

Hello everyone!

Thank you all for your prayers for me and the ministry here. The last two weeks have been pretty busy around here. On Sunday I got to spend time with a group from the church who likes to gather in the afternoons. I get really tired when I spend time with them because they speak Russian, but I enjoy the fellowship. We finally had good snow so we had a snowball fight as we walked to the metro with our group of six. It was fun. :-)

I went all by myself downtown on the metro to meet a friend for dinner. Matt, I spent about three hours with Irina. She said to tell you hi. We had a good visit. We also made a new contact with a boy who would like to learn better English. He heard us speaking English, and came over to talk with us. He is in college, so he is too old to attend our meetings, but I know several of the Americans who work with the Campus Crusade college ministry so I will put them in contact with him when they return from their conference in Europe.

Kyle and Irina returned from the U.S. on the Jan. 24th. Sam, Craig and I spent half of the day getting their apartment ready for their return. We made the bed and got a few groceries for them. Then we rushed off to have our first lesson with the 10th grade students at IKS. We ran into an American man in the metro who lives near the guy's apartment. He is a private pilot for a man who owns an airplane. I thought it was interesting that we would meet two people during the week because we spoke English. I'm interested in seeing how God will use our encounters with them.

Our lesson went well. We had 11 students in our class. They did a good job introducing themselves to us and talking about their holidays. We asked them about special foods they eat and the things they did. I knew three or four of them from English Camps or school visits. We are looking forward to getting to know them better. They even said they wanted to have lessons until 4:30! (Their class and school is out at 3:45.) So we will prepare for an hour and a half.

Thursday was bitterly cold and the wind was blowing the snow sideways, so I didn't even venture out of the apartment. I just worked on the summer camp curriculum and my Russian (Marina started a new Russian learning program with me that is pretty intense. I think it will be helpful.). Kyle and Irina came over in the evening and Irina worked at packing some of her things.

Friday, I was so excited that I made it all the way downtown and to the Visa registration office to pick up my passport all by myself! :-). I didn't have any trouble at all. I got off at the right stop, came out on the right side of the street and walked straight to the office. I figured it would take an hour and a half, but it only took about an hour and 15 minutes. Then I ran to the grocery store, home and back to Koncova for our prayer meeting before the evening meeting. We gather at 3:00 on Friday afternoons to pray before the meeting starts at 5:30. We had a really fun activity planned for the evening and then only had one girl show up. Her name is Katya and she has recently become a Christian. Irina was able to have a good visit with her while the rest of us played Rummikub. Katya doesn't speak much English, so I'm very limited in the help I can do. Irina told me later that she was glad to have the time with Katya because she needs discipleship so their talk was good.

Irina packed up many of her things Friday night and Saturday morning. Then Kyle and Sergey came just before the truck. We help load things into the truck and they went to the guys apartment to load up all of Kyle's things. It took them two truck loads to get everything over to their new apartment. I think they will be unpacking for quite a while. One room is full of just boxes to be unpacked. Thankfully they have a spare room that they can put things in. They also have a nice enclosed balcony with good storage. Now that Irina's stuff is gone, we have rearranging to do in the apartment and several things we need to buy. While we no longer have the dresser by clothes were in, we now have room for the piano I'll be getting in a couple of weeks. Marina made room for me in the wardrobe to put my clothes and everything else just went back into the suitcases and is being stored under the bunk beds. We'll go shopping for another dresser or wardrobe at some point, but we haven't gotten it done this week.

Tuesday we had my first staff meeting. While I understand we had a lot to discuss after two months of no staff meetings, it was a very grueling day for me. When Kyle and Caleb would remember to speak English and not Russian, I could follow about 1/4 to 1/2 of the conversation. Otherwise, it was too much for me to try to follow what was being said. Thankfully, I got the gist of most things. We had a lot to cover about upcoming Friday meetings, the spring camp and summer camp. Thankfully, we had lunch (which is a regular part of the meetings) so it wasn't so bad that the meeting lasted from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. I was exhausted when I got home that evening. My brain can only take about an hour of Russian conversation at a time before it begins to shutdown and I'd had much more than that during the day. Kyle would like to get a translator for our meetings so that Craig and I can really contribute to the discussing and planning that goes on about events and meetings. I also think future meetings will not last as long. Hopefully, just the morning. A major thing we accomplished was planning our schedule for the next two months. I've entered much of it on the calendar page of the website with things to pray for each event. This month we have a meeting with teachers on Feb. 4th to discuss the summer camp. We will try to get to a couple of parent meetings at

schools to share about the English Camps, but don't know for sure when. We heard Feb. 15 at two different schools. We have two meetings for camp counselors and helpers and an outreach activity on Feb. 24th.

Our lesson at IKS went well on Wednesday. I know one boy in our class is a Christian and knows both my roommates. We had two girls that stayed until 4:30. Everyone had to leave earlier but stayed as long as they could. They enjoy the opportunity to talk with English speakers.

Yesterday we visited three schools. Our spring camp theme is building strong friendships, so we asked the students what three values they think are most important in a friend. It was our way to approach them between classes and just spend time talking with them. We visited schools who have students who have come to the Friday meetings in the past. The goal was to get out there as a team, be seen and hopefully, get a few more kids coming on Fridays. We got to talk with two principals about doing something in their schools regularly. Like what we are doing at IKS - go in and teach a lesson once a week or something. They both seemed open to the idea, the problem is getting the English teachers at the schools excited about the idea. You can pray that a couple teachers will want us to come to their classes. There are now four of us on the team who are American so between us we could really do some good. The three schools we visited are within walking distance of my house, so I didn't have to take a bus or metro to get there. Please pray for school 103. I have had good visits at that school and a girl named Mary from there has been communicating with me. However, they have never taken a group to English Camp. Their principal (director) would really like them to, but we can't get any of the teachers excited about it and willing to take a group to the camp. It would be really great if we could get something started at that school even if we only get students to come to the Friday meetings.

Today we meet again at 3:00 to pray. Caleb is in charge of the meeting. He's going to talk about superstitions and how we don't need to believe any of them because we have Christ. We're going to use the idea of Ground hog's day as a jumping off point into the topic since it is February 2nd. :-)

While the weather has been very cold (-10 to -20 C), the Lord has blessed us with sun many days over the last two weeks. :-) In fact, the sun is out right now and make the snow look beautiful on the trees and cars. There is not much sun in Moscow during the winter so the fact that we have seen it so much is a big deal. It helps a lot to brighten ones spirits.

I love getting your e-mails, so don't hesitate to write when you get a chance. Pray for our meeting tonight and our meeting with the teacher's on Sunday. Also pray that my house will get rented. It sounds like Suzanne might have someone lined up so pray that they will be good renters and that we can get the details ironed out.

In Christ,
Kerri