

# Frequently Asked Questions about Sponsoring a Child at Kitezh-Orion

## **How does sponsoring child with Ecologia work?**

Sponsoring a child at Kitezh and Orion Children's Communities means in effect becoming a 'Godparent' to a particular child, encouraging a child's sense of wellbeing and showing them someone cares. Because sponsorship is a form of regular giving, it means we can reliably look after the children at Kitezh and Orion, and develop our capacity to care for more children. You can sponsor more than one child and some children have more than one sponsor. We try to ensure that each child has at least one Godparent.

## **What will I receive once I sign up?**

Once you've signed up with a Standing Order, and selected the child you wish to sponsor, you will receive a welcome pack including a picture of the child and some information about the child's personal background. At least twice a year you will be sent an update, a card, a letter or a drawing from your God Child.

## **How is my financial contribution used?**

Ecologia charges a 10% administration fee for handling sponsorship donations. We feel this is a modest amount that helps to cover the cost of running this programme. All remaining contributions from Godparents go to the Children's Fund in Kitezh so that no one child or foster family has more money than another. The fund is spent on special treats, clothing, health care, education, recreation, and trips out, etc. The foster parents decide amongst themselves at regular meetings how the money will be used to best meet all the children's requirements. Pledging to sponsor a child goes a long way to securing their long-term future.

**How can I set up an Education Fund for my God child?** Some Godparents arrange with us to set aside a certain portion of their monthly contribution in a special Education Fund for that particular child's higher education. Others send a fixed amount each year. This is held in a Reserve Fund on our Balance Sheet, and when the child turns 18, we consult with the foster parents at Kitezh-Orion how best to use it. Although University education is no longer free in Russia, Kitezh is committed to support all children to go as far as they can in their education. It is very expensive to support them all. Please let us know if this is of interest to you.

## **How much does it cost?**

We recommend a minimum contribution of £20 per month by Standing Order. There is no limit to the contribution you can make – one Godparent sends £1,500 annually (the cost of looking after a child at Kitezh for a year)!

## **Can I send a card or a gift to my God Child?**

We encourage you to communicate with your child two or three times a year either by letter or email. They so love receiving letters and modest gifts – especially on their birthdays and at Christmas! A very small gift is more than sufficient. Elaborate or expensive presents can set up competition that we try to avoid. Please bear in mind that these children come from difficult backgrounds. Some were rescued from the streets, others came through social services. A few are orphans have no knowledge of their birth families. Please write your letters in clear simple English. Feel free to enclose photos, postcards and greetings cards. We suggest you refer to yourself as a "friend" or "Godparent" which feels warmer than a "sponsor". Please do NOT send cash by post to Kitezh. Emailing makes it easier for you to communicate. However, we ask that you don't send large attachments. We will supply you with their foster parent's address and email once your sponsorship has started. Please let us know when you have contact with your God Child, and how it progresses over time.

## **What to write?**

The child you are sponsoring would like to know about your life - your family, pets, hobbies, favourite sports or other activities as well as your occupation and where you live. Write about your everyday life, so they can get to know you and gain insight into your culture, making this an educational experience for both of you. You can also ask them simple questions that they can easily respond to – but avoid asking about their personal background. Encouragement is one of the most important things you can give.

## **Can I visit my sponsored child?**

Yes! Visits to your sponsored child are very much welcomed by the children and their parents at Kitezh-Orion. We can assist you with your visa and preparations. Please contact Ecologia at least 3 months before your trip for advice. We do not facilitate visits of children to their sponsors until they are over 18, when they can make up their own minds.

## **How do I make my sponsorship payments?**

UK Residents: We prefer sponsorship payments to be made by Standing Order. Bank details are on the Application Form we will send you. If you are a UK taxpayer, please tick the Gift Aid box as this considerably increases the amount we receive.

Non-UK residents: A Standing Order bank transfer is best, but if this is difficult from your country, you can set up a regular monthly payment through Virgin Money Giving on our website [www.ecologia.org.uk](http://www.ecologia.org.uk)