

**UK based charity run by volunteers working for the benefit of children based in state care institutes in Bulgaria**

We started work informally and spontaneously in 2007 after the broadcasting of the film Bulgaria's Abandoned Children on BBC. Deeply disturbed by the suffering of the children growing up in state institutions, a small group of both Bulgarians and non-Bulgarians living in Bulgaria, UK and Bahrain decided to join forces to help improve the lives of these unfortunate kids.

**BELOW YOU CAN READ ABOUT OUR WORK THE PROGRAMS WE ARE RUNNING:**

**OUR BABA PROGRAM AT THE STATE INSTITUTE DRUGARCHE STARTED IN JULY 2010**



**YouHelp BG resurrected the Baba Program at the state institute Drugarche (Bulgarian for Little Friend) in Varna.** The state institute Drugarche is a traditional orphanage where 1 staff member is responsible for a large number of children (up to 20 children). The staff can barely meet the physical needs of the children and does not have any time for emotional love and mental stimulation so needed by the children. The results from the previous run of the program show that the development of some of these extremely vulnerable and neglected children (ages 3 to 6) was so stunted they could not speak more than two or three words before the

beginning of the program. The children could not speak, not because of any mental or physical disability, but simply because no human being ever spoke to them.

**This is where the Baba Program steps in.** Our Babas are surrogate Grannies of 8 orphaned and abandoned boys and girls for 4 hours a day, five days a week. Each Baba is paired with 2 children and spends individual time with them on daily basis. The program is not only extremely stimulating for the mental growth and development of the children but also brings a lot of joy into their isolated lives between the four institutional walls.

The children have the possibility to explore the world beyond the walls of the institute with visits to public places, the local aquarium, the zoo, the beach etc. There are also many activities conducted indoors aimed at teaching the children how to count to ten, to colour books, to learn to speak (those who could barely speak), to learn children's poems and songs by heart, etc.

**All our projects are run entirely by volunteers and are dependent on donations. We rely on your support in order to carry on with our initiatives and to be able to reach more of those needy children.**

**Make a regular donation to support our programs:**

Donate £5 a month by setting up a Standing Order and help support our programs.

To set up a Standing Order please contact your bank with the following details:

Account Name: YouHelp BG, Account No: 81820427, Sort Code: 400216

**For more information and other ways to donate please visit our website ([www.youhelp.bg](http://www.youhelp.bg)) or get in contact.**

**Even the smallest donation can make a big difference.**

**Thank you for your support!**

**A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM AT THE TRANSITIONAL PROTECTED HOME FOR ADOLESCENTS WITH CEREBRAL PALSY OR OTHER MENTAL DISABILITIES IN VARNA.**

**The Transitional Protected Home for Adolescents with Cerebral Palsy or Learning Disability and Delay in Varna** is run by professional staff and is financed by the Municipality of Varna. All 6 adolescents placed in the home are diagnosed with “severe or moderate mental retardation” and have been raised in isolated state-run institutes.

We run a volunteer program with 12 volunteers, mostly retired teachers, who help the six disabled adolescents at the Transitional Home to adapt to the world beyond institutional walls. Most of the inhabitants of the Transitional Home cannot speak not as a result of their medical condition but simply because nobody ever spoke to them. Our volunteers talk and listen to those who can speak.

Everyone in the Transitional Home is extremely enthusiastic about any form of music ranging from the Opera to Heavy Metal Concerts. Our volunteers organize regular visits to social and cultural events including films, concerts, crafts fairs, dance performances and the theater.

Our volunteers not only help the previously institutionalized adolescents to discover the outside world but also encourage the community to discover the world of institutionalized people. The volunteers invite the adolescents to visit their homes and introduce them to families and friends. The adolescents who are familiar only with bare institutional rooms are curious like toddlers peeking inside closets, drawers and cupboards and discovering “all the stuff” in a real home. Our volunteers make sure that everyone in the Protected Transitional Home has fun on holidays and birthdays. We sponsor parties with homemade cakes, pastries and other food prepared by the volunteers. Our volunteers also teach the inhabitants of the Transitional Protected Home to cook, to wash up dishes, to do laundry and other house chores. This is part of our strategy to help the adolescents to acquire various practical skills which can make them more independent adults despite their disabilities.

All our activities at the Transitional Protected Home are coordinated with the Department of Social Services and Welfare in the Municipality of Varna.



