



Ecologia Trust

**66 The Park
Forres
Moray
Scotland IV36 3TZ**

**tel/fax:
+44 (0)1309 690995**

**e-mail:
ecoliza@rmplc.co.uk**

Trustees:

Rose Baring
Andrew Shorrock
Michael Schnadt
Sandy Barr
Rhiannon Hanfman

Director:

Liza Hollingshead, BA

Secretary:

Joan Jackson

Funding:

**D Paterson
MA(Cantab) MPhil FRSH
+44 (0)1309 675622
synergy@gn.apc.org**

Accountant:

James Findlay

Lawyers:

R & R Urquhart

**Scottish Charity
SC023976**

December, 1999

To our dear Friends of Kitezh,

We all at Kitezh and at Ecologia wish you a very merry, joyful, children-filled Festive Season, the last of the 1900's! If we join each other all round the world we can celebrate two Christmases and two New Years! Three, if we include the Chinese New Year as well. Although the Western world celebrates Christmas and New Year on 25th and 31st December, the Russian Orthodox world celebrates the Old New Year on 6th January and Christmas on 12th January. So take your pick, or celebrate them all, as we do in Russia!



Irina and her daughter Alyonka watching a performance at Kitezh

The Christmas and New Year season is great fun at Kitezh. Lots of snowballs, sledding, skating and skiing. It has become the mid-winter tradition that the children prepare a special theatrical presentation for the Community. Last year it was Jesus Christ Superstar (sung in English all the way through!) and this year it is whispered that Mowgli will grace the Kitezh festivities. Marina does wonderful work with the children, and manages to draw out an enthusiasm and talent for music and dance from all of them, even the youngest, that is quite amazing.

Kitezh will be happy to have Madge Bray with them this Christmas. Madge has become part of the family, with her warmth, her love and experience with children that has added so much to the community's understanding of what their children have endured before they came to Kitezh. Madge has also been instrumental in bringing together a great group of people to take part in the Social Work Training at Kitezh, funded by Charity Know How. Teresa O'Neill from Leicester University School of Social Work will be in Kitezh before Christmas, to get to know everyone and to prepare for her research into the way people work with children there, that hopefully will provide the groundwork for a book or a manual on how to create other models of Kitezh all over Russia, and the world.

David Dean, our Educator 'par excellence', was in Kitezh for the month of October, and fitted in "as if he was always a community member" according to Dmitry Morozov. He surprised them all by not only making an input into the school but also all aspects of life in Kitezh - he even became involved in design discussions for the new Education Centre with the 'Ecodom' architect from Novosibirsk! His extensive report is available to any of you who are interested to read it.

Barbara Smedley, the other member of the Social Work Training Team, will be in Kitezh in February and March, to continue her training for the adults in Play Therapy for Children which helps them to work with the children to heal the memories of the past and move forward into a bright future. I (Liza) will be there with Barbara, to learn as much as I can from her, and to continue to support this work with the others in Kitezh when she leaves. Barbara and her husband Dave have 'adopted' Kitezh into their hearts and lives, and are a strong element in the support network that surrounds Kitezh in many parts of the world.

At the end of March, I with Rosie Turnbull from the Findhorn Community, will lead a week-long group version of the "Transformation Game" where everyone can participate. The Game helps to build community, iron out trouble spots and support each one to continue in the inspiring work they have started.

1999 has been a year of great growth and forward movement in Kitezh, and for Ecologia as well. Ecologia Trust is now almost exclusively concentrated on our work of supporting Kitezh, fundraising for building (THANK YOU to all who have sent generous donations this year!), planning and applying for funding for essential trainings at Kitezh, making arrangements for the increasing numbers of foreign Volunteers working at Kitezh, and coordinating our wonderful, heart-warming, supportive and loving "Adopt-a-Godchild" scheme.

"Godparents" are very popular amongst the children! Each time I arrive in Kitezh, they besiege me with requests for letters, photographs and messages from their Godparents abroad. The money Godparents send goes into a fund for all the children's needs: for presents, clothes, winter boots and this year, for new disco equipment and a video player. But the children really like me to bring letters and small gifts, so please, do send me something very small and light to take with me to your God Children! I am leaving Scotland in mid-January for Kitezh. Your letters and gifts have arrived by mail, however, so it does work, but don't send money by mail. I carry it with me each time I go. Special thanks to Rhiannon Hanfman for volunteering her time to keep in touch with Godparents and coordinate "Adopt-a-Godchild".

Volunteering at Kitezh is catching on too! At least eight volunteers have lived in Kitezh from one to three months, at various times this year. Each one has received a special gift from their experience and each one has said they will never be the same again! (Is this a good thing, I wonder?!) Chris Feutrier, a 21 year old American who spent three months there recently, wrote: "At Kitezh I learned not to think! That 'All Life is Yoga'. I feel I have scrubbed clean my essential goodness within, and found great happiness in quietude." His friend Nate Goff commented: "Since coming to Kitezh I have learned what really matters in life. I realised that life isn't about the many material goods in America but about love. Seeing all the love in Kitezh can make anyone smile all day long. Kitezh is a very special place and will always have a place in my heart." A taste of the effect Kitezh has had upon two young men.

