

the HIGHLANDS

serving children with learning differences

highlights



Alumni News



Students who attend The Highlands School are with us a very short time compared to those who attend traditional schools. When they leave us, they go on to undertake new adventures. One of our former students, **Alex Griffith**,

has moved on and is taking on a project that most adults would not attempt.

Alex is now 14 years old and a student at North Harford High School. He was born in the city of Krasnoyarsk in the Siberian region of the Russian Federation and came to the United States when he was adopted at 11 months of age. He is a Life Scout in the Boy Scouts of America and is working toward earning scouting's highest honor, the Eagle Scout Badge.

The Eagle Project requires that it be helpful to any religious institution, school or community. Alex decided to provide a service to his birth home in Krasnoyarsk, Russia.

Alex was adopted two years after the fall of the Soviet Union and the city where he lived fell on hard times. For his Eagle Scout project he wants to rebuild a playground at Hospital #20 where he spent the first year of his life. Outside the hospital

one small rusty swing and a sand pit filled with mud was the only playground available to the children.

Alex plans to rectify this unsafe playground for the Childrens Hospital by designing and building a playground for the patients, their families and neighborhood children. He has worked with Playworld Systems to help design the play yard for children ages 5-12. At the entrance to the playground, two 8' totem poles will greet children as they enter. The totems, a bald eagle and bear will represent the two countries that hold a special place in Alex's heart. As Alex said to us in his correspondence, "One person can make a difference. This project will forever link hundreds of people involved, half a world apart in a good and positive way."

When the project is complete, over 3000 volunteer hours and \$60,000 will have been raised. Alex sent over 700 e-mails in his research and development of the project. He will be traveling to install the playground with friends, fellow scouts and members of the Rotary Organization in late July through mid August 2009.

Current Highlands students heard about his goal and wanted to help. The proceeds from their annual aluminum can collection and their "Pennies for the Playground" collection will be contributed to the cause helping Alex to reach his goal.

A Huge Highlands Hurrah to you, Alex. We're really proud of you!

"Be the change you want to see in the world." Mahatma Gandhi