

**Summer Program
Group Coordinator
And
Host Family Handbook**



**American
Belarussian
Relief
Organization**

THE STORY OF OUR LOGO

The ABRO logo is a rendering of a photograph taken in Belarus in the early 1990s by Bill Bangham. It symbolizes our purpose of helping children exposed to radiation resulting from the Chernobyl accident and their families.

Notice there are no hard lines. The figures are blurred and indefinite, yet indelible, as they walk toward an uncertain future. But...they walk together.

The effect of the Chernobyl accident on the Belarussian people and their children is also uncertain. There are some things we know - and each year we know more - but most will be learned in hindsight, with the passage of years. It is our commitment to walk alongside, offering a helping hand...and hope.

The photograph the logo is rendered from is of a father and son in a dimly lit hallway of a hospital where children are still treated for diseases related to exposure to radiation from the Chernobyl nuclear accident. At the time it was taken the child was being treated for leukemia. He was very sick. At one point it was uncertain whether or not he would survive.

For the past several summers Sergei has been a participant in our Summer Program and is growing into a healthy young man.

The ABRO logo is a registered trademark and may not be used without permission.

**AMERICAN BELARUSSIAN RELIEF ORGANIZATION (ABRO)
Group Coordinator's Handbook**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 - History Of The American Belarussian Relief Organization

2 - Mission Statement

3 - Summer Program Statement of Purpose

4 - Responsibilities

- 4.1 - American Belarussian Relief Organization
- 4.2 - Group Coordinator
- 4.3 - Host Family
- 4.4 - Chaperones

5 - Qualifications

- 5.1 - Host Group
- 5.2 - Group Coordinator (HGC)
- 5.3 – Host Family

6 - Group Organizational Structure – Areas To Be Covered

- 6.1 - Transportation
- 6.2 - Finance
- 6.3 - Medical
- 6.4 - Activities

7 - Medical Requirements

- 7.1 - Medical Evaluations
- 7.2 - Dental Evaluations
- 7.3 - Eye Examinations

8 - Insurance

9 - Activities

10 - Budget Considerations

- 10.1 - Base Cost
- 10.2 - Transportation
- 10.3 - Chaperone
- 10.4 - Activities
- 10.5 - Support To Host Families
- 10.6 - Medical Deductible

11 - Fund Raising

12 - Suggested Minimal Medical Evaluation

13 - Miscellaneous

- 13.1 - Adoptions
- 13.2 - Communications
- 13.3 - Travel Outside of the United States

14 - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

15 – Application Forms

1 - HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN BELARUSSIAN RELIEF ORGANIZATION (ABRO)

Our goal is simple...to help the children from Belarus

Belarus is a small country whose southern border is just 12 kilometers north of Chernobyl Reactor #4, site of the terrible nuclear accident of April 26, 1986. By its scale, complicity and long-term consequences it is the most severe catastrophe throughout the entire world history of atomic energy use. Seventy percent of this radiation fell on the country of Belarus. Our focus has been and continues to be, on these children.

These children are all affected by the radiation, either directly or indirectly. ABRO brings children from Belarus to America for six weeks each summer to give their bodies a rest from the contamination. Some of the children are orphans; some come from small, highly contaminated villages; some have known medical conditions such as leukemia or thyroid problems and some deal with physical handicaps. And most of them come with suppressed immune systems.

The children, while in America, receive medical, dental, and eye care as well as a loving, caring home environment. Many local and regional hospitals have graciously provided medical attention for "our children", as have many dentists, optometrists and specialists.

In addition to bringing children here, ABRO organizes trips to Belarus each Christmas to take gifts to the children, as well as needed medicines and supplies for the children's hospitals and orphanages in Belarus. ABRO has also conducted wilderness camps in the uncontaminated far northern territory of Belarus, allowing hundreds of children the opportunity to escape the contamination while learning valuable skills and having some summer fun too.

