



Secret Garden International

Helping young minds blossom and grow...

MISSION:

Helping those with special needs blossom and grow through -

Enhancing academic growth

Encouraging spiritual awareness

Expanding developmental potential

FOUNDING DIRECTOR:

C. Shushawn Touryan

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*"...to bestow on them
a crown of beauty
instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness
instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise
instead of a spirit of
despair."*

Isaiah 61:3

Training Nationals to Work With Children with Disabilities in Armenia

Through the sponsorship of Secret Garden International, I spent four days this summer training Armenian teachers, social workers and psychologists who work with children who have Cerebral Palsy, Autism, Developmental Delays and other neurological and muscular disorders in the capital city of Yerevan. As a Pediatric Occupational Therapist, I work with a variety of children with special needs to increase their functional skills and abilities from the ages of infancy through adolescence. While Occupational Therapy services are common in the United States, such services are virtually non-existent in Armenia. Most mothers are unable to care for a child with special needs, so these children are often placed in an orphanage where they cannot be seen or receive services.



The trainings took place at Pyunic, which is one of the non-governmental organizations in Armenia that work with children and adults with disabilities. Pyunic

encourages families to raise their children with special needs at home and they offer medical assistance, therapy and a parent support group for a nominal fee. The therapy is often supplied by psychologists, social workers and teachers, but their knowledge and training in dealing with these disabilities is very limited.

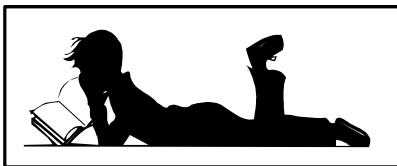
We had 16 participants who attended the four days of training. While most were from Pyunic, three were from World Vision and one was from Mission Armenia. We spent the first two days laying a foundation for understanding different types of Cerebral Palsy and neuromuscular disorders, and how to assess and treat these children. We also covered sensory processing disorders, as are common with Autism, and how to assess and treat these types of problems. The third day was spent doing hands on training, where they practiced techniques and demonstrated them back to me, viewing treatments of children with Autism and introducing a picture communication system for children who are nonverbal. I also met with a parent support group on the third day and answered their questions regarding therapy. My last day was spent treating several children with disabilities and giving home programs to the parents in front of all the participants. The training concluded with certificates for each participant, a champagne celebration and an invitation to come back next year!

Lee Ann Williams, OTR/L

Reading is the Key

To be able to function adequately in school and society a person MUST learn to read. Reading for those with disabilities can be an extremely frustrating experience and can kill someone's spirit. School becomes nothing but a constant frustration which gets harder and harder to handle the older they get. Many students with disabilities end up dropping out of high school because of this. It is not that they can't learn; it is that they need individualized support and intensive training using a variety of teaching strategies. Many of these kids are visual-spacial learners, and the typical way of teaching does not meet their needs.

Secret Garden has identified an exceptional reading program in the Denver area that offers this intensive reading instruction. Everything they do is based on years of research and it is used in many of the districts around the Denver area. Shushawn has been trained in this reading technique as well as several others. She believes that this program offers the most "bang for the buck" so to speak. She is working closely with Results Learning, a tutoring service that provides intensive reading training and is sponsoring those kids who truly need it but can not afford the cost for individualized tutoring.



Results Learning, LLC

One-on-One In-Home Tutoring
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Cyle A. Feingold 6001 S. Willow Drive, Suite 200
President Greenwood Village, CO 80111
Direct: 303-378-8811
cfeingold@results-learning.com
www.results-learning.com

Update on Christina



Hasmig, Christina & Shushawn, 2004

As some of you may remember from the last newsletter, Christina is a young woman I met while in Yerevan, Armenia in 2004. Christina had recently become a Christian and had the desire to become a missionary. This seemed impossible due to the fact that Christina was blind and people with disabilities in many countries are shut-ins their whole life. There are no accommodations provided for them in any way and it is nearly impossible for them to get around doing even the most basic of tasks.

God used Hasmik, a mentor for Christina, to help her pursue her dream. Hasmik found a YWAM (Youth With A Mission) training school in the Ukraine and they accepted Christina's application. SGI helped to fund her six month DTS which included field work in Kyrgyzstan.

"I found a close and living relationship with my Father, with God. Before I was without purpose, but now I am with the purpose of serving God. I am doing my best to understand God's will and to be obedient before Him. I realized that I should always look at God's hands. Also, my spirit desires to go deeper in my prayer life. I know that this is His gift as well." Christina, 2005



Christina, Henriette and Hasmig in 2005

The Dynamic Duo

Henriet has lived in Yerevan Armenia her whole life. She desired to have a purpose for living like all of us, but she had a significant physical disability. She was mobile but her entire right side was disabled. Because of this, not much was expected of her. She was not allowed to attend college or get any special training. Even though her mind was sharp and she herself was very intelligent, she was not given the opportunity to enhance her skills.

