

A little help—a big difference



# Support for Kids Organization, Inc

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### Special points of interest:

- Shipment arrived
- Scholarship Project
- Future plans
- Legends and facts about Georgia

## Letter from the founder

Dear readers and supporters,

At the end of each month when I am getting ready for our monthly newsletter, I wonder if I should skip one issue, or make it shorter, or make it less frequent especially if there is not much to tell. Sometimes I worry that if the issue is not very interesting, you might lose the interest and I don't want to take your valuable time. But at the same time I want to continue our promise to deliver to you all the news, even if it is not so significant, but still concerns our organization's plans and activities.

The time flies so fast that if we don't make some progress every month, I consider it as a failure even though we work very hard.

Being thousands of miles away from Georgia, having the very different approach and the different pace of conducting business, being dependant on certain permissions and government regulations, also 12 hours time difference, are all factors that sometimes slow our progress.

I want to assure you that we are doing everything we can to keep our promise to help the kids and improve their lives.

As I said in the previous newsletter, not everything is measured by money. Your moral support and encouragement are extremely important. That is why I would like to thank those of you who are continuing your interest and wishing us success by getting the word out about our charity and my books about Fluto's adventures at [www.flutobook.com](http://www.flutobook.com).

Thanks as always,  
*Ani Mdivani-Morrow*



## The Shipment Has Arrived

In the last issue I informed you that the container with shoes and clothes has finally arrived in Georgia. It took almost a month to clear customs (the good news is that all the customs fees have been waived, since the goods qualified as a humanitarian aid) and to travel from the Georgian port of Poti to the capital Tbilisi. You probably wonder why it took so long to cover this tiny distance (it is approximately 6 hours drive between these cities and it is a highway not a dirt road). Well, don't ask me, it is one of the things that I can not control from here. Even though I was getting a weekly report of the location of the shipping truck, I could not speed it up. We already waited so long that a few more weeks would have not make such a huge difference.

The Child Protection Agency will contact our representative in Tbilisi—Manana Sikharulidze, who will store half of the goods (especially winter boots, shoes, hats and gloves) until my arrival in September when I will personally deliver them to the kids. The rest of the goods (jeans and joggers) will be distributed to the orphanages around the country and I already have sent to the Agency the distribution list—which boxes go to which orphanage.

It has been so long, that you probably forgot what they look like. Here they are.



## The Teddy Bear Project

One of my friends in Georgia, Dr. Tamara Rukhadze, expressed a desire to participate and to contribute somehow in our mission of improving lives of these kids in the orphanages. As I mentioned before, not everything is measured by money. She came up with the idea to have a group of volunteer doctors, who were willing to do the field trips, visit the orphanages and perform medical examinations of the kids. The project has been approved by the Child Protection Agency.

You might ask why are we calling it a Teddy Bear Project? Well, generally kids don't like [afraid of] doctors and to make the experience more fun, she decided to demonstrate similar exams on the Teddy Bears first (this is mostly for the little patients), show that they don't have to be scared, that it is not painful at all and that they can even enjoy the doctor's visit.

This project, which will start in July, is a first step for routine medical examination of the kids in the orphanages. Most of the kids are healthy and hopefully no further testing or evaluation will be necessary.

## Scholarship Project

If you remember in the last issue I mentioned one special project where we are helping one kid who wants to continue his education in one of the toughest and one of the most prestigious colleges in the country. When I heard about him, I wanted to meet this young man and see if he is really so motivated and deserving. My doubts disappeared as soon as Roba (his name) entered the room - he is extremely polite, smart and very well mannered. While still in Georgia this January, I arranged for tutors for him in two subjects for entry exams . Almost every week, I get an excellent report from these 2 tutors about his progress and that he is doing a great job. If everything goes well and he enters this college, he will need a place to stay because according to Georgian law, 18 years olds have to leave the orphanage. Our estimate of the living expense for him was about \$1500 per year. We had no idea how to fund this housing when there are so many other needs for the kids. But, a couple of weeks ago, my very dear friend called me and told that she wants to discuss something important. She came and asked me to tell more about this kid - Roba. By the end of her visit, she offered the unimaginable - sponsoring his housing for the duration of his college years. We were absolutely speechless and it is impossible to thank her enough for her generosity. I can not mention her name yet without her permission. If everything goes well and Roba enters the college, we will set up the separate fund for him under my friends name.

I want his success so much that I worry about every detail. Last week one of his tutors suggested to me that he should see a doctor since he is a bit pale and is not gaining weight. I contacted my doctor friend in Georgia (the same one who is in charge of Teddy Bear Project) and asked her to look into this. Right now they doing some tests.

Now we have to wait until July when the entry exams start and pray for Roba's success. With his motivation and enormous desire to succeed in the future., let's wish him all the best.

## A Future Project - Mestia Orphanage

In the previous issue I mentioned one important project, to help one particular orphanage in the Svaneti region of Georgia, called Mestia. It is located in the foothills of the highest mountains of Great Caucasus at the elevation of up to 16000 feet. There are 40 kids in this orphanage and they



are in desperate need of almost everything because of its isolated location. I agreed to help them even though I have no idea how I will get there. The roads are mostly nonexistent by our standards and very dangerous even in summer with constant rock slides. More info about this orphanage will be in the October -November issue of our newsletter after my trip. I plan to go there and I will have a better picture and feel for what can be done to help these kids.

We are working on selecting focus projects that we will be able to accomplish [out of many projects that currently are too large for us] and as before, we will select one or 2 projects and will concentrate our efforts to make them happen.



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DIFFERENCE

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## Georgia up close - The Natural Environment

All but unknown to the eyes of the West are the natural attributes of the Caucasus region in general, and Georgia in particular. Nearly 40% of Georgia's area is forested, countering the public perception of a ravaged post-Soviet landscape. More importantly, nearly half of this area has avoided serious human impact, and almost 10% of these forests are virgin old growth, never having known axe nor adz, among the only remaining such stands in Europe.



Two thirds of Georgia is mountainous. In the North are the Greater Caucasus the highest peak of which is Mt. Shkhara with elevation of 16,627 feet (this is the area where one of the orphanages is located).

Georgia's Black Sea coast with a length of 191 miles is a warm and subtropical and it influences the climate in the western part with mild winters (41 F) and pleasant summers (72 F). This part also has the highest precipitation (98 inches a year). Towards the East the climate changes from Mediterranean to Continental - cool winters and hot summers with occasional high of 108 F. Numerous local climates are found in the northern alpine areas, the Southern Georgian Highlands and the semiarid regions.



But not all is gold in the land of the Golden Fleece. Many of the country's current weaknesses in protecting its resources stem from nearly two centuries in an uneasy relationship with Russia, including 70 years under authoritarian regime. Since independence Georgia has undertaken new initiatives to evaluate and solve the environmental problems. Given Georgia's strong sense of national pride, the result is a country with both high natural qualities and the self-awareness to preserve it.

The beauty of this land is incomparable to anything elsewhere and people will admire it forever and ever but it is better to see it once than to hear of it many times.

*Svaneti, view on Great Caucasus*