The American Belarussian Relief Organization began in 1991, when members of the Connecticut River Valley Fellowship, a Baptist Church in South Windsor, Connecticut, welcomed 13 children and two adults from the Mogilev region of Belarus. They housed the children for a period of six weeks, giving their bodies a rest from the physical and emotional stress of living in a contaminated environment.

From this experience there was a desire on the part of Americans involved with this project to see conditions in the contaminated zone of Belarus. In January 1993, they met with concerned business, political, and religious leaders in the Mogilev region. Out of those meetings, the American Belarussian Relief Organization (ABRO) was born as a unique partnership between concerned peoples of both Belarus and the United States.

Since 1991, ABRO has been able to arrange over 2,000 trips for children from Belarus to the United States for rest and medical evaluation. Another 600 children have benefited from the summer camps. This past summer over 600 children and chaperones came to the United States.

ABRO currently works with five orphanages, the Mogilev children's hospital, and the Society of the Blind. In 1999, ABRO coordinated the shipment of two containers filled with 65,000 lbs. of food, clothing, toiletries, over-the-counter medicines, and toys to be distributed to five orphanages. We hope to do the same in the future. Construction is nearing completion on the American Relief Center (ARC House) which will be a facility to help children who need supplies, dental care, or a place to stay temporarily. Its primary focus will be on children leaving the orphanages.

ABRO is able to continue this work only through the generous support of individuals such as the host families, churches, civic clubs, the local medical communities, and caring private and corporate citizens. ABRO is a tax exempt 501(c)(3) organization registered in North Carolina.

2 - MISSION STATEMENT

There is a red line against which all activities of the American Belarussian Relief Organization are measured: that all children living in areas contaminated with radiation from the Chernobyl Nuclear Plant accident are assisted in finding a quality of life and hope in the future.

It seeks to do so in the following ways:

- by providing clean food, rest and sanctuary in radiation free environments.
- by offering medical evaluation and treatment as needed.
- by recognizing and nurturing the spirit of those it seeks to assist.

3 - SUMMER PROGRAM STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

By bringing children to the US for six weeks each summer, we are able to display a love that is felt around the world. You will be helping to meet the physical, spiritual and emotional needs of these children, who have seen their world turned upside down with all the many problems that they and their families face each day. As we help the children from Belarus and their families, we continue to watch relationships build and the love of Christ spread to these precious people.

4 - RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 American Belarussian Relief Organization (ABRO) will...

- secure all necessary documentation for children and chaperones such as Passports, Visas, etc.
- provide training and oversight to all Group Coordinators.
- provide assistance in any problem resolution and guidance in any unique situations.
- provide transportation for the children and chaperone(s) to the US destination city for your group. Example: Washington, DC; New York; Chicago, IL.; or Atlanta, GA.
- provide accident insurance for the children and chaperones during the time they are in the US. **The host parent or group is responsible for the \$250 deductible should it become necessary.**
- provide a parental/guardian release from on each child.
- make every attempt to provide for each child, any and all available information that is deemed pertinent to their visit.
- provide group lists and flight information to Group Coordinators as soon as it becomes available.
- not guarantee any specified arrival dates, but will so its best to comply with the requested dates. ABRO cannot guarantee any dates due to many factors. One factor is the limited number of seats that are permitted on each flight and the number of children requested by each group. It becomes very difficult in matching up which groups fit together to maximize the number of seats available.
- not guarantee any specific child, but will make every effort to bring the child requested provided that:
 1. the child is between the ages of 7 and 17. The child cannot celebrate his/her 18th birthday before August 31st of the year he/she comes to America for the Summer Program.
 2. the child is invited properly through ABRO according to procedures. Do not invite any child or chaperone directly yourself; all requests must go through ABRO. ABRO-Belarus has total jurisdiction in selecting all children who come, even though they make every effort to accommodate our requests. They are in a much better position to know the backgrounds and the needs of the children.
 3. the child is healthy and able to make the trip.
 4. the child does not have a communicable disease.
 5. the child was not a behavioral problem in the past.
 6. there are no circumstances in Belarus which prohibit the child from coming.