She attended a young life meeting in Armenia that was specifically designed for people with disabilities and it was there that she met the Lord and Hasmik. Hasmik was the young lady that worked so diligently with Christina. Hasmik realized the great opportunity that was presented to her in Henriet. Christina needed eyes to see and Henriet needed a chance to be a functioning member of her community. Hasmik introduced the two and Christina can now "see" through Henriet and Henriet feels as though she has purpose. It is a beautiful combination and a wonderful solution that is positive for both parties. They are helping and supporting each other. This is truly how things should work. This is an example of how just a few people who care and are creative in their thinking can make a difference.

Secret Garden's goal is to assist people in becoming self supporting. We are not there to give hand out after hand out. We are there to provide ideas, resources and training for those who are touched in some way to help those who are differently-abled.

Skateboarding Outreach

Question: What do 10-15 athletic, rambunctious teenagers, a middle-aged high school math teacher and a youth minister have in common?

Answer: Skateboarding



How is that you may ask. Well, the Evergreen High School Skateboarding team is made up of 10-15 kids who may not all excel at academics and social relationships, but who do excel at skateboarding. By providing the skateboard team with transportation to Denver skateboard parks and sometimes dinner, relationships are formed between the members and with the adult sponsors. School achievement is improving, which is the ultimate goal.

As a way of motivating the skateboard members toward improving their grades an all-expense-paid boarding trip is given to those who maintain C's or better in all of their fall semester classes. This year, eight boys enjoyed a free day of snowboarding at Loveland Ski area. More of the team was eligible, but some had other commitments and were unable to attend. A great time was had by all.

On a personal note, as the decidedly non-skateboarding math teacher, I've enjoyed the relationships that I've had with these kids. Some, who would otherwise not have come in for additional help, came in, got help and passed my course. Others would stop by to see me and ask when we were going skateboarding again. Partnering with Ben Rodda, the youth minister, has been a pleasure. He is great with the kids. It was a wonderful, successful experience and great benefit to the kids. Thanks for the support.

Marcia Henderson, Evergreen High School Teacher



LAST YEARS GOALS (Accomplished)

* Have another successful year with the EHS skate team.

(Completed May 2005)

* Find and send physical therapist and an early intervention specialist to Armenia as trainers.

(Completed June 2005)

* Raise \$5,000 for the 2004/2005 fiscal year.

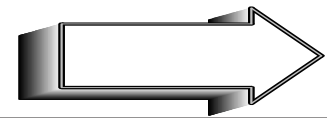
(Raised \$3000 in 2004)

* Continue to support Christina both spiritually and financially as needed.

(In process)

* Provide scholarships for various activities for disadvantaged kids.

(\$400 scholarships for tutoring)



Yes, I wish to make a Tax-Deductible donation to

Secret Garden International

4375 S. Kalamath St.

Englewood, CO 80110

- | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|------|------|-------|-------|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Local (Skateboarding, Tutoring Scholarships and Abled-Hearts) | \$25 | \$50 | \$100 | \$200 | \$_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | International (Training, Christina, Educational Resources) | \$25 | \$50 | \$100 | \$200 | \$_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Where needed | \$25 | \$50 | \$100 | \$200 | \$_____ |

Name: _____

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Abled-Hearts: A Grass Roots Ministry Here at Home

On December 8, 2004 God brought us a little bundle of joy and responsibility. We were graciously blessed with a 2 day old little baby boy. Needless to say, my international travels were cut a little short. Because of this, I decided to focus in- state and see what kind of needs there were in my own backyard. In January of 2005 we started a new ministry at my church. Abled-Hearts is devoted to the inclusion of people who are differently-abled into the family of God at Southern Gables Church. Even though we live in the land of abundance, there are still people in this country who are unable to attend church or who are not accepted into their own congregation. Abled-Hearts provides transportation to church for those with disabilities and it also offers a Bible study for people with developmental delays. We are in the very early stages of development and we have many goals and challenges to overcome. Along with adults with disabilities we hope to offer inclusion programs for children and young adults with either physical or developmental disabilities. We will see where God leads.



Shushawn



*Please visit my
website at*

www.secretgardeninternational.org

Future Goals

- * Continue to provide scholarships for tutoring children with disabilities
- * Expand Abled-Hearts Ministry in Colorado with Southern Gables.
- * Provide financial support for the skate/snowboarding team at EHS.
- * Continue partnerships with those in Armenia who work with people with disabilities.
- * Investigate other international partnership possibilities.



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