

Greetings from Sochi, Russia!

It is very beautiful here, but not very warm. Praise the Lord we got here safely yesterday. I'm sorry I didn't get this message written last week, but I ended up staying at the hotel with my mom instead of at home so I didn't have access to the Internet. The first groups of Americans left on Saturday and the next group arrived on Sunday so that didn't leave me much time to write or check e-mails.

English Camp in Moscow went really well. We had about 230 Russian kids and 60 Americans. I was in charge of the camp programs (morning and evening). They went well. A little rough for me in the back due to communication issues, but the audience couldn't tell for the most part. The Dr. Evil/James Blonde video series Craig and I produced was a big hit. The last skit was done live on stage with a Matrix style fight between Dr. Evil and James Blonde. It was a lot of fun to put together and watch. It was very time consuming though! You don't realize how much time and effort goes into 20 minutes of video. Vanya and Sam did a great job acting which made it much easier to accomplish. I can't imagine how much more work we would have done if they hadn't been able to adlib their parts. :-) We had a difference camp schedule this year that seemed to work really well for everyone. There are a few things we could change for the future, but overall, it was very successful. I've heard really good feedback from the students.

My mom made friends with the wife of the manager at the hotel. Both her daughters attended the camp and have attended the follow-up meetings we had last week. In fact, one of them came to Moscow Bible Church Sunday morning. That's a huge praise. She told Irina Ford Friday night that the camp has changed her life and that she wants to read her Bible all the time. Pray that she will continue to grow in her new found faith. She lives in Zalenengrad which is about 2 hours from the church and our Friday meetings. So for the girls to come, it a big time commitment and sacrifice.

I really enjoyed the school visits we had last week. I got to go to IKS, 4, & 170. We had the cutest 5th graders at IKS. They were full of questions and learned the Hokey Pokey. Several kids from school 4 came to the Thursday and Friday meetings. I was in a discussion group with three girls from the class my mom had at camp. At least two of them plan to come to the follow-up Alpha Cafe meetings that start Friday. Please pray for these meetings. They will have a full meal, talk and discussion time. It will require a commitment from many people to lead discussion groups and really interact with the kids. Please pray for the preparations. There could be only 20 kids on Friday or 100 kids on Friday. This is a great opportunity for the college students to get involved with the ministry as well as church members from the various churches we attend. Paradigma did the Alpha course last year, so they are going to lead the meeting on Friday as well as the training we need for the discussion leaders, etc. I'm glad to see the partnership with the various churches. This will help to get the Russian kids plugged in with a church.

I took the day off Saturday just to relax and rest. It was nice to get a really good night's sleep Saturday night. Easter Sunday was wonderful! We had a good church service. Then, a bunch of us were invited to the Harder's for Easter dinner. We had a wonderful American meal and a time of singing Easter hymns together. It also snowed, so in honor of the snow, we sang some Christmas carols as well. The weather was so nice during the camp! It was really warm and the flowers and trees had started to bloom and bud. Then, on Saturday, we got snow - and Sunday - and Monday. We decided it was God answering the prayers of the California girls who had never seen it snow! ;-) After Sunday dinner, we went to the mall to meet up with the group from Christian Academy of Louisville. The San Diego group got stuck in New York and didn't arrive until Monday. I took the Kentucky group downtown Sunday night to see Red Square at night. It was beautiful with the snow on the trees and puddles in the square! Monday, I got Craig to go with us and play tour guide since he knows much more about Moscow and the Kremlin than I do. I think the kids really enjoyed it. We went into St. Basil's, the Kremlin and Christ the Savior Cathedral.

Yesterday, we flew from Moscow to Sochi for our Rostov English Camp. The kids arrive tomorrow and we're taking an hour now at an Internet cafe to write messages and things. So I'm taking the opportunity to send you this update. It is beautiful here. The trees are green and our hotel is right on the Black Sea. It is cold, but now bad. The high this week will be 60. I think it is in the 40s today. We spend the morning planning for our classes and camp. I'm excited to meet the kids in the morning and get camp started. We have a team of 17. Eight high school students - four boys and four girls; and nine adults. We will have eight teaching teams. There are students coming from seven schools (I think that's what Oksana said). Thomas Priest and I will be teaching together. Most of the students will be in 7th to 9th grades. It should be a great five days. Monday we will take a night train to Rostov where we will have school follow-up visits before flying back to Moscow on Thursday. The teams leave on Friday.

I have to go, since our time is nearly up. Thanks for all your prayers! I'll write when I get back to Moscow and settled again.
In Christ,
Kerri