4.2 Group Coordinator will...

- provide overall supervision and direction for the group and maintain communications with the ABRO-US Director as necessary.
- ensure that each Host Family meet the requirements as specified in the Host Family requirements below.
- ensure that proper transportation is arranged from the US destination city to the place of visit and back again, and that all children are returned to the place of departure on time and ready for departure.
- ensure that all required medical and dental services are made available to each child.
- ensure that the Belarussian chaperone is provided with adequate arrangements to allow them to do their job in overseeing the children during their visit. (Example – location of housing within reasonable distance to children, transportation available to appointments, and adequate communications available)
- provide Host Families with parental/guardian release forms and any information which you receive on their child immediately upon receipt.
- ensure that all financial obligations are met on time and all required forms are complete and turned in to the ABRO office by the time specified. Also ensure that all forms are kept up to date through the program. (Please keep a copy of all forms for your records.)
- make sure that any serious problems or concerns are brought to the attention of the ABRO-US Director immediately.
- make every effort to see that all rules and procedures are followed.
- submit a brief written report to the ABRO-US Director at the conclusion of the Summer Program. The report should include any information that you feel should be known to ABRO or that could be helpful to us in evaluating our program and making improvements in the future. It must specifically include any serious behavior problems with any children and any concerns of problems involving chaperones.
- maintain an e-mail address or have a means to receive e-mail information in a timely fashion.
- have a responsible person to serve as a back up for you if you go out of town. Make sure that the location, telephone number, dates of the trip, and the contact person's information are made known to the ABRO-US Director prior to departure.
- notify the ABRO-US office via phone or e-mail upon the group's safe arrival to your home town and upon their safe departure from the airport on the return trip to Belarus.

See web page www.abro.org for current contact information

4.3 Host Family will...

- provide the child with a good, loving, safe and healthy home environment.
- provide the child with adequate, healthy food.
- properly care for the child, and do their best to meet the needs of the child. This does not mean that you are expected to spend a lot of money on the child for material wants.
- report any serious problems or concerns to the local Group Coordinator immediately.
- ensure that the child is present and on time for every medical, dental or eye appointment.
- ensure that the child has a reasonable level of involvement in the activities of the group.
- ensure that the child is returned to the place of departure on time and prepared to leave.
- ensure that the whereabouts of the child is known by the Group Coordinator or his/her designee at all times, should it be necessary for us to get in touch with the child. (Example – if taking the child on a trip out of town, such as to the beach, make sure that the location, telephone number and dates of the trip are known to the Group Coordinator.)
- not allow the child to work on any type of job while in the US. Helping out with small chores is okay. But, again, with good judgment in mind. They are not here to work a job.
- never leave the child alone, regardless of age.
- never leave the child alone to care for other children regardless of age.
- Submit the Travel Notification Form to the coordinator in a timely manner .

4.4 Chaperones will...

- maintain regular contact with each child for whom they are responsible.
- report any unusual behavior, questionable circumstances, or serious problems or concerns to the Group Coordinator immediately.
- remain within the immediate vicinity of their group of children, except in such situations as a brief excursion with their host family (such as a short trip to the beach), but only after reasonable and appropriate backup arrangements are made.

5 - QUALIFICATIONS

5.1 Group Qualifications

- Before a Group will be allowed to bring children, it must:
- have a minimum of five (5) children and one (1) chaperone to comprise a group, without advance permission from the ABRO-US Director. Please have your group name on all paperwork consistent and representative of your geographical area, such as your county or city.
- have no more than fifteen (15) children per chaperone in any group without advance permission from the ABRO-US Director.
- be current on all money and documentation due to ABRO-US.
- have a certified Group Coordinator responsible for the group.
- be accepted by ABRO-US. ABRO-US reserves the right to accept or reject any Group.

