

# The Maria Foundation

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## The Maria Foundation – NEWS - update

1<sup>st</sup> November 2005

A big Hello to everyone!!

On the 30<sup>th</sup> September Inna and I returned to the UK, having spent the summer in Moscow (where I was on temporary contract with a British security company).

While we were there Inna and I managed to spend quite a bit of time with Maria. We took her and Anton to a pizza restaurant. Apart from an occasional Mc Donald's, they had never been to any other restaurant and enjoyed themselves immensely. We also met Maria on a few other occasions in and around Moscow and, over those three months have got to know her really well.

Maria is a happy, chatty, pretty girl. Apart from our friendship Maria never expects anything from us, and the gifts and money we have given her have been genuinely and warmly received. Since first meeting her at a metro station almost three years ago, she has never asked us for a single thing and we are humbled by her humility. She sends everyone that has helped her and her son a very, very big **"thank you"**. She still finds it almost impossible to believe that people so far away – in a different country and leading such a different lives - care for her and her son.

So far we have raised over 5000 USD. All the clothing and gifts that have been sent they use, Anton adores his toys and, with the money we have raised, she is currently off the streets and is now working part-time as a child-minder at her small apartment.

Maria never wants to return to the streets having to beg for a living – not ever. She is slowly seeing a different life; a normal life like everyone else around her. Her only desire now is to settle down with someone, lead a "normal" life and have more children!!

And Maria is walking almost all the time. She simply cannot image using her wooden wheeled platform full-time again and she hates the thought of being in a wheel chair. Even though her legs desperately need re-adjustment - she gets blisters and bruises every day - she prefers to walk and to be at eye level with everyone around her. We are hoping Jamie and Össur will soon complete the project as her legs need to be completed - new knee joints and new flexible feet still need to be fitted. We are also hoping that Heather will honour her commitment to cover her legs with the silicone cosmesis covering that makes them look life-like.

We also continue to receive e-mails from around the world from readers of the book "Maria's Story", all saying what an inspiration Maria and her story is. If you have not purchased a copy, please do – ALL royalties go to the Foundation.

With your help and support, we have managed to take a girl from a life begging and of hardship and squalid metro stations, onto a road towards a new, happier life.

Thank you all once again and we can e-mail recent images of Maria to anyone that wants them.

Best wishes

Robin and Inna

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