

Dear Friends and Family,

I feel like last week was really LONG and am glad for the day off! Monday's are kind of our days off for the team. That's the day Kyle and Irina take off and for the most part; I've been trying to do that as well. However, it ends up being the day I do cleaning, laundry, and stuff I need to get done for me instead of just relaxing. Isn't that the way it is for most of us anyway?

Let's see...since I last wrote, we had a meeting for those wanting to help with the Spring English Camp. We had about 16 people come. It was a good meeting. We are now in full swing of getting things ready for the camp. It is only a month away!

Sunday I went to the second service at church since I knew we had an American minister visiting for the weekend I would be able to understand the service. The first service is the only one translated into English, so if I go to the second service I don't always know what is going on and feel like I didn't get much out of my time there. Rick Thompson delivered a great sermon on John 13. He talked about the mark Jesus left Christians with being Love and that means servant hood as well. After lunch, a group of friends came over to my apartment to play games. We had a fun time. I think the last people left around 9 p.m. I met Anya on her way home from her youth meeting and we made a trip to the store for food and toilet paper. She showed me another grocery store where I can shop. It was fun to go with her. That's the first time I've been shopping with Anya. In fact, Marina spent much of the week with her dad and sister because her mom is out of town so Anya and I got to spend some quality time together. It has been nice to get to know her better.

Monday was my day off, but I went over to Craig's in the evening to meet with Katyuha and Irina R. to brainstorm for the series skits we need to prepare for English Camp. We got a good start on the work.

Tuesday was staff meeting day. The meeting went well. After the meeting, I went back over to Craig's for more brainstorming on the skits. Kyle came as well and we got even more figured out than the day before.

Unfortunately, I came down with the flu Tuesday night so I stayed home on Wednesday. Thankfully, I wasn't sick more than a day although I was tired and had a small appetite for several days. Thursday I was able to stay home again and get some work done that I had been assigned in our staff meeting.

I had planned to try to get to bed by 12:30 Thursday night, but Marina surprised me with a birthday cake so we stayed up until 1 or 1:30 by starting my birthday celebrations. ☺ The next morning, we left the apartment around 11 and headed someplace. Marina had the morning planned. She had even changed her class time from the evening to the afternoon so that she would need to be in class the same time I had prayer time and evening club meeting! She took me to a French Crepe restaurant where three of our friends were waiting for us to arrive. We had a fun time getting to know each other better with the "I've Never..." game and eating brunch. Sasha K. delivered three letters from my family. We took our time and enjoyed ourselves. When we finally left, Irina Ford and I hurried to meet the rest of the team for our prayer time which had been moved to Craig's. I was actually happy about this because the church where we meet for club on Fridays is VERY cold and we end up sitting around in our coats all afternoon and evening. When we got there, the guys had decorations up, cake and pizza ready. We ate and did our prayer time together before heading to the church for our club meeting.

Club went well. Dasha was in charge. Sam was going to talk, but he got sick, so Kyle stepped in and gave the Christian nugget for the evening. Since it was Defender's Day, everything revolved around the guys. The girls wrote nice messages to each guy on balloons and they played games that were strength competitions. It was fun. We had four students there and three college student leaders. There are two boys who have been regular attendees for the last two years. (I would tell you their names, but I wouldn't even know how to begin to spell them.) Anyway, we are hoping to find a way to give them scholarships to go to the spring English Camp. I guess they don't attend schools that send students to camp and neither family has the money to pay to send them

to camp. So we are hoping to get sponsors for them so they can attend English camp. I can't remember the price for the students. I know it costs 5,000 rubles (which is about \$200) for each American who will be helping at the camp, but they will be there several days longer than the campers. If you're interested in helping, let me know.

After the club meeting a group gathered at our apartment for more birthday celebrations. We ate and played games. It was a lot of fun. Saturday I was exhausted from all the activity the day before! Church on Sunday was good and again a group came over to the apartment. This time, they came for tea and cake. I'm glad they came because I certainly couldn't eat one and a half cakes by myself!

While I know I'm not being disciplined enough in my Russian studies, I have been very pleased to be able to understand parts of conversations. In fact, on Sunday, Danila was telling Sasha about the birthday part Friday night and I was able to understand what he said. I felt like it was a big accomplishment. It also surprised Sasha that I understood which made me feel even better. That kind of thing is happening much more often. Of course, it makes my Russian friends more excited than anyone. Vanya P. gives me a hard time every time I see him because he wants me to learn more Russian so he practically refuses to speak English around me, but at the same time, he carries on conversations with me in English once he's finished giving me my Russian lesson. The girls taught me how to say, "I'm eighteen with a tail," in response to people questioning my age. I'm so thankful to have good friends who are willing to help me learn and very patient about it. Visalisa doesn't speak very good English, but every Sunday we talk and she teaches me Russian questions and answers, then practices the English that she knows. I appreciate all she does for me.

As far as I know, I still need your prayers for renters for my house in Louisville. We also need prayers for our class at IKS on Wednesdays. We have yet to find something that works really well with this group of kids. What we do is too easy, boring or too hard. We're still looking for the happy medium. They did like a role playing game we did with them and we are going to try a debate this week. I need to try to see if I can get Ira and Masha to do something with me outside of school. Masha is very involved in horse competitions so it would be fun to see her in a competition. You can also continue to pray for language acquisition and English Camp preparations.

We did not have a disco at the school last week like we had hoped. They already had another activity planned for that night, but we do plan to have a snow competition Saturday as an activity to get the students involved. It should be fun. It's supposed to warm up by Thursday so I'm sure we will get some fresh snow. It's been between -7 and -25 C this last week. I'm so thankful for my warm clothes, hat and gloves!

Thanks for all your prayers. I've added several photo pages to my website and am updating some of the content, so be sure to check it out when you get a chance! <http://kshold.home.insightbb.com/>

In His Service,
Kerri