whispered and voices were choking. We held two wonderful children in our arms and as we hugged them, we whispered "we're sorry we can't take you with us. We would if we could." Tears streamed down our cheeks. And I thought, where are their angels? Where are they going as they walk down dark steps to the street? Where are they going as they trudge through the snow along dark streets to their orphanage, their home?

Will someone kiss them goodnight? No, I think not. Our hearts were broken that night as they have never been broken before. Who will be the angels for these children?

Brittany's Hope, A Mission of Mercy

This is where Brittany's Hope comes in. In our case Brittany's Hope came in before we even knew about Sveta and Pasha. And we knew we would do our best to adopt them despite the cost. We were into the process a bit before it dawned on us just how much the grant from Brittany's Hope would mean to all of us. We can not stress enough how Candace hung in there for us and the children. She became our guardian angel when some of the adoption / grant process started to "go south". It was the most difficult time that we as a couple have ever had.

Candace, along with the rest of the board of Brittany's Hope were the answer to our prayers. We can not thank them all enough for what they have done for our family. Brittany's Hope is truly the angel for many children, our prayer is that your mission of mercy will continue to save other children.

Healing Our Hearts

Each day our hearts heal. Sveta thanks us for breakfast. Pasha is excited to go to Boy Scouts. Sveta paints another picture. They laugh at a joke in a movie. They bless the meal in their native tongue knowing that God understands. And all our hearts heal a bit more.



Svetlana and Pavel's family:

Seated in front row: Svetlana ("Sveta"), mom Irene, and Pavel ("Pasha") standing. In back row: sister Rachael, grandfather Hulet Hornbeck, dad Lawrence, and sister Julia.

Feature

Kids Helping Kids!

By Alyssa Telenko, Age 12

When I first found out about Brittany's Hope Foundation I thought that it was a GREAT way to help unfortunate kids in other countries find homes and families in America.

My mom is a Pampered Chef® consultant and I thought it would be a great idea to have a fund raiser to help support Brittany's Hope Foundation. As a result of the fund raiser we donated almost \$400.00 to the Foundation. That \$400.00 could do a lot of things to help other kids.

I would like to thank Carol Hughes and the Handmaids from Saint Peter Catholic Church for helping collect orders. The Handmaids is a group of girls in grades 5-8th that get together every first Sunday of the month, and do different activities.

America is a great place to live, because you are free and are treated fairly. In some countries you are not free or treated fairly. All the kids that come to America through Brittany's Hope are now happy.



Alyssa Telenko organized a Pampered Chef® fund raiser that garnered \$400.00. All of that money was used to place a grant on a child.

Thank you Alyssa... We love you!

100% of all funds raised or donated to the Brittany's Hope Foundation are used directly on placing grants on special needs children. All of our board members are volunteers, and every expense is paid for by board members. We believe that every child deserves a loving family, and have dedicated ourselves to accomplishing that mission.

Debra Miller Editor
Deborah Ellis Art Director
Contributors: Cathy Pressimone, Mary Jane
Risser, Lawrence Hornbeck, Alyssa Telenko,
Candace Abel

Special Information

They spend 24 hours a day in cold bare metal playpens. With your help, they'll sleep in a crib with a warm blanket.



As in other parts of the world, HIV and AIDS are becoming more prevalent in Vietnam. HIV babies are often abandoned to one of the many orphanages throughout the country. Sadly, these babies experience stigma and are often segregated from the other children in the orphanages, spending countless hours in a crib devoid of toys, blankets and often a mattress.

Several humanitarian organizations have recognized this sad problem and have come together to build a HIV/AIDS Center outside of Ho Chi Minh City for these precious children. Here, they will be

able to live out their lives without the loneliness of ostracism. They will receive the care and attention that their special needs require. In keeping with our mission to help provide a better quality of life for special needs children worldwide, Brittany's Hope Foundation has pledged to provide quality cribs for this facility.

A safe and stimulating crib is an essential piece of equipment for a baby, but especially for an institutionalized infant who spends 24 hours of their day in their crib. It is our desire to not just provide the crib itself, but to see that it is equipped with a mattress, blanket for comfort and a "busy box" for valuable stimulation. We have promised to provide the 100 cribs and accessories required for this facility. At a cost of \$100.00 per crib, we need to raise \$10,000 towards this commitment. We are looking for individuals and organizations



to pledge any number of cribs to reach our goal. This is a fully tax deductible contribution and a truly tangible way to provide a better quality of life for children in need.

Thank you for your donation and for making a difference in a child's life.

Checks may be made payable to: Brittany's Hope Foundation

Mailing address: 1000 North Market Street, Elizabethtown, PA 17022



The students of St. Peter School, Elizabethtown, enjoy making a difference. Their most recent endeavor was working with the Brittany's Hope Foundation in the Cribs for Kids campaign, to supply children in a Vietnam orphanage with safe cribs, blankets and stimulating toys. They have been doing extra work around the house and working for others to earn money. The total quickly added up to over \$700.00, enough to purchase seven cribs. The students recently presented a check

to Candace Abel (second from right) from the Brittany's Hope Foundation. Taking part in the presentation are (from left) Amie Knowlton, Ted Boycard, Susan Miklos, and Isabelle Gulick.