5.2 Group Coordinator Qualifications

- A Group Coordinator must:
- be of good character
- be recommended by the Pastor of the church he/she attends, as evidenced by the Pastor's signature on the Group Coordinator Application.
- be willing to take on the responsibility for organization and oversight of the Group.
- have attended the mandatory Group Coordinator Training or received individual training from the ABRO-US Director or ABRO board member. Individual training will be permitted only for those that are restricted from attending one of the training sessions due to geographical barriers.
- be accepted by ABRO-US. ABRO-US reserves the right to accept or reject any Group Coordinator.
- maintain good relations with ABRO-US and other program participants.

5.3 Host Family Qualifications

- A Host Family must: be of good character.
- be able to provide a good, safe, loving environment for the child.
- be geographically located within a reasonable distance from the Group they will join.
- be recommended by the Pastor of the church they attend, as evidenced by the Pastor's signature on the Host Family Application (Applications will only be accepted from Group Coordinators. Do not send applications directly to the ABRO office.
- be accepted by ABRO-US for the program. ABRO-US reserves the right to accept or reject any Host Family Application.
- maintain good relations with ABRO-US and other program participants.

6 - GROUP ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

In past years, various groups have used many different organizational structures. There is no right or wrong answer, as long as the job gets done properly. But whatever structure is used, it is critical that the following areas be covered.

6.1 Transportation – this committee or person will arrange for all transportation of the children from and to the airport. The committee will need to:

- Secure a bus, vans or whatever other means are best for the group to transport the children from and to the destination city airport.
- Ensure that all costs of transportation are known so they can be included in the budget.
- Make arrangements for any meals that may be required on the trips from and to the airport based on the distance to your location from the destination city.
- Arrange for some adults to accompany the children, primarily to assist the chaperones and handling of baggage on the return trip.
- Ensure that the children are picked up on time and returned on time. Extra time must be allowed should the plane arrive early or depart early. Both situations have actually happened in the past. ABRO-US will confirm all outgoing flights. The ABRO-US office will make available any relevant information prior to your child's departure date.

6.2 Finance – this committee or person will be responsible for raising funds, putting together the budget, and paying the bills. In some groups, they have a separate Fund Raising Committee.

6.3 Medical – this person or committee will arrange for all medical physicals and eye doctor exams. They will need to begin recruiting volunteers from the local medical community early before the children arrive to ensure that everything is scheduled. It is easier if it can be arranged for all the physicals to be done on one day at the same time. The appointments should be scheduled within a few days after the children's arrival such to give the children a few days rest and to allow adequate time for follow up testing or treatment if necessary.

6.4 Activities – this area can be very diverse and made up of many different groups or committees. This is an excellent area to get your church or community groups involved. Some of the activities may include:

- **Clothes Closet** – there will be a need for most of the children coming to the US for the first time to have some good used clothing. Especially, the children coming from orphanages do not bring much in the way of clothing with them. Therefore it is a good idea to put some effort into collecting some good used clothing before the children arrive and have it available for the Host Families to select from in the first few days that the children are here. All clothes that are left over then may be taken to the Salvation Army, Good Will, or sold in a Garage Sale, as a fundraiser for other needs of the group.
- **Gift Bags** – many groups collect various goodies and make up gift bags for the children before they arrive. It could include such things as toiletries, pencils, pens, a notebook, coloring books, crayons, various give-away articles from companies, candy, stickers, etc.
- **Care Bags** – this would be a bag that the children would take home with them with such items as toiletries or over the counter medicines. Remember that we take many things for granted in America that are not readily available in Belarus. Here are some suggested items: cold and flu medicines, antiseptic ointment, aspirin – both children's and adults, vitamins, and band-aids. Please make sure that all medicines and vitamins have directions with them written out in Russian – use the chaperone to assist with this task.
- **Travel Bags** – The return trip to Belarus is long and tiring. Fast food restaurants are not available and the children may want to eat something on the way. It is necessary to pack a non-perishable snack meal for them to take with them for the trip. These can be made up by each individual Host Family or a group or committee. Here are some suggested items: box drinks, small bottled water, packaged crackers, apples or dried fruit, cookies, candy bars.

