



Serendipity-Russia (The American Home) Alternative Spring Break

DATES: March 4-13, 2011

LEARN FIRSTHAND ABOUT THE RUSSIAN HEARTLAND—AND MAKE A CONTRIBUTION

TWO PROGRAMS TO CHOOSE FROM

PROGRAM 1 Murom

**Assist the “legal studies” English language program—and other programs—at the Murom Institute
Contribute to improved understanding of the American legal system—and American society in general**



PROGRAM 2 Vladimir

Assist the Youth Health & Education Center Contribute your compassion & your labor



SHARED INFORMATION

- **DATES: March 4-13, 2011 for both programs** (Need to arrive in Moscow before noon on March 5)
- **COST: \$1450** (\$100 discount if application with \$500 deposit received by November 30)
The full fee will cover all in-country expenses—with the exception of “personal items” such as extra food and drink and souvenirs. Also not covered: International airfare, Russian visa, insurance—including required emergency medical evacuation coverage. The latter is available with the Student ID card from STA Travel or similar organization for about \$25. See your College/University International Studies Office.
- **MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 12 per program.** Acceptance will be selective. (Emphasis will be on the selection of participants who are the best prepared to make a positive contribution to each program.)
- **APPLICATION DEADLINE: November 30, 2010 (to receive \$100 discount)**
December 10, 2010—final application deadline

APPLICANTS *MUST* HAVE A VALID US PASSPORT BY DECEMBER 10, 2010

See below for application instructions.

- **LIVING ACCOMMODATIONS:** Participants will stay with host families in both communities. This will provide a valuable informal “window” on modern Russian society.
- **SIGHTSEEING:** One day in Moscow—at either the beginning or the end of the trip; plus a tour of your local area.
- **COMMUNICATION:** Each participant will be loaned a “mobile phone” (\$50 cash deposit required). You will be provided with “emergency” phone numbers and each other’s numbers. Parents and friends will be able to call your mobile number at no charge to your phone in Russia. Your deposit will be given back to you at the end of the trip if you return the phone—and the charging cord—in good working condition. (Experience has demonstrated the considerable value of the provision of these phones.)
- **ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT:** The experienced—and highly regarded—American Home staff and the staff at the Murom Institute will be available to assist with any issues that might arise. Since its founding in 1992, the American Home staff, particularly through the administration of its English and Russian language programs and its “special interest” tour services, has acquired substantial experience in dealing with a wide variety of issues and problems ranging from lost documents to “medical emergencies.” Staff members—in both Vladimir and Murom—will be reachable 24/7 by mobile phone.
- **PREDEPARTURE INFORMATION:** Participants will be provided with
 - ✓ *A Preparing for Russia* check list that will include packing suggestions and other relevant information.
 - ✓ Russian language materials, including a list of basic words and phrases (“survival Russian”) and a PowerPoint presentation (photos of Russian signs with cognate words) that will facilitate learning the Russian alphabet.

MUROM PROGRAM

The American Home in Vladimir has developed an extensive relationship with the Murom Institute, beginning with visits to Murom by Criminal Justice and Politics tour groups. In 2004 the Murom Institute hosted 14 K-12 American teachers who spent a month in Russia under a Fulbright grant. The AH arranged all of the in-country program. This was the first group of American teachers to visit Murom—which had been a completely closed city during the Soviet period due to its extensive armaments industry. Two more Fulbright groups



were warmly welcomed in 2007 and 2008, along with other groups traveling through the American Home. Dr. Pope, Founder and President of Serendipity-Russia (The American Home) arranged the contacts that resulted in Karen Porter's stay in this historic city. The Murom Institute's hospitality remains an example of the best Russia has to offer.

