

Bulgarian Child Bulletin



Let's Celebrate!

*Learning Center Borovtsi
has two June anniversaries!*

BCI is marking the **fifth** anniversary of the dedication/ribbon cutting for Learning Center Borovtsi on **June 4, 2011**. What a miracle! It took another year to receive all approvals and documents, to complete registrations, and recruit staff and students. On **June 10, 2012**, the center was finally operational and the first young men entered the doors. Nearly 100 youths have called LCB home since then!

See the full story:

Anniversaries

Page 2 + 3...

Who was there?
What did they do?
How did it look?

Courses

Pages 4 + 5..

Wonderful
creations – picture
perfect.

Shoes and More

Page 6.....

Shoes for 158
Preschoolers!!!!

Spring Greetings

The Ridgway family celebrates many important dates in June: On June 10, 1994, we arrived in Bulgaria as music missionaries. That was twenty-two years ago!

Our ministry has since grown into two separate foundations: Bulgarian Child, Inc. (headed by Judy) and Ridgway Ministries (headed by Paul.) Our children have long since grown up and are leading their own lives in the U.S. Paul and I are still in Bulgaria, ministering as we are led.

RIDGWAY FAMILY, 1994
Judy, Anthony (6), Paul,
Zachary (10), and Andrew (12)





Time of Purchase

Learning Center Borovtsi, A Brief History.....



Ribbon Cutting



At Present

Through the work of BCI, we learned that children aged out of the orphanages at age 18. They were simply discharged with no support system, no job skills, and no place to live. Thus was born the idea for Learning Center Borovtsi. **December, 2009**, BCI purchased an old, dilapidated orphanage facility. The formidable remodeling/restructuring process began early in 2010. The vision and planning had begun more than a year before that! Most of the funding for the initial stage of remodeling was from the **America for Bulgaria Foundation** who approved the project proposal and grant in New York at the same hour of the property purchase in Bulgaria! But it took much more than that! Many individuals and church bodies supported this project in prayer, labor, and donations of goods and/or funds.

For the next year-and-a-half, paid workers and hundreds of volunteers labored to bring the dream to a reality. A team of Baptist builders from Texas laid brick and mounted rafters for the third floor. Tennessee volunteers laid the roofing tiles, hung windows, and tiled. Dorm furniture was built to order by Texas Baptist retired builders. More volunteers came to lay tile or laminated flooring, paint, insulate pipes and put in sinks and toilets. Some came simply to sweep, mop, and CLEAN!

Others collected donated goods such as kitchen appliances, stainless steel sinks, pots and pans, office and classroom furniture, mattresses, sheets, computers, and countless other items big and small. All this was shipped in containers to Bulgaria. Many thanks to the work of hundreds from **Sugar Land Baptist Church, The Heights**

Baptist Church, FBC Morristown, and FBC Cabot to fill these containers and for the teams from these churches and **FUMC Morristown, Towne View Baptist, and International Baptist Churches of Sofia and of Rome, Italy**. Other goods and volunteers came from the Dutch foundation, Come over and Help.

Australian missionaries Dan and Katie Patterson came to live at the center even before completion of their apartment. The first year they helped in planning, and even painting!

The weeks immediately preceding the dedication, teams came from FUMC Morristown, TN and Towne View Baptist Church in GA. Impossible to tell all they did to make the place presentable – cleaned, moved furniture, hung pictures, painted, etc. Can you imagine any other circumstances where a pediatrician is washing the windows and a judge is taking out trash?? The day before the opening we were all anxious -the front door and the upper story windows had not arrived yet. They arrived around 11 at night in a terrible thunderstorm. We had lost electricity so the windows were installed by the headlights of cars. We worked by the lights of our cellphones!

Our wonderful volunteers prepared a reception. Our guests included: **Pastor Theodor Angelov, who led the dedication; US Ambassador James Warlick, who helped cut the ribbon; Karst Devries**, director of Come Over and Help; **Bas Belder**, EU parliamentarian from Holland; BCI board members **George and Dorothy Hayner**; local mayors and other government officials; and many, many friends.

