

## One Heart Bulgaria - Family Dynamics International, Inc. Bulgaria Orphanage Assessment Trip Report, April 2008

**Family Dynamics International** directors Roberta and Thyrlle Stapley along with associate Becky Johnson just completed an eleven orphanage assessment for curriculum in partnership with One Heart Bulgaria. OHB directors and Bulgaria field director Nikolai Gavazov provided the itinerary, contacts and appointments with orphanage directors and city governmental officials, mayors and vice-mayors. OHB provided funding along with translation and travel means though Nikolai's services for the nine-day assessment trip April 1-9, 2008. Nikolai previously translated FDI assessment materials, FDI credentials and resumes, which were sent out to orphanage directors and city mayors for evaluation and input several weeks in advance. Roberta Stapley reports as follows:

FDI is extremely impressed with the efforts and relationships which have been established between OHB and the orphanage directors, children and various city officials. We loved the warmth and professionalism of Nikolai's services and efforts in behalf of OHB-FDI.

Our assessment goals and hopes for caregiver training and curriculum development, governmental relationships and approval were significantly exceeded. Our experiences reflected the providential hand of Him whose work this really is. We also recognize the element of serendipitous timing.

Since Bulgaria's acceptance into the EU in 2007, they have been under pressure to make significant changes in their orphanages. Previously, orphanages were under the direction of national governmental agencies. They are now under city governments. The emphasis on intellectual education only has been changed to socialization skills for caregivers and children. Orphanage directors and caregivers are expected to care for post-traumatic stress and attachment disorders, lying and stealing problems, and many other areas affecting proper healthy socialization. Government officials are seriously seeking NGO training for orphanage directors and caregivers for these required changes.

In our assessments, from the orphanages ranging from 0-3 years, 3-7 years, 7-18

years, and 18 years to transition, we found their feedback and needs to be a good fit for the caregiver training and orphan curriculum which FDI has established in other countries. We took about 1200 pictures from which we will select those to use in the curriculum.

Meetings with the mayors of Sofia, Plovdiv and Bratsigovo proved very favorable. We committed to produce materials for training caregivers; a nine-month curriculum for orphans, to begin with a four to five-month pilot curriculum; and we will address parenting skills and foster care training. They seek ongoing training.

The Sofia vice-mayor proposed that OHB-FDI be given one floor of the large Slaveikov Orphanage to provide for and maintain long term. The city currently is processing renovation of all five floors. Authorization for all the training we can provide to Sofia's orphanages was given. The Plovdiv vice-mayor was enthusiastic and invited us to register on the mayor's list of NGO's. He invited us to future meetings with himself and coalitions of NGO's. He offered OHB-FDI work in conjunction with himself and his staff to provide caregiver training, orphan curriculum and parenting to the Plovdiv orphanages. He was enthusiastic in offering a building for an opportunity home and stated they had buildings that need repair and others with less need of renovation. The Bratsigovo mayor was also highly motivated and asked us to commit to return in October and do training. We further received permission and have committed to train orphanages in the Rodopi Mountains region.

FDI will complete a customized curriculum, provide printed materials and return with extensive long term training for caregivers. We feel confident this current project will affect hundreds of orphans, caregivers, and parents for generations to come. Our vision is to expand this project to other districts of Bulgaria. The primary limitation is funding. If you would like to donate to this project, please contact One Heart Bulgaria.

Gratefully, Roberta R. Stapley, Director, CEO  
**Family Dynamics International, Inc.**



Becky Johnson, Thyrlle Stapley, and Roberta Stapley meet with the Vice Mayor of Plovdiv and his assistant.



Meeting with the Mayor of Bratsigovo



Opportunity home in Plovdiv