

# VESTNIK



Fund for Assistance to the  
Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia  
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*The mission of the Fund for Assistance is to support the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, specifically, the moral-spiritual education of youth, aid to its clergy and distribution of emergency relief to its missions.*



## Her Shattered Life, Made New

*Her family disowned and abused her. But your kindness let her find a new family within the Church.*



For years, Elizaveta suffered neglect at the hands of her family. The situation became worse when she converted to Orthodoxy. She suffered physical and verbal abuse,

and was homeless twice. She had been beaten, thrown out of the house, and called "a curse on her family."

Years have passed since then. But Elizaveta still cries when she talks about it. But fortunately, it gets easier with Christ's help. Thirteen years after her conversion, 26 y.o. Elizaveta tries to satisfy her thirst for the Truth. She fills her

days with church, teaching Sunday school, and attending as many Orthodox events she can. Because for her, there is no life outside of Orthodoxy.

Part of her goal is to surround herself with people she can trust – Russian Orthodox youth she meets at FFA-sponsored youth events.

"Attending youth conferences is like recharging a battery," she said. "The Gospel story of the woman with a blood problem who just wanted to touch Christ's garment comes to mind... Simply sitting next to my fellow [Orthodox] brothers and sisters - even this much is enough."



*Your support helps young people like Elizaveta find their place in our Church.*



**"My tithe to the Church is raising the children, preparing them to take self-motivated responsibility of the faith by picking up the cross and following Christ ...no matter the circumstances, no matter how difficult... And to bring the love of our Lord to their neighbors one heart at a time."**



*Thanks to your support, 150 young people from 11 countries attended the XIIIth All-Diaspora Youth Conference in San Francisco this year.*

But at Orthodox youth events, there is so much more to offer! We met Elizaveta at the XIIIth All-Diaspora Youth Conference in San Francisco this July.

Thanks to your generosity, she and 150 young people like her from 11 different countries participated in church services, lectures, discussions and workshops. They attended a soup kitchen for the homeless and the needy, and a home for the elderly. The idea of the conference was to unite Orthodox youth around themes of charity and mercy.

Elizaveta now has longtime Orthodox friends she keeps in touch with and visits, as well as role models for building her life around the Church.

"I get to see the clergy and laity live out their lives with fear and trembling; more importantly, I learn to emulate them just like emulating the saints. I could walk up to just about any Orthodox Christian and ...these strangers, they treat me like their own. This is my family now."

When you give to the FFA, you plant a seed that blossoms in young people like Elizaveta. She doesn't take Church for granted. She pays back – with interest.

What she learns at FFA-sponsored youth conferences, she shares with her Sunday School class, which she has been teaching for over 5 years.

Thank you for caring for the next generation of Russian Orthodox Christians!



Brother David entered Holy Cross Monastery as a novice 3 years ago, at a time when Holy Cross Monastery was growing so fast, it was splitting at the seams. There were so many prospective novices, there was a waiting list to enter the monastery.

All cells were occupied, brethren lived in offices and the guest house. Some guests even had to camp in tents in the summer because there was so little room (not that it stopped people from coming!)

The only place Br David could be housed was an old RV. It may not sound too terrible for someone who's pursuing an ascetic way of life, but West Virginia summers are hot, and being in a small enclosed space in 100F weather is simply dangerous.

Three years later, Br David was one of the brothers making incense that brings the monastery some income. However, he was still living in the RV.

He may have been there for many years more, if it hadn't been for you. Your generosity allowed the brethren to breathe a sigh of relief this year. Thanks to you, they didn't have to worry too much about paying for necessities such as food or medical insurance, so they were able to free up some resources to finish their major construction project – project Kelia. Now they have nine more cells and an infirmary.

You know why you are absolutely amazing? Because you stepped in when the brethren were afraid to draw people's attention away from "merely surviving," to building.



**Because of you, brethren like Br David, who lived in the RV, the guesthouse basement, and office building, have now moved to real monastic cells – small rooms with a bed, bookshelf, and icons on the walls - built efficiently and to last. The cells are easier to heat in the winter and cool in the summer.**

"We were just surviving, we only had money for groceries and basic expenses. After the FFA came in to cover necessary clergy expenses, we finally had the stability and confidence to divert our own resources into the capital investment and construction that was desperately needed. Thank you!" said Hieromonk Alexander (Frizell).

