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## Skills for Life Program Highlights

The Skills for Life program, sponsored by AFG, celebrated its very successful first phase at the Closing Ceremony on December 22nd. Over 200 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) were trained in a wide variety of professions, from computer skills to beauticians.

The project focuses on retraining and rehabilitation of Internally Displaced Persons. During 2009, around 200 people from the villages of Khurvaleti and Tsminda Tskali participated. They have been trained in computers, English, small and medium business administration, hairdressing, cosmetology and massage. Other courses included ceramics, decorate gardening and enamel cloisonné making (an art form used in making jewelry). There are also study programs for landscaping and nursing.

Over thirty men received training in construction; 15 students took business administration courses; over ten women received an education in cosmetology and beautician courses and over 80 children received English lessons.

Many participants exhibited their work at a gallery on Tbilisi's Shardeni Street.

During the ceremony, children from the Khurvaleti settlement exhibited their enamel artwork, and ceramic art works. Children from the computer and English classes also presented "We Will Come Back," a program about their lives, problems and future.

A puppet show, performed in part by children from Khurvaleti and the Puppet Union of Marionette Theater, lead by Zura Kikodze and Manana Abzianidze, included songs, and folk dance.

The event was attended by program participants, as well as representatives of Gori University, American Friends of Georgia, American Community College for International Development, Association "Biliki", Women's Business Incubator and the Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation. Representatives from

International organizations also attended including Gori city administration, press, TV and other interested guests.

The program will continue until May. The project is primarily financed by a grant from the U.S. Embassy in Georgia. Funds to support vocational training of women were received by the Rapidan Foundation. AFG also received additional funds from the Clarence and Anne Dillon Dunwalke Trust. The program could be expanded if AFG were to receive additional contributions.



*Nino Elizbarashvili, Director of Women's Business Incubator, giving certificates to IDP women participating in her courses of cosmetology, stylist and massage.*



*Zura Tsofnashvili, Dean of Gori University, granting a certificate for completion of an English and computers course to an IDP participant in AFG's Skills for Life program.*



*Marika Mgebrishvili, Director of Biliki, granting certificates in English and computers to IDP children living in Khurvaleti.*



*IDP children from Khurvaleti presenting puppet show during the closing ceremony.*



*Three IDP girls who lost their homes as a result of the 2008 war with Russia proudly presenting their new skills and the puppets they made themselves.*



*Twelve year old Giorgi Javakhishvili, IDP child, selling his first ceramic art work at Gori University exhibition.*



*Exhibition of ceramics and cloisonné made by IDP children*



## A Christmas Surprise for IDP Children

In January, Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy, Kent Logsdon and representatives from the U.S. Marines brought toys and karaoke to children at AFG's kindergarten and nursery at the IDP settlement in the Isani district in Tbilisi.

The children were ecstatic, and had written wishes for Santa (called Grandfather Snow in Georgian), so the American presents were a welcome treat.

The visit was initiated by Ian Bostrom, an officer in the Marines, who had visited the shelter and saw the letters children wrote to Santa Claus and their 'wishes' – stars cut from colored paper that were hung on the windows. He was interested in helping the children and providing them with things that they need.

"It is very important to support IDP children. They had a lot of pain and stress in their life and now to see them so happy is very beautiful", said Nino Agapishvili, the director of the kindergarten.

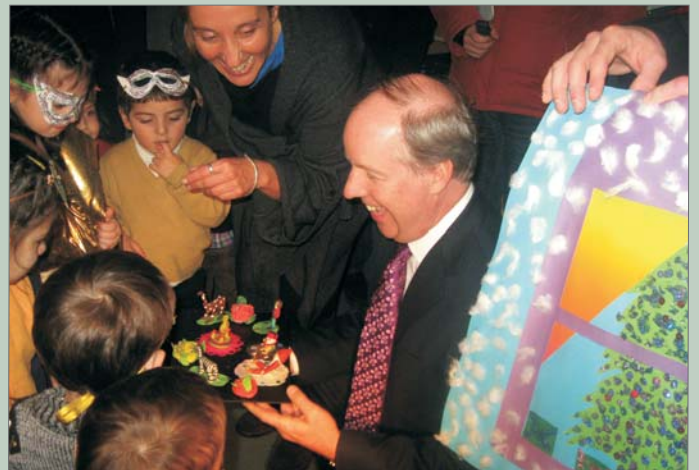
AFG sponsored the construction of a kindergarten and nursery for IDP children living at the settlement following the August 2008 war. The kindergarten is one of the IDPs' favorite places in the settlement.



Kent Logsdon, the Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy, and members of the U.S. Marines, brought toys and Christmas joy to IDP children at the Isani kindergarten in January.



Marine Ian Bostrom making two little IDPs happy



Kent Logsdon and the Marine Corp officers gave presents to the IDP children. Lena Kiladze, head of the Georgian office of the American Friends of Georgia, admiring the presents.



Deputy Chief of Mission Kent Logsdon, celebrating Christmas with IDP children.



Children at the settlement sang songs and performed for their guests. They were very pleased with the attention and the gifts.



