

S U M M E R 2 0 1 5

# Bulgarian Child Bulletin

*"You Raise Me Up to More than I Can"*



Bulgarian Child, Inc. Mission Statement:  
*To impact the lives of institutionalized and impoverished children in Bulgaria by compassionately meeting their basic needs.*

Fall ministries – coming soon!

## Healthy Child Project

Each October, BCI helps 10 orphanages by providing vitamins, over-the-counter meds and flu vaccines, if desired. This project is funded by Dutch foundation "Come Over and Help."

## Roofing team

A team from Grace Four Square Church of Camas, Washington, came last September to build a roof on half of a large building that will be part workshop, part warehouse. They are coming again this September to finish the job!

## Winter shoes

This year BCI will fit nearly 400 children with new socks and winter boots.

Thank you Sugar Land Baptist church and Buckner Benevolence for collecting and sending so many shoes!

*Greetings from Bulgaria!*

*Bulgarian Child (BCI) is in its 15<sup>th</sup> year of ministry! Thanks to the abundant blessings of the Lord and the work and support of our faithful friends and sponsors, BCI has had a great impact on the lives of thousands of children and youth.*

*As large institutions are being closed, children are relocated to foster families or small group homes. BCI is still committed to meeting needs and is adapting ministry to do so.*

*Yes, we still have contact with lots of orphans! Yes, we still need YOU to help, to sponsor, to come!*

*Please read this bulletin to see what volunteers can do! And rejoice in the report from Learning Center Borovtsi – a place of miracles!*

*Blessings,  
Judy Ridgway*

## 2015 May Shoe Team – Volunteers from Arkansas, Italy, and Bulgaria!

*“Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:16*



### FBC Cabot, Arkansas

**Bonne Jensen** is a long-time board member of BCI. She is also a great friend and hard worker. She spent a month in Bulgaria helping at Learning Center Borovtsi and then worked with the May shoe team.



### International Baptist Church, Rome, Italy

**Pastor Dave** (below left) and Cathy Hodgdon are great friends and supporters of Bulgarian Child. They brought volunteers during the construction phase of the Learning Center and have also brought two shoe teams! The first time they had TOO many volunteers! **Paola** (below) has come three times!

BCI assistant/driver, **Stani Chalumov** helped fit shoes, too! Also pictured: **Paola**, **Theodor Angelov**, and **Liana Khapava**.



### Bulgarian Volunteers

We love our volunteers from the U.S., Italy and Holland, but we depend on the help of great Bulgarian volunteers. Theodor Angelov works with almost every shoe team. Stefan Borisov drives our passenger van while Stani drives the truck. Three times now Natela and Liana Khapava have translated for our teams. All have great spirits and it is a joy for them to be with us. Lately, the youth from Borovtsi have helped too (pic to the right).



FUMC  
MORRISTOWN, TN  
+  
LEARNING  
CENTER  
BOROVTSI  
=  
*FAMILY*



*"We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us." 1Thessalonians 2:5.*

The Morristown Methodists come each year to bring their warmth and love to Bulgaria. As always, their activities were varied. This year they began by singing (in Bulgarian) in a Ridgway Ministries sponsored concert. Then they moved on to northwest Bulgaria to minister to orphanages, a local preschool, the public school in the Roma community of Rakovitsa, and to the youth at Learning Center Borovtsi.



One of the most wonderful events was a birthday party at the orphanage in Gavriel



While some prepared inside for the party, others played outside with the children.



Each child had cake and a candle as well as lots of gifts!



Each and every child felt special and loved.

# LEARNING CENTER BOROVTSI



Learning Center Borovtsi has worked with at-risk and previously institutionalized young men for three years, providing a short-term, residential, work-study program. More than 60 young men have entered the program where they learn life and vocational skills needed to achieve independent living. In addition to the professional training courses, the youth study English and learn computer skills. We realize the need for spiritual and moral guidance, too. Several of the staff are believers who try to model Christian attributes through their attitudes and daily behavior. We have weekly Bible study with the youth.

As the plan for closing Bulgarian institutions for children is being realized, it is becoming more difficult to have contact with youth and recruit them before they leave the orphanages. Many children are being sent “home” to a parent or other relative who has no interest in caring for them. Some are then forced out of these “family homes” or run away. A few have even returned to their old orphanages to seek shelter.

For Learning Center Borovtsi de-institutionalization means that we have fewer youths coming straight from the orphanages and we must now be more focused on reaching young men in temporary youth shelters and programs for the homeless.