**FUNDRAISING EVENTS THIS YEAR:**

**2010 LUXURY WALL CALENDAR CAMPAIGN:**

*We produced a 2010 calendar featuring beautiful Bulgarian landscapes to raise funds in support of TBACT's Baba Program*

**BULGARIAN FILM FESTIVAL:**

*We were present with a promotional and fund-raising stand at the Bulgarian Film Festival at the Riverside Studios - giving away free copies of our 2010 calendar. The event was a great success for both raising awareness and money.*

**CHILDREN'S FUNDRAISING PARTIES:**

*We had two very successful children parties this year and plan to continue doing those on a regular basis in different parts of London.*

**SPONSORED BLIND DAY:**

*Laure Miles - an incredible 12 year old girl from Portsmouth - spend a whole day blind to raise some monies for the children in Bulgaria. Laure came to our fundraising event in May and officially presented us with the cheque.*

**WEDDING DONATIONS:**

*Our volunteers Diana & Nik asked their guests to make a donation to us as a special wedding gift. Laura Miles' parents also donated some money by asking their friends to make a donation to us as a gift for their wedding anniversary.*

## ONGOING ACTIVITIES ON THE GROUND:

### BIRTHDAY, SUMMER PARTIES & CHRISTMAS PARTIES

We organise regular celebrations to bring happiness into the kids lives. This year we also got the local cookery high school (TOH) involved and the students prepared special cakes and other goodies for the kids. We are continuing this relationship and plan to do this on a regular basis.

To mark the start of the Baba Program in 'Drugarche' we organised a summer party for the kids - sponsored by two of our London activists. There was a magician, lots of balloons, cakes and fun. That way all of the kids managed to have fun and not feel isolated as they are without a 'Baba'.



### SPORTS ACTIVITIES

We have been in touch with the local swimming leisure centre and will be sending some of the kids (the older ones) to weekly swimming lessons. The Baba's were keen to help with this and will be taking them and bringing them back.



### POEM WRITTEN BY LAURA MILES:

*an extraordinary 12 year old girl with a big heart, who at this young age has devoted her life to helping those less fortunate disabled orphans in Bulgaria*

#### BULGARIAN ORPHAN POEM:

An isolated world of pain  
A world of misery with no love to gain  
Never been to touch a flower petal  
Or to be stung by a stinging nettle  
It is me a Bulgarian orphan longing for your help & care  
I have no possessions but I would love a teddy bear  
As I weep silently at night as a speck of dust  
My non existence growing so die I must  
As my spirit transparently soars  
I sure wish I was forever yours.



*Laura at one of our previous events handing over a cheque to YouHelpBG*

## **FUTURE PROJECTS:**

### **THE LITTLE HOUSE IN VLADISLAVOVO: PROVIDING EXTRA PHYSIOTHERAPY WITH THE HELP OF SPECIALISTS TRAINED AT KARIN DOM**

In 2007, the BBC aired Kate Blewett's film Bulgaria's Abandoned Children which showed the shocking suffering and severe neglect of dozens of mentally and physically disabled children in a state-run institute in a small Bulgarian village, Mogilino. The film produced an instantaneous reaction of outrage and concern among the public in Bulgaria, the UK and other parts of the world where the film was broadcasted. The notorious Mogilino institute has now been closed and seven of the children from Mogilino have a new modern home, the Little House in Vladislavovo in Varna which opened in May 2010. The Mogilino children at the Little House are improving slowly and we would like to improve their lives a little further by sponsoring much needed physiotherapy.

The national health care system in Bulgaria provides only for 15 days of physiotherapy per child annually which is highly insufficient for these severely disabled Mogilino children who need regular physiotherapy sessions on daily basis. The physiotherapy which the children receive under the national health care system is not only insufficient in hours but also of inadequate quality to meet the special needs of the children.

In order to address the problem with the quantity and quality of the physiotherapy received by the children we are planning to hire a well-trained specialist with years of previous experience as a physiotherapist at Karin Dom and a prestigious private practice. This specialist will work with the seven Mogilino children at the Little House on daily basis for four hours, five days a week. This means that each child will receive three 45 minute sessions of high-quality physiotherapy three times a week. The estimated cost for this project includes the salary of the physiotherapist which is about 400 Bulgarian Leva per month for 4 hours each morning between 8am until 12pm. The expected annual amount for this project is £2,200.



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### **YOUHELP BG IS ESTABLISHING A SCHOLARSHIP TO SPONSOR A MEMBER OF KARIN DOM INTERESTED IN PROFESSIONAL TRAINING ABROAD DURING THE YEAR.**

Since we are great believers in human potential, we have decided to sponsor specialist professional training aimed at reaching out to more needy children. The recipient of the scholarship will also conduct a short training to share his knowledge with the staff at the Little House in Vladislavovo that we sponsor.

#### **OFFICIAL SUPPORTERS:**

**Ivan Stancioff**, Bulgarian Ambassador at Large and Foreign Affairs Advisor to the President of Bulgaria

**Lyubomir Kyuchukov**, Bulgarian Ambassador to the UK

**Dr Zdravko Markov**, Director of Social Services & Welfare Department of the Municipality of Varna

#### **OTHER SUPPORTERS:**

**The Bulgarian City Club in London**

**We would like to thank everybody who donated to us in the past one year,  
without you none of the above would have been possible.**

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