After the success of Concordia University's student visit in May this year, which we expect will be repeated next year, we also hope that other Universities will take up this excellent idea to offer their students the opportunity to study and serve at Kitezh as part of their education.

When Marina and I talked about what to tell you all at the end of this busy year, we realised that there is so much, it is difficult to encapsulate it all. For example:

- **Two babies** were welcomed into Kitezh Families this year: a son, Svyatoslav for Dmitry and Irina Morozov, and a daughter, Anastasia for Sergey and Julya Khlopinov
- **Five Kitezh teenagers** are now in higher education in Kaluga, Kirov and Moscow, and two others preparing to enter University next year
- **The psychological work** introduced by Madge, Barbara and resident psychologist Ivan is bearing rich fruits for adults and children as they all grow together
- **The Communal Dining Hall** will be completed in time for the New Year 2000 Celebrations! At last! A beautiful space, kitchen and dining area downstairs, and upstairs a big space for dancing and celebrating
- **THREE new houses** are built and ready to live in - one for Sergey, Julya and baby Anastasia, which includes a computer room and maths and physics classroom, so Sergey is never far from home
- **Running water and sewerage pipes to ALL the houses!** Thanks to an ecological grant from the Institute for Sustainable Communities, Vermont, USA the physical face of Kitezh is transformed! Gone are the days of the warnings about outside toilets! And feeling guilty about asking the lads to carry heavy barrels of water to the house. This grant also provided the means to pave the paths through the forest to the farm, and to clean up the Park, as well as a Geological survey of the land to test for the best agricultural areas
- **A new mini-bus** was bought, essential for transporting loads of children to the nearby towns and to Moscow
- The big development at Kitezh this year was the beginning of '**Kitezh-Agro**' the **commercial Potato Farm** project started by Andrey Stepanov, a businessman from Moscow, who has captured the vision of a thriving eco-village with Kitezh at its centre. As he said, "A healthy economy can only flourish within a stable society. Business people

need to do something useful with the money they make. If we want to keep our money in Russia, we have to find those initiatives with a vision and a future to invest in, or we have to send our money to the west." Kitezh has stability, a vision and a future, so Andrey is putting everything he has into developing the agricultural land around Kitezh. First it will be 250 hectares of potatoes, next a dairy farm, and after that - who knows? In partnership with Kitezh, the sky is the limit! This project will have many far-reaching benefits. It will provide jobs for the Kitezh youngsters. In two or three years' time the income will give Kitezh a self-sufficient economic base that is not dependent on the State nor on foreign support. The economy of the local area, with desperate unemployment, social despair and sadly de-populated villages, will also benefit from the energy and activity that is flooding in.

This is an excellent opportunity for Investment in Kitezh-Agro. If investing in the long term future of Kitezh appeals to you, please get in touch with me and we will take it from there. The door is open.

And the children? How are they doing? Very well indeed. Kitezh decided not to take any new children this year, to give the last group time to integrate, a very wise move. Children whose behaviour last September ranged from wildly uncontrollable to withdrawn and inaccessible, are now healthy and open. All the wise and caring input has paid off. These children are growing into themselves, but each one requires special attention, thought and care.

To illustrate, there is one lad, Kolya, for whom I have always had a soft spot. Kolya and his younger brother Serge lived on the streets for 3 years before they were brought to Kitezh, in desperation, by the police. At that time they were 11 and 9 and were among the first children to be taken in by a Kitezh family. They had run away from at least 6 orphanages, and lived by stealing food, sleeping in unused houses, constantly running from the police. For 3 months the brothers sat in silence, 'like two birds on a fence', watching. Then Kolya agreed that they would stay. It was a pragmatic choice. Every day for the next six months Kolya's foster mother rubbed his legs with oil, until the encrusted, ingrained dirt finally came off! In spite of being surrounded by loving people, Kolya remained closed and suspicious of everyone. When we first met, my task was to teach him English. He resisted even trying to learn, and he asked me honestly, what was the point, if he was never going to need to speak English? Why would he?

He got me! I promised him that very soon I would bring lots of English children to Kitezh so he would HAVE to talk to them. A year later I showed up at Kitezh with 18 teenagers from Findhorn. Specially for Kolya. They asked the Kitezh teenagers if they would like to go to Scotland. Kolya eyed me with THAT look, and lo and behold, the following year he and the others were preparing to spend 2 weeks in Scotland! But Kolya refused to be bought by the promise of a trip abroad and continued to be his old uncooperative self. But he finally came to Scotland, and I was thrilled. He was bound to change! But, there he disgraced himself and Kitezh by stealing a small item from his host family. The other Kitezh children all gave him a piece of their minds. He was stony silent. We all wondered whether Kitezh or anything we did for him could make an impact, or that perhaps there were some children whose life experience had already established attitudes within them that could never be shifted.