7 - MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

7.1 Medical Evaluations – Each child is required to have a physical examination, however NO bodily fluids can be withdrawn from any child without the permission of a parent or legal guardian.(The ABRO-US office must obtain this for you) Should there ever be any medical concerns of a serious nature, they are to be brought to the attention of the Group Coordinator and the ABRO-US Director as soon as possible. No surgery or medical procedure of a serious nature is to be performed on any child without prior written approval by the ABRO-US Board of Directors, unless it is of an emergency nature. In such an instance, the ABRO-US Director and the Group Coordinator are to be notified immediately. *See – Suggested Minimal Medical Evaluation*

7.2 Dental Evaluations – Every reasonable effort should be made to see that each child has a dental evaluation, with the host parent making the decision as to what dental work will be accomplished while the child is here. Some children come in need of extensive dental work (many cavities), and some needing only minimal work. A few come with no needs, mostly those that have been a part of the ABRO Summer Program in previous years. ABRO cannot assume any financial responsibility for any dental work, nor is it expected that the host family take on this responsibility. Most all host family dentists have been very gracious in providing this service free of charge once they understand the program.

The host family should contact their family dentist well in advance of the child's arrival and ask if he/she is willing to provide the service free of charge. If not, the Group Coordinator may be able to help in finding a dentist who will. Do not consider this a reason to not bring a child for the summer. There are sufficient other benefits to the child beyond dental treatment. No dental surgery is to be performed on any child without prior written approval by the ABRO-US Director after authorization from the ABRO-US Board of Directors, unless it is of an emergency nature. In cases of an emergency nature, the ABRO-US Director and the Group Coordinator are to be notified immediately.

7.3 Eye Examinations – Every reasonable effort should be made to see that each child has an evaluation by an optometrist. Each year, there are a few children that need glasses. Should the child need eyeglasses, many doctors will either donate them or provide them at cost. In addition, many Lions Clubs, Rotary Clubs, churches and other civic organizations have paid for them in the past. The host family is not required to purchase the glasses, and we encourage the host family and the Group Coordinator to pursue these other avenues should any child in your group need them. ABRO cannot assume any financial responsibility for the eye examination, or for the purchase of eyeglasses. No eye surgery is to be performed on any child without prior written approval by the ABRO-US Director after authorization from the ABRO-US Board of Directors, unless it is of an emergency nature. In such instances, both the ABRO-US Director and the Group Coordinator are to be notified immediately.

8 - INSURANCE

Accident and Sickness Insurance is provided by ABRO-US on every child and chaperone for the time that they are in the US. There is a \$250 deductible (per incident) for which the Host Family is responsible. The Group Coordinator may make arrangements with the Host Families to cover this cost. But this issue needs to be agreed upon within each group prior to the children's arrival. In many groups, the medical community covers all costs incurred with minor accidents and sickness such as stitches, or broken arms. If this is the case, do not process the insurance. If you have a question, consult with your local Group Coordinator. The insurance coverage is as follows:

- \$50,000 Accident/Sickness Medical
- \$10,000 Accidental Death & Dismemberment
- \$25,000 Emergency Medical Evacuation
- \$ 7,000 Repatriation of Remains – Emergency Medical Assistance Service

Each host family will receive a brochure/claim form, which they will need to complete should an accident or illness occur requiring medical treatment. Each host family should read the brochure/claim form to familiarize themselves with the coverage and procedure. Please take special note of the EXCLUSIONS section, especially where it excludes pre-existing conditions and "named hazards" such as skiing, mountain climbing, motorcycle driving, etc. You must take these into account when planning your activities for the summer. Again, good judgment is the best insurance you can buy. Notify the ABRO office with detail of any claims made within a few days of the claim.

9 - ACTIVITIES

There are many different groups each summer in many different states, therefore the activities can be very different depending on your location. Activities are a very important part of your program, but please keep in mind, it is not necessary to keep your children involved in an activity the whole time they are here. It is required however, that each child have a reasonable level of involvement with the group. This gives the child a chance to interact with the other children, as well as, giving the chaperone an opportunity to interface with each child to ascertain their well being. But always remember that the most important thing you can do for your child is to share your life, and spend time with him or her building a loving relationship. Here are just a few suggestions that you could pursue as activities for your group.

