

MVERN: Miami Valley Episcopal Russian Network

Annual Report for 2016

Achievements

MVERN (Miami Valley Episcopal Russian Network) celebrated 20 years of mission and friendship on Sunday, June 26, when 158 people enjoyed an evening of Russian food and culture as well as reconnecting with friends and fellow-travelers at St. George's.

Donations from the Miami Valley Episcopal Russian Network (MVERN) this year supported a summer day camp at the church community center for the children of Sablino. These children, mostly of working parents, enjoyed recreation, drama, religious classes, musical instruction, and a balanced lunch—supervised by caring adults in a safe environment.

This past fall, Fr. Nikolai used donations to clear a newly acquired and overgrown lot behind the Community Center to use as a playground.

Other improvements to the community center in 2016 included adding insulation, resulting in significantly lowered heating costs during the winter. The center is increasing used as temporary housing in a declining economy. The small open pond next to the Community Center was filled in to provide a safe play space for the many children now using the center.

Funds were sent in December 2015 from a grant to add a larger oven to use in producing meat pies for sale to the community. Profits from sales of the pies have been used to fund programs at the center during 2016.

Although MVERN is no longer organizing group trips to Sablino, members of St. Georges made two separate private visits to the village, taking donated Christmas toys, medications for Fr. Nikolai, and financial donations with them. During these visits, former youth exchange group members—some orphans—are now doing well and still involved with activities at the Sablino Center. The children receiving those gifts can be seen at the recording of their Christmas play at https://vk.com/video3354208_456239071 (Russian version of Facebook). The children's play was the Monday after their Christmas on Saturday, January 7. Another private visit was made by a member of St. Pauls Episcopal Church and former youth exchange group member. This college student hopes to use her growing knowledge of Russian in a journalism career.

Plans

Continue sending donations from MVERN to support ongoing programs at St. Nickolas Church. Facilitate individuals who want to travel to the area and to visit Fr. Nikolai and St. Nickolas Church.

After 20 years MVERN's original mission has been achieved. It will maintain its relationship with St. Nicholas and continue to be a conduit for funds for Fr. Nikolai's extensive ministries. For further information and for the video presentation of MVERN history, check out the MVERN website - www.mvern.org. Donations can be made via St Georges or through PayPal at the web site.

Challenges

A smaller board continues active support.