Russia Welcomes Students

According to one popular saying, "It takes a whole village to raise a child." From May 19 to June 9, five students from Concordia's Paul and one from St. Cloud State visited a children's community that takes this saying seriously.

Concordia University professors Debra Belisle and Basim Ibrahim DeVries led students on a service learning trip to Russia, where they spent three days in Moscow, four days in St. Petersburg, and two weeks in Kitezh, an innovative rural children's community located about six hours south of Moscow.

Kitezh, with a population of about 50 people, was begun about 10 years ago as an alternative to traditional orphanages. At Kitezh, families make a permanent commitment to their foster children and to living in the community, the whole purpose of which is to raise happy, healthy children.

We found that this trip to the unknown surpassed our expectations. While we went in Russia we experienced many facets of Russian: glamour in Moscow, friendliness and warmth in Kitezh, and history in St. Petersburg.

We spent our first three days in glamorous Moscow, where we visited the Kremlin, Red Square, Lenin's Mausoleum, Tolstoy's home, the Tret'yakov art museum, and many churches. When there were language barriers our guide, Iliia Holinghead, was there to interpret. However, when we felt dramatically out of place in comparison to the well-dressed Muscovites, even Iliia couldn't help us with the culture clash.

Kitezh had neither the glamour nor the luxuries of Moscow, but the friendliness of the community was difficult to leave. The scenery and host families were reminiscent of the Midwest. Although the family units who lived in traditional Russian wooden homes (or "stubes") had little material comfort to offer compared to American standards, they were generous with their hospitality and warmth. We were always welcome in their homes for tea, treats, and the fine Russian art of conversation. These traditional Russian gatherings sometimes lasted all night.

This welcoming atmosphere, along with the fact that most of the Kitezhans spoke English well, made it easier as we were split up to live in different family households. As the two weeks passed, most of our group followed a routine schedule: optional morning exercises at 8:15 a.m., breakfast at 9:00 a.m., teaching children English at 10:00 a.m., exercising with the children at noon, lunch at 2:15 p.m., and dinner at 7:00 p.m. The rest of the day was filled with community work projects (such as gardening, and building a path and bridge). Aside from these expected duties, we also enjoyed ourselves learning Russian language and crafts, bathing in the sandy, and dancing at the weekly disco.

The friendships formed with the children made the stay more enjoyable but the learning more difficult when the two weeks were finished. There was not a tearless face as we gathered on the bus to leave for St. Petersburg.

St. Petersburg welcomed us with a historical uniqueness apart from either Moscow or Kitezh. We were fascinated by the elegance of the buildings and beauty of the many rivers running through the city. Statues and tributes to Peter the Great were everywhere. After having been served back washer and other simple rations in Kitezh, we greatly appreciated the restaurant outings and bottled water. After St. Petersburg, we flew back home where the colors and warmth of Russia will stay with us forever.
Soccer Players Meet Aussie Challenge

By Lindsay Hartleben

Just before returning to Concordia for preseason training, three Concordia soccer players were able to take advantage of a unique opportunity. Not only did senior Stephanie Hodson, junior Lyndsey Gagas and sophomore Lyndsey Gagas of Mesa State College, July 21 rolled around, the surprise of the trip was, "We made the commitment was made, players needed extensive fundraising," Hodson said.

"Friends and family were the major source of support for the trip," Hodson said.

When the departure date of July 21 rolled around, the surprisingly difficult task of leaving the country arose. They faced one obstacle after another when acquiring airline tickets that never arrived, a cancelled flight, changing connecting flights, an overbooked flight, never-ending lines and hard-enough task of leaving the country. Hodson said.

Due to circumstances beyond the control of tournament organizers, such as a major SAS scare at Malaysia and the events surrounding the war earlier in the year, participants from other countries opted out of the tournament.

"I wish there would've been more countries in the tournament, just to get a look at women's athletics around the world," Hodson said.

The first contest was against the Northern Roos, in which Hodson added another assist in the 5-0 win. The following day the U.S. defeated Griffith University 5-0, then had a day of rest before playing the Czech team in a tough game. The offense exploded to score four goals, one off of an assist from Hodson, to overcome the Bears 4-2.

The following week, the team relocated to the Gold Coast Region farther down the eastern coast of the country where the Down Under University Games took place. Griffith University-Gold Coast hosted the tournament, which consisted of baseball, women's basketball, softball, and volleyball, in addition to women's soccer.

"Winning the gold medal showed that you can take girls from different universities and put them together on one team to be successful," Hodson said.

