



Institute for Human Services Forges Partnership with Child Welfare Leaders in Russia

This year marked the start of face-to-face meetings between child welfare leaders in St. Petersburg, Russia and Columbus, Ohio. It began January 11 as a series of gatherings and study tours in Columbus, and will culminate in spring in St. Petersburg.

The Russian representative is *Partnership for Every Child (P4EC)*, a non-governmental organization (NGO) working to strengthen Russia's growing foster care system by developing novel program models, providing staff and foster parent training, expanding networks and resources, and shaping public perception about foster care. The U.S. representative is the *Institute for Human Services (IHS)*, which has managed Ohio's child welfare training system and served 88 county child protection agencies since the program was founded in 1985. IHS is also an NGO recognized as a leading child welfare expert and provider of resources and training technologies throughout North America, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia.

The immediate goal of the Russian-American partnership is to create an association of foster caregivers in St. Petersburg and neighboring regions that will support its members and be a catalyst for social change. At the same time the **P4EC** members, led by Director Lyudmila Sorokina and Program Director Irina Zinchenko, are looking at foster care models that work in Ohio, particularly for children with developmental disabilities and other special needs.

The work is being funded by a State Department grant for peer-to-peer projects between Russian and American NGOs. Under Program Director Dr. Judith S. Rycus, IHS will support P4EC's development by sharing resources developed over the past thirty years. P4EC also offers IHS information on models for both respite care and longer term foster care that work in Russia.

This is the fifth Russian-American child welfare collaboration that IHS has organized in the last five years.

Local organizations involved in the study tours included the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services, Licking County Job & Family Services, Caring for Kids, the Central Ohio Regional Training Center of the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program, The Village Network, the Ohio Primary Parent Advisory Council, the Public Children Services Association of Ohio, and young adults who had previously been in foster care.

At the Russian guests' sendoff dinner last month, Ms. Tatiana Krayneva, P4EC's PR director, toasted to the success of the alliance, saying "Last year we saw tension between our two countries. But in our alliance there is no such tension, because the focus is on our common humanity and the goals we share for children and families."

Partners will spend the next few months exchanging ideas and resources via Skype and other distance-communication technologies. In spring of 2015, IHS representatives will visit P4EC and

affiliates in St. Petersburg for a close-up view and further dialogue. The year-long initiative runs from July, 2014 through June, 2015.

To learn more about **IHS** and its international partners, go to <http://www.ihs-trainet.com/international.htm>. For more information on *Partnership for Every Child*, visit <http://www.p4ec.ru> (*Click on the British flag icon at top right of the screen to translate the page from Russian to English*).