

The American Home in Vladimir was dedicated on the 4th of July 1992. Since then a great deal has been accomplished through this private undertaking. The foundation is the Home's highly regarded English Program which has grown from 70 students and three young American teachers in the fall of 1992 to 8 American teachers, and two experienced Russian “teacher supervisors,” both of whom also teach the beginning level course. Together they work with over 400 students each term. Three former teachers—two of whom just completed teaching English in Korea (Jane Keeler) and Serbia (Brooke Ricker) respectively, and one who is teaching Russian at Vanderbilt University (David Johnson)—are providing substantial assistance with the program on the American side—while the Russian staff and American teachers do the work in Vladimir.



A path to America

In addition to the classes offered, the English Program hosts area English students, sponsors a lecture series, Saturday movies, and the celebration of American holidays. We also regularly provide workshops for area English teachers.



Workshop for area English teachers

In addition to teaching English to Russians, the American Home is licensed to teach Russian to foreigners. The students study one-on-one or in small groups with excellent tutors in the middle of the Russian heartland.

Our first substantial “special project” involved the set up of donated playground equipment in 1993 at an orphanage and at a boarding school for deaf children. Since then we have initiated and made a major contribution to a law enforcement exchange program; provided substantial assistance to the regional basketball program; assisted talented individuals seeking training in the U.S.—and more.

In 2004, 2007, and 2008 the AH made all the in-country arrangements for three very successful Fulbright programs for a total of 43 American K-12 educators through the University of Illinois and the University of Chicago. We have initiated a very promising high school exchange program based on the Fulbright foundation. We hope that this will grow and ultimately make a substantial contribution to engaging Russian and American young people (and their teachers) in on-going direct communication—with the assistance of the AH and the Internet.

We have developed a special relationship with the English program at the Murom Institute. Murom, which is older than Vladimir but is off the regular tourist route and therefore has relatively few foreign visitors, is about a two-hour drive from Vladimir. We have helped them acquire teaching materials and equipment and provided them with “native speakers.” Most recently, we helped arrange for a retired American attorney, Karen Porter, to spend the better part of two months interacting with students and faculty. (See the link to her detailed diary on our blog and website.)

Visitors from Murom



Other projects have included helping a very gifted young jazz singer receive training in the U.S. (The singer, Yuliana Rogacheva, won acclaim at the 2010 Montreux Jazz Festival.) We also initiated and are

providing substantial assistance to an important tourism development project. Initial funding for this was provided by a Sister Cities International grant.

With the help of donations, we have assisted a Vladimir organization that provides counseling services and courses on "coping with life" for children, their parents, and teachers. We now sponsor Street Ball tournaments for boys and girls attending a summer basketball camp, and for older girls' teams. Recently, we made arrangements for a Russian professor of "physical training" to collect information for his *doktorat* dissertation comparing Russian and American approaches to teaching physical education; and this past March we helped organize a very successful basketball clinic in Vladimir. (See our Facebook page.)

We are making a major effort to follow through on the tourism project. In this connection, among other things, we prepared and have updated a map of Vladimir for tourists, and we are continuing to develop an English-language web site for the City of Vladimir (www.vladimir-russia.info), and we are offering our services to edit and polish the English language pages of hotel and other tourist oriented websites. We have put online a history of the region for visitors with an accompanying video walking tour of Vladimir. There is also a two-part video about our operations. All of these can be accessed from our website, as can our Facebook page and blog.

We manage a writing exchange program that involves Russian students of English and American students of Russian writing essays in their second language which their partner corrects and comments on.

The excellent Russian staff and teachers in Vladimir are managed by Galya Altonen. Her husband, Dr. Alexei Altonen, is Director of our special projects—and also teaches English at Vladimir State University. The acting AH Assistant Director, and main contact person, is Natasha Yudina.

The American Home was conceived in 1991 by Dr. Ron Pope as a project that would contribute to Russia's transition to a stable pluralist system and promote improved Russian-American relations at the grassroots level.

A good deal has been accomplished since the doors were opened to the first students in our English program in the fall of 1992. We will continue to work to improve our existing programs and pursue new opportunities as they present themselves.

For some comments on this project, see:

<http://theamericanhome.blogspot.com/search/label/Ron%20Pope>

<http://www.pantagraph.com/articles/2008/04/11/life/doc47ff79063b273005578180.txt>



Chinese delegation visit to the AH
May 2011



Oblast (Regional) Supreme Court Visit
Texas State University Criminal Justice Tour, May 2011

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