- **Appreciation Picnic** – This is something that can be done as a special “thank you” to all those who helped out with your Summer Program, either by sponsoring children, providing medical care, sponsoring an event, or contributing in any other way. This is an excellent way to promote your local program within the community. It has become a very important part of our local group’s program each year.
- **Field Trips** – As you begin looking around for local activities, it is amazing how many local points of interest may be in your area that you never even realized.
- **Amusement Parks** – Most of the children love amusement parks. It is something that they are not used to, and visits to them have always been a hit for many groups.
- **Beach or Mountains** – Depending on your location you may wish to do this as a group or within individual families. Please remember to use good judgment with regard to water activities, as many of the children do not know how to swim. Also be careful in a setting where children could become lost, such as in the mountains.
- **Science/Discovery Place** – Such places as Charlotte’s “Discovery Place” or Durham’s NC Museum of Life & Science where children get to experience many things with a “hands on” approach are also very popular among the children...big kids and little kids alike.
- **Community Sponsored Events** – Many local civic groups, church groups or community associations have sponsored picnics or socials for the children after hearing about the program.
- **Sporting Events** – Many of the children love sports, and welcome the opportunity to watch local sporting events, and also to participate in sporting events.
- **Zoo/Ranch** – Another popular activity has always been trips to the Zoo or an animal ranch where children can see animals in their natural habitats.
- **Circus** – If there is one in your area while the children are here, most children love them.
- **Historic Sites** – There are many historic sites or places of interest, such as Cabarrus County’s Reed Gold Mine, where children get to travel through an actual mine shaft and are allowed to pan for gold.
- **Church Sponsored Events** – Some other very important activities that have had great success in the past are such things as English as a second language, AWANA, Vacation Bible School, and Sunday School in Russian.
- **Others** – Other ideas can be obtained from your state or local tourism office.

10 - BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

In forming a group, you will need to put together a local group budget to make sure that all of your costs will be covered when you set the price for your children, and to avoid problems down the road. Below are the items that you will need to cover. You may wish to add others.

- **Base Cost** – This is the amount paid to ABRO for each child and chaperone which covers the costs of airline tickets, passports for first time children, visas, ground transportation in Belarus and Russia, insurance for the time they are in the US, and some overhead costs absorbed by ABRO.
- No airline tickets will be purchased for your group until all money for your group has been received by ABRO.
- Should you need a receipt, please make written request for such when you send your check to the ABRO office.

- All checks from your local group must be made payable to ABRO, and your local group name must be written in the memo field on the check to ensure proper credit. ABRO will not be responsible for determining which group is to be credited for checks that are not specified.
- If your group receives donations from outside organizations (example – corporate sponsors), you must collect all checks at the local level and give proper credit for the specific child/family, and then forward the checks to ABRO. ABRO will not be responsible for determining which family/child is to be credited for what amount of money.
- Under no circumstances are checks to be made payable to ABRO with expectation for funds to be reimbursed to individuals or groups.
- **Transportation** – This is the amount that it will take to pay for your transportation of the group from the airport to your hometown and the return trip back to the airport. It should also include any costs for meals or snacks en route. For a few groups, it may also include overnight stay.
- **Chaperone** – This is the money that is paid to the chaperone(s) of your group. ABRO requires that each group pay all chaperones within the group \$200 for their services. It is to be paid within the first two (2) weeks they are here. Had they not come to the US, many of them would be working a summer job to get additional money for their families. Additional monetary or non-monetary gifts are allowed.
- **Activities** – This amount is for any group activities that you have planned where the individual families, including their Belarussian child, will not be paying their own way. Include such things as group admissions to events, costs of meals, costs of supplies such as arts & crafts, etc.
- **Medical Deductible** – This is an amount of money put aside and used to pay for the insurance deductible of \$250, should one of the children in the group need to use the insurance coverage. Some groups require that the host family cover this expense, while others cover it at the group level. It is important that this be agreed upon ahead of time within your group.