## Your Generosity Roundup

### Thank YOU for Being Our Perfect Match!

This summer, a generous donor (requesting to remain anonymous) offered a challenge grant of \$10K for each: Holy Trinity Monastery (HTM) and Holy Cross Monastery (HCM). You rose magnificently to the occasion! Each received \$35,000! Thanks to your donations, they are able to focus more on spiritual development, and heartfelt prayers for all of us!

### Easter Gratitude

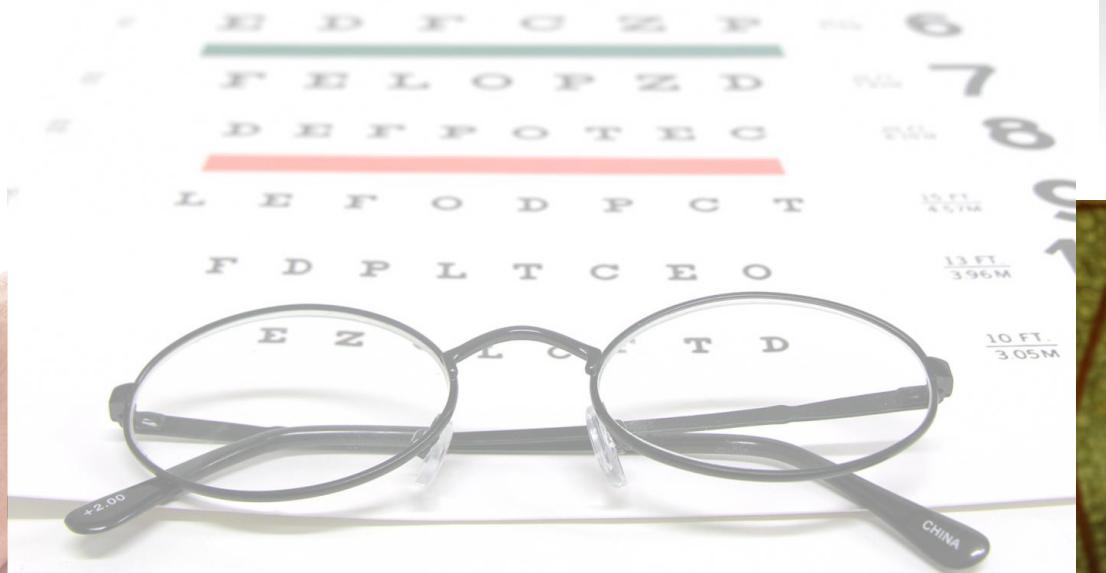
Your tremendous response to our Easter Appeal collected over \$9,000 for our general fund. We already have a few exciting projects lined up for support, like the 2014 Choir Conference in Santa Rosa in October. If you love to sing, you'll love the conference.

Also, you just may have supported it by giving to the FFA! One more reason to go!



## I Can See Clearly Now!

*How you saved a Jordanville monk from going blind*



*Thanks to donors like you, Fr Alexander receives the eye care he needs to retain his sight.*

The last thing you expect to hear when you're only 30 years old is: "You are losing your eye sight". Riassophor monk Alexander, candle maker and reader at Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, NY, has had vision problems for years. And his sight was rapidly deteriorating.

A few years ago, he had an operation that prevented him from completely losing his vision. Although his condition had improved after the operation, very expensive eye drops were essential to help him retain his sight. Like nearly all our monastics, Fr. Alexander doesn't have health insurance, so he couldn't afford the medicine that was crucial to preserving his remaining vision.

Thanks to the help of generous people like you, the FFA sent help to the monastery, which allowed the brethren to take care of many different projects on the monastery grounds, and paid for such daily expenses as food and healthcare.

As a result, Fr Alexander was able to get the medicine he so desperately needed.

"Each one of our brethren is precious to us. Fr. Alexander is now able to do his obedience unhindered, an obedience which provides our people with pure beeswax candles, and, of course, a source of income for the monastery. If it weren't for this good eye care, he would be blind, he would not be able to work, or read and sing on the kliros, which would be a tremendous loss to all of us," said monastery Treasurer Hieromonk Theophylact.

