

Don't take our word for it



Love's Bridge assistance to street children has been documented by a number of local and international news channels, including CNN. To view some of these reports, search for "Love's Bridge street children" on YouTube or visit www.lovesbridge.org/video

How you can help

During the past eleven years Love's Bridge has helped thousands of children and young people to make dramatic changes in their lives. Many of them are now living examples of ability to overcome negative stereotypes and succeed against all odds. There are still many who are in desperate need of our help, and with your support we can continue reaching out to the most needy young people in Perm today. Your donation may make the difference between life and death for a child who is out in the cold.

To donate now, visit www.lovesbridge.org/donate

To volunteer or offer another form of assistance, contact us at info@lovesbridge.org



www.lovesbridge.org

Love's Bridge

Empowering Russia's Most Vulnerable
Children and Young People

www.lovesbridge.org

Love's Bridge gives some of Russia's most vulnerable children and young people the opportunity to reach their potential, becoming healthy, happy, independent and self-reliant. Our focus is in the city of Perm, on the border of European Russia and Siberia. Here the enormous social upheavals since the collapse of the Soviet Union have resulted in children and teenagers ending up in truly desperate circumstances.

The stories of street children are remarkably similar: abuse, alcoholism and abandonment are all common causes behind a child leaving home and taking up residence on the street, or in a basement or abandoned building.

The future that life on the street brings isn't better: drug addiction, prostitution, crime, incarceration or an early death. How can this fate be avoided for an alarming number of children and teenagers?



Let's help street children - together!

My name is Vanya. I used to live at the market and sniff glue. I don't have a mother, because when I was little - only two years old -



my father got drunk and beat my mother until she had bruises. Because of that she committed suicide. My two younger brothers and I lived with my father, and we really wanted a good mother.

When I turned eight I went to school, but I didn't make it to school. I started to hang out at the market instead. I found friends there that taught me how to sniff glue and drink vodka. I lived at the market for four years. Then I got lucky - my friends told me about a centre that was taking care of homeless children. They fed and clothed me there, and with time I gave up sniffing glue. Then I started studying to become a plasterer and painter. Now I'm 20 years old. I work in a tourist camp during the summer, and do construction work during the winter.

to read other children's stories,
visit www.lovesbridge.org/stories

When Love's Bridge started working with street children in 1998 there were over 2,000 kids living in Perm's sewers, basements and abandoned buildings; now there are very few. Love's Bridge has already helped hundreds of kids to leave the streets and start a new life. However, there are still many underprivileged youth who are left to wander the streets until late at night, have easy access to cheap alcohol and other toxic substances, and often beg, steal and prostitute themselves instead of going to school.

We increasingly work to keep kids from becoming street children by reaching out to at-risk youth. For those who are already on the streets, our experiences have taught us that every child can overcome the effects of poverty, addiction and abuse, but the solution is different for each of them. Sometimes we find an uncle or aunt they didn't know about who's willing to take care of them, sometimes working with their parents leads to an improvement in their home environment, but whatever the solution, it's our individualized approach to the child's needs that makes the difference.



Sniffing glue is a major part of street life

Love's Bridge programmes

Outreach and prevention - We regularly search out young people on the streets, providing them with a hot meal and inviting them to our drop-in centre. This initial contact on their own turf is the first important step in developing trust with the youngsters. We also provide regular material and moral support for some of the poorest families in the city, to prevent children from leaving home in the first place.

Drop-in centre - Street children and teenagers are able to come to us for medical attention, hot meals, washing facilities and are able to get involved in educational and leisure activities. Social workers and psychologists are on hand to offer advice and support in the first stages of getting off the streets, and returning to school.

Social centre for at-risk youth - this part of our program is aimed at children and teenagers who are at high risk of ending up on the streets, and also provides follow-up support for teenagers who were formerly on the street. Young people can follow a variety of courses and classes to develop vital skills for an independent and healthy lifestyle, and take part in extra-curricular activities inside and outside the centre.

More at www.lovesbridge.org/programs



Learning arts and crafts at our social centre



It all started after my father was imprisoned. One day when I was ten I was walking downtown with my mother and she met a new

boyfriend. He taught me how to use substances, and I started sniffing glue. I started to run away from home and beg for money. I lived in sewers. My glue habit kept me away from home. When I did go home my mother just beat me, so I left again.

That's how the next months and years went by, until I met some volunteers, and they helped me. They gave me clothes and shoes and enrolled me in school. I started living in their shelter. When I was 16 I gave up sniffing glue. I continued to live in the shelter for the next few years, until I met a young man that I liked. I eventually moved in with him. Now we have a beautiful daughter. I'm 21 years old now, and I don't drink, smoke or use substances. - Natasha

Natasha