11 - FUND RAISING

Many groups hold various fundraising activities to pay the costs of their summer program, while others rely directly on their church or association. Obviously, either means is acceptable to ABRO. It is very important however, that the ABRO name not be used as the name of the organization that is actually raising the funds. It is acceptable for the local organization to state that you are raising funds to bring children THROUGH an organization named ABRO. In this way, we do not have to be involved in the process of approving your means of raising funds, nor do we have to concern ourselves with any limitations that are placed on us as a result of our 501-C-3 status.

12 - SUGGESTED MINIMAL MEDICAL EVALUATION

- A Medical Evaluation should at a minimum, be similar to a “sports” physical. The doctor should examine the eyes, ears, nose, throat, and spine. The doctor should also obtain the height, weight, and temperature.

A PPD is not recommended in that most of the children have had BCG, a prophylactic drug that is used against TB, which usually gives a false positive result.

A Medical File should be kept for each child.

- A chart should be compiled for each child containing any available past medical history from Belarus along with any information obtained in the US. It should be updated each year that the child visits.
- Any new information gained in the US should be given to the Belarussian chaperone to be added to the child's existing home medical file.

13 - MISCELLANEOUS

- **13.1 Adoptions** – Each year as families become attached to their children, those that hosted orphans frequently desire to adopt them. At this time the Belarussian government does not allow any child to be adopted. The ABRO-US office receives many calls each summer and throughout the year inquiring about adoptions. It must be clearly understood that the ABRO organization cannot be involved in adoption efforts in any way. Our mission is clearly stated.
- **13.2 Communications** – The ABRO organization is composed of two independent components working together to achieve the mission of bringing children from the contaminated zone of Belarus to America within the scope of the Summer Program. ABRO-US is composed of a Board of Directors and a Director. Likewise, ABRO-Belarus or Moo Kovcheg is composed of a Board of Directors and a Director. While the structure of each organization may appear as mirror images, they are vastly different. Each organization must work within their respective government's laws and regulations. Beyond this obvious difference there are language and cultural differences each group must seek to understand. In keeping with misunderstandings which can occur through improper communication, it is most important that all business related communications be channeled through ABRO-US and ABRO-Belarus. Specifically, here in America, all business related communications must lie between the ABRO-US office and the local Group Coordinators. This point cannot be over emphasized! There are other means of communicating with your Belarussian child and his/her family once the child has returned home.
- **13.3 Travel Outside of the U.S.** – No one is authorized to travel outside of the U.S. with their child. Re-entry could cause many problems for you, your child, and ABRO.

14 - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Question:** Who do I contact if I have a problem or a concern with my child?

Answer: All questions or concerns should be addressed to your local Group Coordinator first. If you are unsuccessful in resolving the issue, then you should contact the ABRO US office.

2. **Question:** How are the children selected?

Answer: The children are selected in one of two ways. First, is by specific request by name and date of birth from the American host family on the Host Family Application form. Every attempt will be made to bring the specific child requested, but ABRO can never guarantee that any child will be able to come to America as part of the Summer Program.

Secondly, children are selected by ABRO Belarus. The children are selected from orphanages, villages, the city of Mogilev, or by recommendation from the medical community. Most of the children who come to America are poor by our standards, although some are more fortunate than others. Some have more needs, but all benefit immensely by coming to the US for six weeks in the summer.

3. **Question:** Do I need to speak Russian?

Answer: No, it is amazing how capable we all are of communication with someone from a different culture, someone who speaks a different language. With the aid of a Russian-English dictionary one can point to specific words and it is surprising how well ideas can be communicated. Also, there will be an English-speaking translator with each group. Many people find that there are others in the community who speak the language and are willing to assist. You will be surprised at how much you and your Belarussian child will learn together in just six short weeks.

4. **Question:** Will my family be exposed to dangerous levels of radiation?

Answer: No. There is no danger whatsoever.

5. **Question:** Is it okay to take my child to church?

