

Charity of Choice | St Gregory's Foundation



St Gregory's Foundation is a UK charity founded to support organisations in Russia and the former Soviet Union that work to change the lives of disadvantaged young people, including disabled children and those who have grown up in orphanages.

Until perestroika, disabled children in Russia were mainly educated in closed boarding schools. This policy is now being relaxed, but there are not enough school places for disabled children to be educated in the community. In addition, for young disabled people to stay in education beyond the age of 15, they must be taught practical skills.

Dinamika School in St Petersburg, a partner of St Gregory's Foundation, is a leader in this area, offering high quality education to 200 children and teenagers who have motor disabilities and in some cases also learning difficulties. They need enhanced facilities to offer more support to some of their pupils who currently learn at home and also to offer practical skills training workshops for disabled teenagers, which are not available at all in St Petersburg.

The Foundation is raising £225,300 to create a new training centre for teenage pupils at the Dinamika School. The project involves adapting and renovating the ground floor of an existing building to make it accessible. It will contain a sports hall, a model domestic flat, a textiles workshop and printing workshop. The centre will be run by the Dinamika special school with involvement from Physical Rehabilitation, a local physiotherapy charity, and Fair Play, a social enterprise.

Through this project, the Foundation aspires to help as many pupils as possible to gain confidence and, where possible, find at least part-time employment after leaving school. As young people with disabilities start to become more visible in Russia, others will feel more hope about their own prospects and wider changes in society's attitudes.

With £150,000 already committed to the project, St Gregory's Foundation seeks a substantial outside contribution towards the balance, in order to unlock local funds to complete the project.

Salon: Russian Art

Date: 21st November 2014

Guest Speakers: Albert Godycki and Evelyn Heathcoat Amory

Host: Alexandre Tissot Demidoff