## English Translation of Georgian Fairytales Published

AFG sponsored the publication of an English translation of Georgian fairy tales, translated by Archil Khantadze and including illustrations by Sandro Eristavi, a well-known painter as well as a recorded CD. The illustrated book, and its disc, is rare in Georgian literature. The colorful tales include the story, 'How Wine Came to Be', that traces the story of the first barrel of wine made by accident by a farmer. The book touches on the origins of other great Georgian traditions – the supra and the toast – as the farmer celebrates the delicious beverage he created with a dinner and his guests: the nightingale, rooster, wild boar and fox all lift a toast to the drink endowing it with their traits.

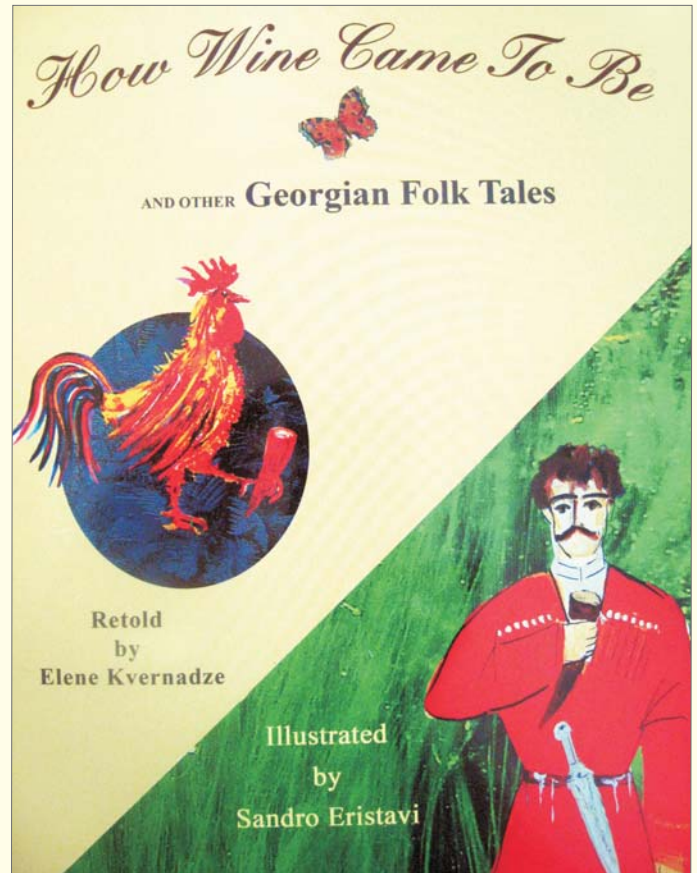
The book was presented during a December fundraising event. There were also cloisonné enamel and ceramics made by the IDP children from Khurvaleti for sale. The proceeds went to help IDPs.



Guests included Ted Jonas, the managing partner of DLA Piper's Tbilisi office, and other prominent members of society.



IDP children also enjoyed the event and guests were enchanted by the children's lovely cloisonné enamel and ceramics.



AFG presented the book "How Wine Came to Be" during a fundraising event in December.



Guests at the AFG fundraising event in December which raised funds for AFG's programs for IDPs.



## Parents' House Finished!

One of AFG's on going projects, a Parents' House for families staying in Tbilisi during their children's lengthy leukemia treatments, is nearing completion. The International Fund for Children Suffering with Leukemia, started by parents of leukemia patients at the Hematology-Oncology Center in the Children's Republican Hospital, asked AFG for help with funds to build the Parent's House.

Construction on the building was begun in early 2008 and is now completed. The house will open for families in May 2010. An estimated seven families can stay at the spacious, modern, three story house. Well equipped kitchens were installed on all three floors thanks to a generous donation by the pharmaceutical company, GlaxoSmithKline which was coordinated by the U.K. office of Project HOPE.

Zura Natroshvili, a GlaxoSmithKline representative in Georgia, and his associates visited the Parent's House construction site to view the completed kitchens.

Project HOPE and the employees of GlaxoSmithKline also donated quality art materials for the children to use during the AFG sponsored arts and craft therapy program at the Hematology-Oncology Center of the Children's Republican Hospital. The art therapy is one of AFG's programs for children suffering with leukemia.

AFG would also like to thank the American Chamber of Commerce in Georgia for its contribution towards this project. Proceeds from AmCham's gala event in 2009 in Tbilisi was given to AFG to support the completion of the Parents' House.



*The house was started by the International Fund for Children Suffering with Leukemia, and was completed with financial support from AFG, GlaxoSmithKline, AmCham Georgia and other sponsors.*



One of the new bedrooms at the recently completed Parents' House in Tbilisi for the children and parents at the Hematology-Oncology Center at the Children's Republican Hospital.



Zura Natroshvili of GlaxoSmithKline and his assistant Eka Balashvili standing in one of the three kitchens in the parents' house, funded by GlaxoSmithKline and the U.K. office of Project HOPE.



Zura Natroshvili and his assistant with child with leukemia enjoying art supplies donated by GlaxoSmithKline in the Hematology-Oncology Center.



Zura Natroshvili, a GlaxoSmithKline representative in Georgia, visits with children receiving treatment at the center. GlaxoSmithKline provided financial assistance to the Parents' House project, and donated art supplies to the art therapy program.



Lena Kiladze visits with the children during the center's art and therapy program.