Answer: It is expected that you WILL take your child to church.

6. **Question:** What do we send home with my child?

Answer: You should send warm clothing, school supplies, some practical items for other family members, and some money. If you send money, it should be in \$5, \$10, or \$20 dollar denominations. They must be clean, unmarked bills, not torn or damaged in any way. They may be either the newer or older bills but they must have the security strip in them.

7. **Question:** What is the time difference between our countries and how do I call my child?
Answer: Belarus is seven (7) hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. To call Belarus you need to use the following example:
- Sample telephone number: 011-375-222-00-00-00
Where: 011 is the International switch
And 375 is the Country code for Belarus
And 222 is the city code for Mogilev (this number may be different for your child)
And 00-00-00 is the six digit phone number (this is the actual phone number, whatever it may be)
8. **Question:** Where can I purchase a Russian-English dictionary?
Answer: Your local bookstore should carry Russian-English dictionaries and phrase books. If they do not, they will order them for you. The paperback edition of the Romanov dictionary is one that many families have used.
9. **Question:** Where can I get Russian Bibles?
Answer: There are several sources for Russian Bibles and New Testaments.
- American Bible Society 1-800-322-4253
Russian Bible Society 252-8896
International Bible Society 1-800-524-1588
10. **Question:** Where can I get Christian Praise Music in the Russian language?
Answer: Hosanna Integrity Music offers two excellent Russian Praise tapes.
- "Heal our Land" for youth and adults
"Wonderfully Made" for children
Contact them @ 1-800-239-7000
11. **Question:** Should I allow my child to telephone home, and how frequently?
Answer: If your child is from a family, you should assist your child in making a call to their home to notify their family of their safe arrival. Other than that, it is your personal discretion as to how much you allow them to call. It is not necessary for them to make any calls home after the initial one. Please be aware that calls to Belarus are very expensive, some as low as \$0.34 cents per minute. Also, be aware that your current long distance carrier may be as high as \$1.35 cents per minute.
12. **Question:** What are the children like?
Answer: They are just like you own children. Each child has his or her own personality with particular likes and dislikes. At the end of six weeks, you will see these children as if they were your very own children.
13. **Question:** What do I do if my child becomes homesick?
Answer: You can expect that your child may become homesick at some point. Interaction with other Belarussian children may help, and the group chaperone can be of assistance. But the most important thing is to always just show your child that you love them.
14. **Question:** Whom do I call if I have a question about something I heard concerning world affairs?
Answer: Should something happen in the world that affects our program, we will probably be the first to know the consequences. PLEASE, do not call and ask questions about world affair issues. If we know of something going on that we feel host families need to know, we will contact all Group Coordinators and ask them to pass on the information.
15. **Question:** Do I have to submit an application if I am planning to host a chaperone?
Answer: Yes, we must have an application form every host family regardless of who they are hosting.
16. **Question:** Do I have to submit an application if I am planning to share a child with another host family?
Answer: Yes, we must have an application form every host family regardless of who they are hosting.

17. Question: I would like to communicate with my child and his/her family in Belarus. I do not speak the language. What should I do?

Answer: ABRO Belarus has a translation service that is provided to host families that wish to communicate with their Belarussian child(ren). We ask that a \$25.00 per year donation be made so that we can maintain this service. You may send an e-mail to: ark@abro.org addressed to your child. Your e-mail will be translated into Russian and mailed to your child. When your child responds back to the ABRO-Belarus address, their letter will then be translated into English and e-mailed back to you (or the e-mail address you used).

18. Question: My child wants his/her ears pierced. Do I allow them to do it?

Answer: You must have permission from the parent(s) or legal guardian in Belarus before allowing them to do it. The best way is to e-mail the parent in Belarus at the e-mail address previously provided.

15 – APPLICATION FORMS

An Application/Agreement form is required in order to serve as a Group Coordinator or as a Host Family. Forms will be provided to the Group Coordinator under separate cover. As previously indicated, a separate application must be completed for each child and chaperone regardless of whether a particular family agrees to host more than one child.