Once the task of winning the gold medal was accomplished, the Americans focused more on the tourist side of the trip. The Australian Friendship Sports tour guide organized a variety of activities for the visitors to experience the country.

The group ate croc ribs and held a baby crocodile at a crocodile farm and spent time on Great Keppel Island, which is part of the Great Barrier Reef.

They got to know their teammates and the Australian opponents better, fed kangaroos and saw koalas at a wildlife sanctuary, received surf lessons and braved the waves, enjoyed the delicious local foods, and relaxed on the beach when the bustle of the activities got to be too much.

Two weeks came and went much faster than anticipated, and soon the women and coaches were leaving the land of "No Worries" to face busy airports and another 11-hour flight. Four flights and two days later, the Concordia students were back at home with many stories to tell and several rolls of film to develop.

"The trip was an experience of a lifetime," Gagas said, "We made some friends that we'll never forget..."
Habitat Builds Support: Labor of Love

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HABITAT FOR HUMANITY
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St. Thomas Academy
Highland Park HS
Macalester College
St. Paul Central High School
University of Minnesota
St. Paul Central

University of St. Thomas
Concordia University

Devotion: Nuggets of Change

By Javonie Cotter
The weather is getting cooler. The parking lots are getting full. Students are moving to campus. Change is here. We are surrounded by new people, new buildings, and new situations. Freshmen are learning what it means to be 'on their own.' Sophomores and juniors are facing more intense classes and complicated schedules. Seniors are examining the potential path of their future. Faculty and staff are changing buildings and offices. The complexities of life are manifesting themselves into our world.

I'm not good with change. Like many people, I like things to be safe and familiar. It's often difficult for me to swallow the changes that surround us. Like shifting shadows, God chose to be with me. Just as He has given me the grace to choose the new white meat chicken nuggets. They don't realize until after the first bite that change can be good.

This summer, I was challenged with many changes. I had a new campus, housing assignments, and course alterations. However, the most difficult change came in my relationships. Many of my friends got married or engaged, and several others formed significant relationships with long-term potential.

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all that has been created (James 1:17–18). God doesn’t change; He is our constancy in a world of chaos. In the midst of many new locations, different classes, and altered relationships, God remains faithful.

One singer/songwriter described faithfulness in the following way: "You have been more faithful than the morning sun. You have been more faithful than the stars in the sky. You are more faithful than the morning sun. You are more faithful than the stars in the sky." As we move into this new season of our lives and approach the many changes that surround us, let us remember God’s faithfulness and chew the chicken nuggets of change. "The Lord is faithful in all His promises, and loving toward all He has made" (Psalm 145:14). Peace be to you.

Martha Ross Rausman's Art Exhibit
Collective Secret
September 8 and October 5, 2003
There will be a Gallery Talk Monday, September 8, 4:30 p.m.
followed by a reception, 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Art Department Gallery - Luther Tunnel 113

The SWORD welcomes all ideas, suggestions, and letters to the editor for potential publication. The SWORD reserves the right to publish submissions at Editors' discretion. The views expressed in published articles do not necessarily represent The SWORD, The SWORD staff, or Concordia University, St. Paul.
Students: Heartbeat of Campus

By Andrew Johnson

Welcome back! I worked for a while to find the most appropriate thing to start the article with and after some searching and rewriting, this seems to sum it up best.

Last year ended with people ready to leave and ready to renew themselves with some time away. Let me just tell you, though, that the campus just is not the same without you. I was one of the few, the proud, the resident assistants, who stayed around to check students out of their rooms and close down the dorms. That is not a fun job. It becomes painfully apparent how much this campus is without the life that students bring to it.

This campus has changed since last year. There are many things to be thankful for and many things that are worth showing off. Over the summer I came back to campus to talk to prospective students and show them around campus: the new library, the Gangelhof Center, the dorms, all the outer things that make this place Concordia.

I found, though, that with each tour I encouraged all those participants to come back for a visit to campus when students are here. Concordia just is not Concordia without the students. It was like the heartbeat of campus was gone. The laughs in the halls and the shouts across the knob were missing. The people who make this campus great were not here to show to the tour participants. This new year is arriving and so are the possibilities and reasons for excitement.

"They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself."

- Andy Warhol

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The history club wants to achieve a lot this year. Some of our goals include volunteering in the community, a trip to Chicago. The most important goal is to be an outlet for excitement for our members through interaction, discussion, and travel.

Amanda Chavez History Club President at chaveza@noah.csp.edu

Or contact:
- Matt Maki History Club Vice President makin@noah.csp.edu
- Marcus Breitbarth History Club Secretary breitbam@noah.csp.edu

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