In the spring of 2014, Learning Center Borovtsi had places available in the program for new youth. In addition to previously institutionalized guys we also accepted a few young men who had not been institutionalized as children, but were considered “at risk.” With ALL the documents now filed for “right to occupancy for the other two floors of the dorm, we can offer help to around 40 youths. With more youth, house parents are a MUST!

Please pray for committed families to come live at the Learning Center and meet the needs of these young men. They are yearning for acceptance. They need people to be interested in them as individuals. They need examples of family life.



Easter reunion with some of our former students. We sang at an institution for adults with dementia.

## SUMMER PROFESSIONAL TRAINING COURSE AT LEARNING CENTER BOROVTSI

### FURNITURE REFINISHING AND UPHOLSTERY

This summer many of our young men learned all about furniture – building, repairing, and even upholstery! We have a design engineer teaching the theory and a master carpenter teaching the practical aspects. The Dutch foundation “Come Over and Help” has sent three commercial truckloads of great used furniture. We hope to refinish and market the refurbished pieces.



### MAKING BEDS FOR A HOTEL!

Learning Center Borovtsi and our design engineer are working with a Christian businessman to build furniture for his new hotel complex! We are very excited about this new venture and hope it will be the beginning of a great income generating opportunity to help the center off-set operating expenses.



### PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE IN NEARBY FURNITURE FACTORY

The youth also have practical experience at a small furniture factory about 20 kilometers from the center. They are learning many skills including making mattresses!



### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Do you like to repair or refinish furniture? Are you familiar with some of the newer techniques with chalk paint or distressing?

Recruit a like-minded friend and come share your expertise with the youth at Learning Center Borovtsi!

## MEET TWO of the BOROVTSI YOUTH

(As told in their own words)



This is a story about the difficult life of a boy who was forgotten and abandoned by everyone, even by his mom. His name is Emil, 18 years old. He's never known his father. At the age of 3, his mom left him in an orphanage to be cared for by the State.

He remembers his mom's visits with great details. They were short and cold, and there were only 4 visits in the span of 11 years. She never called him with a loving word, like "I love you". He continued his education but the most important lesson he learned was to rely only on himself.

While he was coming back from school on an ordinary day, he came to a crossroad, then, out of nowhere, a car came down the street, moving ferociously. The car hit him. He fell on the street and injured his head badly. The next thing he remembered was lying in a hospital bed with a severe brain injury.

If this were the end of the story, it would be quite unpleasant. However, bear with me please - the good is just to follow. Within a hair's breadth of becoming homeless, Emil got involved in a program offered by Learning Center Borovtsi and its director, Mrs. Judy Ridgway. Here he found a new place to call home with food and housing, friends, support as well as opportunities for professional qualification. He's not alone any longer. In addition, we all get together to study more about our Lord, about the Bible and to pray in the Center every week. He loves playing football, following his passion he got trained for a referee. His hobby is to work on a computer.

That's how the story ends - with a happy ending, because anything is possible for our Lord. Emil was forgotten by his mom but not by God.



I am Lyudmil 22 years old, from the village Dolni Tsibur, Montana region. Six years ago my father died. I had to take care of my family.

I happened to hear about Learning Center Borovtsi and decided to apply for the program. I consider Learning Center Borovtsi to be a very good place which gives me hope for success in my future life. Currently I am enrolled in professional courses Woodworking and Furniture Production. I believe with these professions and with God's help I will find my way.

*These two stories give you an idea of the backgrounds of the young men entering the program at Learning Center Borovtsi. Tsvetan, one of the men in the program, wrote the story about Emil. Tsvetan attended a spring training seminar in Sofia offered through our Dutch partner foundation, "Come over and Help." The seminar was to train people to produce short informational pieces for publication. As a homework assignment, Tsvetan chose to photograph and interview a fellow student, Emil.*

*Lyudmil gave the interview shown above just a few weeks after entering the program in late May. He is committed to doing his best and learning all he can learn.*

## Can you help BCI?

*BCI is adapting to the new situation of smaller orphanages with fewer children. We hope to finish and equip some of our buildings at Learning Center Borovtsi to be able to provide day camp activities and hopefully a sheltered workshop for special needs children and youth. We need your prayers, your expertise, and your support. Lives are being redeemed at Learning Center Borovtsi. We are working towards self-support, but we still have a ways to go. BCI still needs your help. Please consider contributing to BCI through PayPal on the BCI website [www.bulgarianchild.org](http://www.bulgarianchild.org). or with a check made out to Bulgarian Child, Inc. and sent to the address below.*

*Thank you and God bless!*

*Judy Ridgway*

*Director, Bulgarian Child, Inc.*

*Director, Learning Center Borovtsi*

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