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GGA Partners with the Adamov Memorial Fund

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GGA Partners with the Adamov Memorial Fund to Help Blind People in St. Petersburg

Since early 2005, the MN Adamov Memorial Fund has been dedicated to helping talented blind people in Russia. Based in Boston, the nonprofit organization was started by Svetlana A. Sussman, an administrator at MIT's Sloan School of Management, and her husband, Harris. Svetlana grew up in St. Petersburg where her father was a distinguished professor of physics at St. Petersburg State University. Her father was blind from the age of two, and after he died in 2005 at the age of 84, Svetlana and Harris decided to establish a program in his memory to help blind people.

In Russia, government support for social services to people with disabilities has decreased significantly, and the Adamov Memorial Fund has helped to fill a critical need by providing equipment and other materials for blind and vision-impaired people in St. Petersburg. The Fund works with a network of groups and programs that serve about 1,000 people out of the 5,000 blind and 6,000 vision-impaired people in St. Petersburg. While the Fund has been successful to a great extent, it can still expand its outreach to a large number of underserved blind and vision-impaired people in St. Petersburg.

Specifically, the Adamov Memorial Fund has delivered canes, digital voice recorders, laptop computers, and educational materials to the blind and vision-impaired. In St. Petersburg, the government provides canes at no cost, but blind people may need to wait more than one year to receive their canes, and these canes have severe limitations. They are not made of graphite, and they are not reflective. In addition, regardless of the height of the various recipients, all canes are the same size. In comparison, the Fund buys an improved model of cane. It is a graphite, reflective cane, and the length of each cane is customized for the recipient.

In addition to canes, the Fund has delivered digital voice recorders for students to record their class lectures, as well as used laptop computers. The Fund has also provided young blind and vision-impaired people with educational materials and has purchased special items as requested by different groups and individuals in St. Petersburg.

The Adamov Memorial Fund depends on travelers to St. Petersburg to transport the equipment by putting the equipment in their luggage. For example, recently the Fund developed a partnership with GGA Software Services LLC, a member of the U.S.-Russia Chamber of Commerce of New England, whereby GGA employees will carry equipment and other materials from Boston to St. Petersburg on their visits to St. Petersburg, where GGA's development facility is located. While the GGA relationship has been helpful, the Sussmans hope that other people and companies will follow GGA's example.

In addition, the Fund depends on individual contributions to purchase the needed equipment for blind and vision-impaired people in St. Petersburg. At present, the Sussmans use primarily their own funds for the purchases, but they hope that companies and individuals will begin to make contributions to the Adamov Memorial Fund so that they can expand the program in St. Petersburg and benefit a larger number of blind and vision-impaired people.

A small contribution to the Adamov Fund will go a very long way in changing the life of a blind or vision-impaired person in St. Petersburg.

The customized canes cost \$30 each, and so far the Adamov Fund has delivered more than 110 canes. Magnifiers cost \$10 each, and the Fund has already purchased 20 magnifiers from Hong Kong because 30X magnifiers are not available in Russia. The Olympus digital voice recorders are \$36 each, and the Fund has delivered 35 recorders, with requests for 30 more.

In addition, the Fund buys special toys for blind children, spending about \$600 to date. For 18 months, the Fund gave a kindergarten teacher in St. Petersburg about \$70 per month for her blind students. Now this teacher has moved to a remote town,

and the Fund continues to send her educational materials for her blind students.

Furthermore, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology contributes used computers to the Fund. So far, the Fund has delivered about 30 used computers from MIT to St. Petersburg. The Fund hopes to identify a company in St. Petersburg that will donate used computers.

To learn about how you and your company can assist the Adamov Memorial Fund, please contact Harris Sussman at harris@sussman.org or +1-617-629-0048.



About GGA

[GGA Software Services LLC](#), a 350-person software outsourcing company with its headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and its development facility in St. Petersburg, Russia, provides scientific software engineering, algorithm development, and data curation services, especially for life science, instrumentation, and other science-related companies.

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