Other projects Jordanville was freed to pursue: a better kitchen for the growing needs of the monastery, a new mailroom and publications office, some brick work on the deteriorating buildings, a small fitness room for seminarians, among others.

*For more information,  
please see our website [fundforassistance.org](http://fundforassistance.org)*

# Haitian Family Now Has Food – Thanks to You!

*Your support launches a family on the way to a better life*



*Thanks to you, our brothers and sisters in Haiti have food on their tables and hope in their hearts.*

**"My daughters are receiving an education. I can pay rent, and I am rebuilding our house. This would have been impossible without your help. May God bless you!"**

*Micheline*

When we first met Micheline, she didn't know where her next meal would be coming from. Thanks to you, she now supports her family with her own business!

Micheline used to burn coal for a client, who would give her one bag of coal in payment. After burning coal, she would do housework for another family, who paid her by giving her a bowl of rice. Every night she brought the pot of precious grain to her tent, where Micheline and her two daughters lived after the terrible earthquake of 2010 destroyed their home.

But in 2012, a terrible storm tore through her native Jacmel, blowing away the tent that served as a home for many months.

It was the most difficult time of her life... She didn't know where her family's next meal would come from. Sometimes she'd have to make the pot of rice last several days... Her daughters were growing up without school, and she was afraid they would have to lead the same difficult life that Micheline, her mother, and her grandmother have always lead: burning coal, cleaning houses, scraping pennies to eat...

The Russian Orthodox church of St Augustine was the only place Micheline found consolation for her troubles... where anxiety about where tomorrow's food would let go of her heart...

She started volunteering to clean the church and take care of the priest's vestments and church linen. She said it gave her peace.

Doing laundry in Haiti is not easy. You need a river, a pair of sturdy hands, and a lot of patience.

Because Micheline was so helpful, the rector Fr Gregoire Legoute decided to do something for the family.

Micheline has been receiving \$100/month through the FFA-supported HOFR program for several months now. Her life has been transformed. "I am so thankful," she says.

***Our Promise***

**Your money – your decision: 100% of all donations directly fund the cause indicated by the donor.**  
**Stay updated on how your kindness supports the Church you love: subscribe to our email newsletter on our website:**  
**[fundforassistance.org](http://fundforassistance.org)**

### **Could you help us help others, please? Pretty please?**

St Apostle Paul said, "Carry each other's burdens, and it this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal.6:2). We try to do that, but since we're a very poor organization (we do not have an endowment, unfortunately!), we keep delving into our operating account to help members of our Church in need. That means we can't do as much as our Church needs us to.

### **Could you help TREMENDOUSLY by donating to our general fund, please?**

Your donation will fund extraordinary cases. For example one priest – father of 5 - who has no salary from his parish, no insurance, and diabetes, couldn't pay his tuition at Holy Trinity Seminary. If it hadn't been for your kindness, he wouldn't have graduated. But because you donated to our general fund, our Church has received one more highly-educated clergyman into its ranks!

Thank you!

### **Volunteer work in the Fund for Assistance**

We need YOU to join us in changing the future of our Church for the better!

Let's help our Church together!

For more information, please contact Alena Plavsic by phone at 917-817-2925 or at [alena@fundforassistance.org](mailto:alena@fundforassistance.org)

### **Pssst! You probably noticed...**

That this newsletter is in English only...

**The reason:** we are trying to cut paper and mailing costs, which come out of our ... you guessed it: FFA General "*nuts and bolts*" fund! Times are tough, so we had to cut corners. The less we have for operational expenses, the less work we can do for our Church. And we want to do much more because we owe it to Her and to you!

Please let us know if you really want to receive our publications in Russian, too! We'll try our best for you.

**Why?** Because without you, we are nothing. **YOU** keep our Church strong. **THANK YOU** from all of us at the Fund for Assistance to our wonderful Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia!

By the way, all materials are bilingual on our website: [fundforassistance.org](http://fundforassistance.org)



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*Help us save money on paper: sign up for our e-mail updates on our website! Thank you for your support!*