

Youth Impact

Making a difference...one youth at a time.

Trip to Savva Orphanage

Once a month we go to Savva orphanage we meet with the graduates and talk about something that may help them after they leave the orphanage.

This time we talked about good manners, listening skills, bullying, and how to deal with boredom and loneliness.

The kids did role plays to practice their listening skills. It was a challenging task for many of them but two boys did very well at active listening while discussing the goals they want to achieve in future: finding a good job, having a house, and starting a family.

The issue of "bullying" turned out to be a familiar topic for them. It is very common at orphanages for older kids to bully the younger ones. The kids learned to keep it to themselves and wait till they grow up to stand up for themselves. Telling the adults did not sound like a realistic option to them.

When we talked about boredom and loneliness the kids said that there are many things they can be involved in at the orphanage such as dancing, singing, handicraft, music, sports, etc. It becomes a problem when the kids leave the orphanage and have a lot of free time on hands. We gave them ideas on how they can use their free time instead of spending it drinking, smoking, or clubbing.

Future of orphanage graduates

On April 8th we hosted a forum at Interlink office and invited directors of all the orphanages we're working with, vice-director of vocational school, directors of the Department of Education and the Committee on the Protection of Children's Rights. The goal of the meeting was to address the needs and problems of youth graduating from orphanages and how we all can work together to help make their transition easier.



After the Youth Impact program presentation we had two program participants share what they've gained from the program and their plans for future. They told how the program helped them when they just left the orphanage and all the difficulties they faced, and decisions they had to make on their own.

All the orphanage directors and directors of the Department of Education and the Committee on the Protection of Children's Rights expressed their interest in the program and made some suggestions. Normally we start teaching life skills classes after the kids leave the orphanage and go to a vocational school (PL #1) but one of the orphanage directors suggested to start the program a year or two before the kids leave the orphanage. A week after this meeting we started teaching life skills at all 3 orphanages. Orphanage directors talked about the program with the caregivers who got very interested and after watching the classes asked if they could come regularly to learn more about Youth Impact so they can use it on the daily basis working the children.

Orphanage graduates applying for college

Very few students receive full scholarships to study in college. Their educational level is usually not high enough; however, this year even those with an average educational level may have an opportunity to go to college or university. There are two foundations in Almaty started by Kazakh businessmen and foreign embassies

in Kazakhstan that give scholarships to orphans and youth from low-income families. Their test score does not necessarily have to be very high to be selected but their leadership potential and active involvement in community projects is one of the requirements. Their goal is to invest in young people who can become active leaders of society.



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