Participants will

- Help present several—at least two—mock trials with a special emphasis on the role of the jury system. The Russian government has officially sanctioned the jury system for “especially serious crimes”—but most Russian citizens tend to believe that “only legal experts” are capable of taking part in the legal process. The mock trials can introduce law students—and faculty—to the separate concepts of “interpretation of the law” and “judging the facts,” as well as to the adversarial system for presenting arguments.
- Participants will also be asked to express their opinions on subjects such as “plea bargaining,” the role of the US Supreme Court, State vs. Federal courts, the American legal education system, the role of / attitude toward lawyers in the US. (A more complete list of topics of special interest will be provided to the participants in this program several months before the March 4 departure.)

Both the mock trials and the “expression of opinions” will be videotaped for use by future Murom Institute law students in the English language program.

- *The Murom English faculty is also interested in participants with training and/or experience in social work, business, computer science—or any area if they have a special interest in Russia, its language and culture.*

(Everyone should anticipate assisting with the mock trials and participating in videotaped discussions.)

In addition to the videotaped activities, there will be ample time for informal conversations—and sightseeing in the ancient city of Murom. (For a brief history of Murom, go to: <http://www.serendipity-russia.com/history2.pdf>.)

The supervisor and coordinator for this program will be Karen Porter.

Ms. Porter (B.A. George Washington University; J.D., Northeastern University School of Law) has been a lawyer in the United States for over 30 years. She has worked as a corporate counsel, editor of a prestigious legal publication, lecturer in legal writing and oral advocacy, Assistant Dean at Temple University School of Law, and for 20 years was a lawyer with a professional education organization, authoring two textbooks on insurance-related law. She has also served as a judge for a high school mock trial program and for law school moot court proceedings. She recently earned CELTA certification to teach English as a second language from the University of Cambridge (England) program in Moscow and has taught in the Foreign Languages Department at the Murom Institute, a branch of Vladimir State University.

VLADIMIR PROGRAM

The Director of the Vladimir Youth Health and Education Center, Olga Goncherova, was one of the early tutors in the American Home's Intensive Russian program. We have made an ongoing effort to be of assistance to the exceptionally dedicated staff of this very "un-bureaucratic" organization.



They provide a variety of counseling and therapy services to children from to him preschool through the completion of their secondary education. The staff does its best to help "at risk" children and teenagers in particular—and their parents or other care givers—to deal with "life's problems"—and to emerge as healthy adult contributors to society.

Participants in this program will

- Assist with painting and other maintenance work at the Center's facility.
- Interact with the Center's clients, including a group of teenage boys who are the wards of a local army unit.

This will include introducing the children and teenagers to games which will be selected in advance of the trip. (The participants in this program will be encouraged to assist with this process. The emphasis will be on new (to the Russians) engaging and “low cost” activities.)



The supervisor and coordinator for this program will be David Johnson

David teaches first through third year Russian language classes at Vanderbilt University and coordinates the Russian group at Vanderbilt's language immersion residence hall. For the American Home he is responsible for the Intensive Russian Language Program, several special projects, and he plays a major role in developing and disseminating information about AH programs and projects. He taught English as a Second Language in Vladimir at the American Home from 2001 to 2004. After leaving Vladimir, David worked in Moscow for a year and then returned to the United States, earning a Master's Degree in Russian Language, Linguistics and Literature at the University of Arizona. Since 2007, David has been the Group Leader for the U of A's summer Russian program in St. Petersburg.

For a brief history of Vladimir and the surrounding area, <http://www.serendipity-russia.com/history2.pdf>.

For a video walking tour of Vladimir, <http://www.vimeo.com/14884521>.

Also see the City of Vladimir website . www.vladimir-russia.info

(These are all products of the Serendipity-Russia tourism development project.)

TO APPLY FOR EITHER OF THESE PROGRAMS:

Contact Dr. Ron Pope at RonPope42@cs.com

and David Johnson at davidmatthewjohnson@hotmail.com

We will provide you with complete written application instructions

For answers to your questions, arrange for a phone or Skype conversation by e-mail.

For more information on *Serendipity-Russia*, see

www.serendipity-russia.com

Don't miss our two-part introductory video

www.youtube.com/americanhomevladimir

Click on Part 1 (English) and Part 2 (DRAFT)

AND

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The American Home, Vladimir, Russia