

Dear Friends,

May 2020

On line (link at the bottom) is a special edition of our newsletter that spotlights the opportunity that Covid-19 has provided: a space in the political rhetoric where we all – worldwide – can see each other as just people trying to survive. We are all having our courage, patience and creativity tested. I pray that we take advantage of this time to feel our common humanity – to recognize each other's respect for life, concern for others, desire to help.



Big Change is an organization that we have worked with since at least 2003. I have visited Big Change many times over these 17 years, and I have seen how its staff changes the lives of those who have aged out of the orphanages – not just with thoughtful tutoring so they can develop life skills, but also by providing the sense of family and security – continuing even through these times of Covid-19 – continuing for years after their official programmatic connection is ended.

As I sat in their office about 5 years ago, chatting with the director about the current challenges they were addressing, a young man walked in carrying a thick calculus book under his arm. He and the director exchanged warm smiles, a few sentences of friendly conversation and then he was directed to the tutor he had asked to see. After he left the room, the director confided, “He says he needs help with his math. He doesn’t. He knows more about math than any of us here. He comes to tell us how well he is doing in school. We are his only family; he has no one else.”

In this issue is a link to a moving article about two nurses in Russia. They tell their poignant stories of personal hardships, and of how the redeeming hand of Big Change – still partially funded by Friends House Moscow – helped them to achieve the ultimate joy of independence and service.

I also encourage you to watch the “music video” referred to in the newsletter. It was made by our staff person Sergei Grushko. It is a delightful vision of how one family of 4 deals with the various aspects of Covid-19 with care and humor. It is also a touchingly personal glimpse of the creative and joyful side of Sergei.

We appreciate your support,
Julie Harlow

<https://friendshousemoscow.org/coronavirus-special/>