Feature

Brittany's Buds: Granted Children Waiting For Families



Evgenia, age 10 and Sergey, age 8 1/2 were recently hosted in Maryland for summer camp. The host family described Evgenia as "a gem". She likes reading and it is easy to communicate with her. Sergey is fun to be around but is sometimes strong-willed. He likes riding a bike and other outdoor activities. Evgenia and Sergey have two younger siblings in Russia: Olga, age 6, and Gen**nadiy**, who just turned 5. Olga likes to listen to fairy tales. She is happy when she has an opportunity to watch flowers and animals. Gennadiy is very active and likes to be outdoors. He likes drawing and singing. His health is excellent. All four children need to be adopted together. If you can give these children a loving home, please contact Cradle of Hope, 301-587-4400 and ask for Linda Perilstein. Amount of grant: \$15,000.



Sweetie-pie **Sergey** is kind and gentle. Born on August 20, 2000, he will celebrate his third birthday this year! He will also have waited 3 years for a family to love him. Sergey is diagnosed with delays in psycho-speech development and a horseshoe shaped kidney. Sergey's placement fees have been covered by Brittany's Hope, requiring adoptive parents to only pay the expenses for 2 trips, document preparation, translation, home study and post-placement. Contact Linda Perilstein at Cradle of Hope, 301-587-4400 for more information. Amount of grant: \$7,500.



Cute-as-a-button **Nikita** is sweet-natured. friendly and developing age-appropriately. He was born in November of 1996 and has waited 3 years for a family. He has a diagnosis of arthrogryposis, a joint and muscular disorder which is affecting his wrists, knees and ankles. He is described as "benevolent and emotionally stable" by the orphanage staff. He is a leader, loves organizing games, never shows aggression, and gets along well with staff and children. He walks and runs, speaks in complex sentences, repeats poems and stories, sings, counts, knows numbers and colors. Needs some assistance with eating and dressing, but strives to please and works hard at tasks. Nikita will need a wonderful loving family who has access to medical intervention. His placement fees are sponsored by Brittany's Hope, so adoptive parents' expenses would be for 2 trips, document preparation, translation, home study and post-placement. Contact Linda Perilstein at Cradle of Hope, 301-587-4400 for more information. Amount of grant: \$7,500.





Augusta and Aminata are sweet sisters born in 1999 and 1996. Born into the middle of a civil war, these beautiful girls were orphaned when both their parents were killed by rebel bullets. Augusta and Aminata are now safe and well-taken care of in an excellent children's shelter, but they are in need of a loving and permanent home where they can heal and know peace. Both girls are healthy, but somewhat malnourished. The girls can be escorted or parents can travel. Please contact Cindy Boody of MAPS at 207-532-9358 or maps@mapsadopt.org. Amount of grant: \$12,500.



Shy **Kim** was born on August 12, 1996 with a severe cleft palate. Several surgeries have repaired his lip, but he will need further surgery for his palate. He can walk and run well, has a good appetite, and dresses independently. Kim loves to play with toys, understands what is said to him, and enjoys talking with his caregivers. He is in need of a loving family who can offer him the proper medical intervention. If you are interested in Kim, please contact MAPS, 207-775-4101 and ask for Stacey Dudley. Amount of grant: \$7,500.



Pretty little **Anisa** is described as a "gifted and self-dependent girl". Born in the spring of 1996, Anisa takes her responsibilities and tasks seriously, and is cooperative and neat. She loves poetry and enjoys memorizing and reciting it. She arrived in the orphanage in 1999, and has waited 4 years for a loving family. Her medical records indicate that she has some residual encephalopathy. For more information regarding Anisa, please call Donalee Thornock from Focus on Children at 307-279-3434 or email Thorns@allwest.net. Amount of grant: \$5,000.

Every child deserves a loving family.

Darling baby **Anna** was born on May 3, 2001 with congenital deformity of her hands and right leg. She is described as active and happy, likes to interact with adults. Anna has a good appetite and loves her Music Class where she sings and dances to tunes. Contact Miriam Johnson of MAPS at 207-225-4101 if you are interested in bringing Anna home to love! Amount of grant: \$7,500.

New Year's baby **Almagul** was born in 1994 and entered the orphanage in 2000. She is described as sweet-natured and even-tempered, but also self-reliant. She does very well in school, loves reading and has a curious nature. She is wonderful with the younger children, and is quite musically talented. For more information about Almagul, please call Donalee Thornock from Focus on Children at 307-279-3434 or email Thorns@allwest.net. Amount of grant: \$5,000.



Adorable **Natalya** was born on November 6, 1998 with a rotated femur, which causes her to walk with a limp. If you are interested in Natalya, please contact Cradle of Hope, 301-587-4400 and ask for Linda Perilstein. Amount of grant: \$7,500.

Feature

Brittany's Blooms: We're Home!



Sayali came from India to join her family.



Daniel's family is thrilled to have him home!



Jacob is a happy little boy – he has joined his family at last!





Sinnah and **Sento** with their sister Laura.



Annie came from Vietnam to join her family.



Sydney is thriving in the care of her loving family.

◀ Ashley (center) shares a giggle with sisters Kaitlyn and Jessica. Read their story at www.OurAdoptionStories.com.



Brittany's HOPE

Brittany's Hope Foundation

1000 N. Market Street Elizabethtown, PA 17022 (717) 367-9614 abelc@brittanyshope.org

Aiding Adoption of Special Children Worldwide

100% of our funding is used to place special needs children with loving families.

Visit us on the web at http://www.brittanyshope.org

2003 Brittany's Hope Foundation

ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT



Join us on
Friday, September 19th, 2003
1:00 p.m. Shotgun Start
\$75.00 per individual

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November 1 & 2, 2003

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For information, call Mary Jane Risser at 367-7153, email Candace Abel at abelc@brittanyshope.org, or write to 1000 N. Market Street, Elizabethtown, PA 17022