Learning Center Borovtsi accepted its first participants on June 10, 2012

It took another year after the dedication service to secure licenses and permissions to begin ministry. The Patterson family helped me plan program and were houseparents. Katie, as a physician, was our medical person. A team from FBC Cabot, Arkansas, helped us get off to a good start with the first youths. So, what IS the center? Learning Center Borovtsi is a short-term residential program for at-risk young men. Most of them come out of the orphanage system, others from the street or homeless shelters. Some come from prison. A few are from extremely poor Roma communities. They come carrying little - all their worldly possessions in a grocery bag – but laden with much emotional baggage. **Nearly 100 have come to the center for help.**

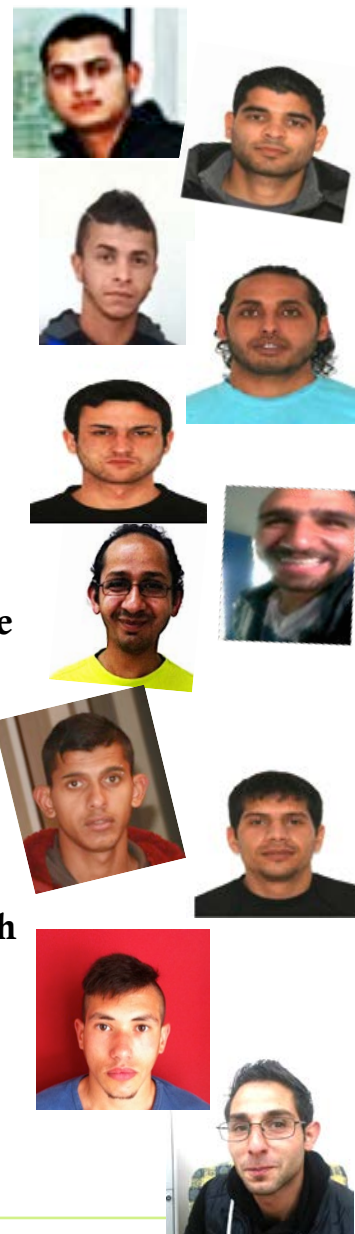
LCB is a safe environment in which they can overcome the problems of the past and gain confidence to pursue a better future. It is a place for them to learn about a loving Father and His plan for their lives. They learn to live peacefully in community with others. **The average time for a youth to live at the center is 9 months. They call it “home” forever!**

LCB provides food, clothing, healthcare, and a little spending money. They learn discipline and work habits through chopping wood, caring for animals, gardening, and kitchen duty. Yes, they wash dishes!

LCB is a registered Center for Professional

Training. We may offer courses in 10 professions and 30 specialties. Our graduates receive official certificates or diplomas for the courses. Sixty percent of those entering the center successfully complete a course.

Some of our young men come to the center with very little education. We help them enroll in an independent study course. This year, one is finishing 7th grade and another graduated from high school. Everyone is provided with the opportunity to learn – success is determined by the desire and commitment level of the individual.





Spring Cooking Class



Stephan and Ivailo

Beautiful presentation to grace the table of any fine restaurant.



Krasimir and Stillian

Delicious taste to please the most demanding client.



The new cooking teacher was fantastic. The young men learned not only elementary cooking techniques and kitchen safety, but also how to plan menus, calculate the amount of produce or other foods to purchase, and to figure preparation time. They learned how to prepare more than 50 different dishes – and to present them in the best possible way. Every Friday during the term, the young men prepared dishes for themselves and the rest of the participants at the learning center. It was always a treat.

The youth are wearing basic chef attire donated from Holland with aprons and hats that were made by youth participating in the upholstery class - they were learning sewing techniques. The professional-looking clothing helped the youth have more self-confidence and pride in their work. Stillian is now working at a Sofia hotel restaurant as a cook's assistant. Stefan still lives at the center but works in a restaurant in Montana. At the moment, Krasi is working in security at Learning Center Borovtsi!