Now Kolya is a handsome 17 year old. When I met last met him, he gave me a big broad grin. "What's happened?" I asked in total surprise. "Do you like living in Kirov so much?" (where he is studying at college) "No," Kolya said with a shy smile, "Kitezh is better." After a recent stealing episode involving some of the younger children, Kolya's comment to them, before the whole community, was that he was in the same situation once, and decided, as a result, that it wasn't worth it. He worked at Kitezh as an adult all summer this year, and now ---- he is an elected member of Kitezh Council!

A good story, don't you agree?

What are our plans for the future? Kitezh needs to grow, and it needs to grow fast. Or faster. There is a great need for places like Kitezh to replace the orphanages in Russia, and after seven years, the foundations are laid and Kitezh is ready to move. Of course, the challenges are not over. Next year Kitezh will take in 10 new children. Children need new families, who require more houses, more training, more teachers, more school equipment, books, computers. The list is endless. But exciting. Already we are thinking about when and where to start the next Kitezh!

Plans for 2000:

- to build the Education Centre - with ecological design features, Play Therapy Room, Computer Room, Science Laboratory to start with. We already have funding to purchase the building materials this winter, ready to start building in the Spring. However, money to furnish and equip it still needs to be found!
- to develop the School and the education methods of Kitezh, both teacher training and new equipment
- to expand the Farm facilities - extend the Barn, build a Milking Parlour and Cheese Room; add to the herd of cows that provides Kitezh with all its dairy products, buy a second tractor
- to build 4 new Ecodom houses
- to complete the Church and a house for the Priest and his family
- to prepare the families to take on new children in September and to introduce new families into Kitezh

- to continue with the Social Work Training for adults and Play Therapy with the children
- to prepare the materials for a book or a "Manual" on how to set up similar Kitezh-type children's communities elsewhere in Russia (or the world)
- to develop a community management style and structure that will keep the vision clear and yet involve the creativity of all who live there

Dreams for the future:

- a Windmill to provide Kitezh with its own electricity
- Biological Waste Water Treatment for the eco-village
- increase the productivity of the vegetable gardens with the help of a skilled organic gardener or permaculturist
- Expand the School for 200+ children

*** **We have just heard that the Kitezh electricity supply has been restricted** as a local 'energy saving programme' - from 9am to 12noon, and from 6pm to 9pm daily they will have no electricity! All cooking and lighting is electric. Wood stoves heat the houses, thank goodness. A diesel Generator is urgently needed now to supply electricity to at least the Kitchen and the School. The cost is in the region of £2,000. Can anyone help with this?

Here at Ecologia Trust, we continue to work on Fundraising for Kitezh, preparing new grant applications (the next is to the National Lottery) developing contacts for Kitezh in Britain, Europe and North America, and acting as a go-between for those who wish to visit or otherwise take part in the growth of Kitezh. We do appreciate the incredible support from all of you this past year, in particular. Please continue! To give you an idea of what people around the world have contributed to our fundraising efforts, to follow is an outline of the year's sources of income to Kitezh through all of our joint efforts

Kitezh Videos	£181
Donations to Kitezh (used mostly for building)	£18,682
Volunteers and Students	£4,260
Kitezh Church	£227
Kitezh Children from God Parents	£2,312
Social Work Training 1999/2000 (Charity Know How Grant)	£14,561
Travel Fund	£317
Total to Kitezh	£40,900

Donations to support Ecologia Trust £5,028

Although we run a very tight ship up here in the far North, it is a stretch to keep everything going with a small (shall I admit it, TINY!) staff and no easy way to cover 'core costs'. I do appreciate Joan Jackson and David Paterson for long hours and low pay! And Rhiannon, Boni Craig and many other volunteers for long hours and no pay! I would love to replace our antiquated office caravan and expand our staff to include a full time projects manager, and of course I personally would love to spend more time working at Kitezh too. Maybe next Millenium!

To support our efforts here, we do provide an **Independent Travel Service to Russia**: Invitations, Visas, Air Tickets, and private Accommodation in our flat in St Petersburg, with friends in Moscow and other places. We even have contacts in the Caucasus Mountains, where you can hike or even hunt in the most incredible scenery imaginable! So if you know people who are thinking about a holiday in Russia, please do direct them to us. It's another way to support our work. Ecologia Trust is important to Kitezh to provide the connection with the West that it needs so much.

Being part of Kitezh is the most rewarding, inspiring, wonderful occupation anyone could ever imagine! And being in touch with all of you makes it all the more so. We do appreciate the phone calls, letters, gifts, offers of help that constantly flow through our small caravan. Please keep them and your donations, however small, flowing! A little does go a very long way at Kitezh. And please do spread the word about Kitezh amongst your friends too.

In the first year of the New Millennium I wish for us all joy, prosperity and fulfilment, with the sound of children's happy laughter ringing in our ears!

With love to you all,
Liza Hollingshead and all at Ecologia and at Kitezh

PS Our new glossy brochure was produced thanks to Andrey Stepanov and Kitezh-Agro. Please use it fruitfully!