

## Summer Projects for Deaf in Ukraine Highly Successful

**D**r. Liudmyla Fomicheva of Drahomanov State Pedagogical University visited Alberta in February 2000 in response to an invitation extended by Dr. Michael Rodda, Director of the Western Canadian Centre of Studies in Deafness (WCCSD), and also Director of the David Peikoff Chair of Deafness Studies, University of Alberta. Dr. Fomicheva's visit, facilitated by the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre, was extremely productive and led to the formation of the Canada Ukraine Alliance for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons (CUADHHP).

CUADHHP is soon to be incorporated under the Societies Act. As a registered society, it will foster educational, social and medical partnerships between organizations

working with, or for, deaf and/or hard of hearing individuals. It will also develop, among its members and society at large, an awareness of the issues and opportunities pertaining to deaf and hard of hearing people in Canada and Ukraine. In pursuit of these goals, CUADHHP will design, fund, and implement projects that address the educational and social needs of people in both countries who have experience with deafness.

This summer CUADHHP spearheaded two projects for the benefit of the deaf and hard of hearing in Ukraine.

The purpose of the first project was to fit hearing aids donated by



*Dr. Rodda leads children in a game at Summer Institute 2000.*



*12 year old Olena Ivaniuk (middle) and her mother (left).*

Starkey-Canada to 88 children from various regions of Ukraine. A team of eight professionals from across North America worked for several weeks to accomplish this task. The team was assembled by Michael O'Reilly of Thibodeau's Centre for Hearing in Edmonton whose company contributed in many ways to support the project and obtain sponsorship.

Twelve-year-old Olena Ivaniuk of Kyiv was one child who benefited from this project. Severely hearing impaired from birth, Olena expressed great excitement at receiving a new hearing aid. "Good quality hearing aids are very difficult to come by in Ukraine, and when one is available it is usually much too expensive," explained Olena's mother.



*Summer Institute participants in Crimea.*

*continued*



Team of audiologists and organizers of CUADHHP summer projects.

The second project sponsored by CUADHHP and two other major hearing aid manufacturers, GN Resound and Oticon, was "Summer Institute 2000". The Institute took place in July at a scenic camp in Crimea. 61 individuals took part including teachers of the deaf, school directors, parents, children, university professors from Canada and Ukraine, and other professionals. The Institute was part of a program requirement for Ukrainian teachers of the deaf to upgrade their credentials. It was unique in that it also involved parents and their deaf children in a co-operative environment, an approach that is new to Ukrainian teachers and administrators.

Alexander Savchenko, a teacher and administrator at a school in Kyiv, attended the Institute in order to acquire



Above: Institute participant Alexander Savchenko, with Anastasia Bendza



Professors Fomicheva (left) and Rodda in Crimea.



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an understanding of what needs to be done to improve the lot of deaf children in Ukraine.

"I want to learn as much as possible from the Canadian team about their methods and innovations," said Savchenko.

Anastasia Bendza, project assistant and student at the University of Alberta, attended the Institute as part of Dr. Rodda's team. "The feedback was incredibly positive, and other activities are already being planned for next summer," she says. ❖

## Centre for the Advancement of Deaf Education Launched in Lviv

The URDC-sponsored Centre for the Advancement of Deaf Education was launched in Lviv in October 1999. The Centre is housed at the Mariya Pokrova School for the Deaf in Lviv, and is the brainchild of Ihor Kobel, a teacher at the school. "Our institution is now the first to provide deaf children with the opportunity to learn the English language," says Kobel. Much of this is due to the generosity of Canadians such as Laurie Elkow, Principal of Delwood School in Edmonton, whose institution donated 15 computers to the Centre. Educational software, books and other materials were also donated by other Canadian sponsors and have helped to create a real possibility for the deaf in



Attendees at the launch of the new Centre.

Ukraine to get a quality education.

The Centre has also begun to promote the use of Ukrainian Sign Language. "Before, signing was practically taboo in our schools. Now we realize it is absolutely indispensable," explains Kobel.

Kobel also sees improvement in post-secondary education for the deaf in Ukraine. As evidence he points to a program being developed at Ivan Franko University in Lviv that is specifically designed to facilitate the needs of people with disabilities, including the deaf. ❖

## Ukrainian Students' Practicum in Alberta

As a requirement of Grant MacEwan College's Business Management Program in Ukraine, students must complete a work experience component at the end of their program of studies. Ten of the 33 students in the first graduating class were selected to complete this requirement in Canada.

The students arrived in Edmonton in early July 2000 for a week of orientation. The week's activities included a Ukrainian Foundation for College Education (UFCE) - sponsored "Meet and Greet" reception for the employers and students.

The practicum placements took place over a six-week period from July 10 - August 18, 2000. Joanne Christie, Field Placement Coordinator at Grant MacEwan College, arranged for the majority of placements with employers that included The Royal Bank, TD Canada Trust, The Bank of Montreal, Hong Kong Bank of Canada, The Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza and Enbridge. The goal was to expose the students to Canadian business and management practices, and to provide them the opportunity to integrate their program learning with industry realities.

Iryna Horzhevskya, who was placed at the Bank of Montreal, found her practicum to be a great learning experience. "The attitude toward the customer is very different in Canada. Here, the customer is treated as number one. It is a perspective I would like to bring back to the banking industry in Ukraine," says Horzhevskya. The

Ukrainian students also had several networking opportunities that resulted in each now having many Canadian business contacts.

The outcomes for the business organizations were equally positive. "They felt the experience provided them with an enhanced corporate image from having worked and



Practicum students, employers, and program organizers at "meet and greet" reception.

succeeded on an international education project," says Joanne Christie. The employers also welcomed the opportunity to play a significant role in mentoring a student, and considered the practicum a process by which they could affirm the practice of their day-to-day operations. ❖

### Students Aided by Scholarship

The Ukrainian Foundation for College Education (UFCE) has created a scholarship that will assist Ukrainian and Canadian students to participate in educational exchanges in one another's countries. The Canada Ukraine Scholarship Fund was introduced on July 31, 2000 at a reception at the Mayfair Golf and Country Club. The recipients of scholarships from this fund will use their awards to decrease the costs of participating in programs such as the Canadian business fieldwork placement.