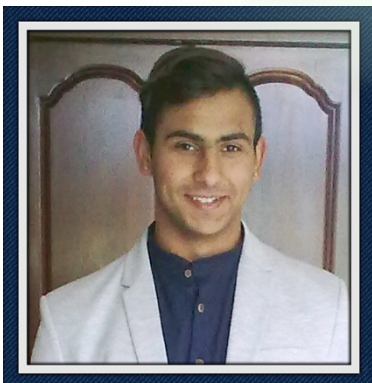


FURNITURE REFINISHING & UPHOISTERING



This spring we offered the furniture refinishing and upholstery class for the FIFTH time! It is a popular course and the young men learn much about furniture repair, refinishing, repurposing, and re-upholstering. BCI/LCB has begun a small business with donated furniture from Holland and other places. The youth in the course “re-do” the furniture as part of their practical experience. We have sold some pieces and are planning another exhibition soon. A website and catalog are being prepared. Pray for a favorable place to show and sell our goods, occasionally and/or permanently. Proceeds support the programs of the center.

Our Graduate



Tsvetan Kerov Dimitrov

Tsvetan came to Learning Center Borovtsi in January of 2016 when he aged out of a small group home in Berkovitsa. Some of our volunteers may remember him from the time he was in the home we called Berk. 3.

Tsvetan has completed his high school studies in an independent learning program and was able to graduate with his class late May. LCB sponsored his participation in his graduation party/ball on May 24. We are proud of him!

Summer Shoes!!!



**June 1,
International
Day of the
Child**



Checking out her new shoes!

For more than 15 years, BCI volunteers have “socked and shoed” thousands of kids in orphanages both in the spring and the fall. Because there are fewer children living in fewer orphanages, BCI did not have a shoe team this year. We still had some shoes and I purchased more in sizes where we were short. The boys from Borovtsi did an amazing job of fitting and shoeing!

May 17. Belogradichik home - 30 kids

Gavril Genova home - 13 kids

May 18. Vratsa baby home - 18 kids

Vratsa home for school-aged 38 kids

Roman : 58 kids

May 19. Borovtsi preschool – 10 little kids

We still had many preschool shoes left so I arranged with a mayor of an obshtina (county) near Vratsa to have a distribution there on **June 1 - the International Day of the Child**. They bused in preschoolers from the entire county of Boichinovtsi. We put shoes on **ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-EIGHT kids** from 3-6 years of age! That is the official number from the preschools, but the actual number is higher because many kids came with their parents. Teo Angelov, Stevcho, and another Bible Society worker came to help and brought with them books of children’s Bible stories and children’s Bibles. The adults received regular Bibles! From Boichinovtsi we traveled another 40 minutes to the home for school-aged children in Borovan and had a much harder time of fitting **27 older children** there! Sorry we don’t have more pictures – everyone was working with the shoes!!!

Thank you, Buckner Benevolence for the thousands of pairs of shoes you have provided over the years. Thanks to Sugar Land Baptist and The Heights for sending them – and much more – to us in containers. And many thanks to the hundreds of volunteers that have worked hard in the States and in Bulgaria! I am grateful for the opportunity and financial ability to travel to serve all these children. That is what BCI has always done! Thank you for supporting this work.

BCI develops new ministry venues.

The numbers of children living in large orphanages has decreased greatly. Many of the homes where we have ministered are now closed. For many years BCI had 5 full-time employees in the home for handicapped children in Vidrare. This home and Berk 4 are closed. The home for preschoolers in Pleven is closed. Seven smaller homes have been built for these children. Other homes have greatly diminished numbers of children. The baby home in Vratsa which once housed 115 babies had only 18 last week. We pray that the children have better care in these smaller settings. It is much more difficult, though, for BCI to meet some of their needs. It is especially difficult to have large teams come to work in such tiny places. So, BCI is developing a plan to bring the kids to us – at the Learning Center – for “camp” activities! Volunteer teams will be able to provide hours of VBS, sports, music, play activities with larger groups of children at the center. This is a lot to arrange: permissions, food, transportation, etc. for the children and, of course, caring for the needs of the volunteers. But BCI will work to make it happen!

We still need your prayers, your expertise, and your support. Lives are being redeemed at Learning Center Borovtsi and Bulgarian Child still ministers to children in need. If you, your church or organization would like to get involved, please contact me at

ridgway@bulgarianchild.org.

Please consider making your tax-deductible contribution to BCI through PayPal on the BCI website www.bulgarianchild.org. or with a check made out to Bulgarian Child, Inc. and sent to the address below.

Judy Ridgway



Bulgarian Child, Inc.
7522 Campbell Rd.
Suite 113-172
Dallas, TX 75248