

Alternative Spring Break in Russia (1)

Service Learning Volunteer Work in the Ancient Russian City of Vladimir

Help one or more community organizations, such as the Youth Health and Education Center, Regional Veterans' Home, Karl Liebnicht Orphanage, Russian Orthodox Church, Handicapped Children's Association "Light", while interacting with Russian university students and others and experiencing the wonders of provincial Russia.



Dates: March 4-12 and 11-19, 2017 (Saturday-Sunday)

Housing: Home stays (with home-cooked breakfasts and dinners)

Excursions: Vladimir, Suzdal and Bogoliubovo (UNESCO World Heritage Sites)

Program Fee: Approximately \$390

Fee includes room and board, excursions, transportation from/to Moscow airport, visa invitation, Russian language lessons, on-site administrative support;

Fee does not include visa application expenses (~\$340), airfare, lunches, public transportation in Vladimir (~\$0.25/ride), health/travel insurance

Leaders: Dr. Alexei Altonen (American Home Director of Special Projects), David Johnson (Vanderbilt University), Vladimir State University English students, American Home staff, and others in and around Vladimir

Group size: 5-10 participants (a minimum of 5 participants is generally required for each group)

Application Deadlines: November 1 and November 10, 2016

To Apply:

1) By November 1 email David Johnson (david.matthew.johnson@vanderbilt.edu) expressing your interest in the program and include a scanned copy of the picture page of your passport (for your Russian visa).

2) By November 10 mail a \$500 deposit check to: Serendipity, 1403 Kingsridge Drive, Normal, IL 61761-2860. The check should be payable to "Serendipity".

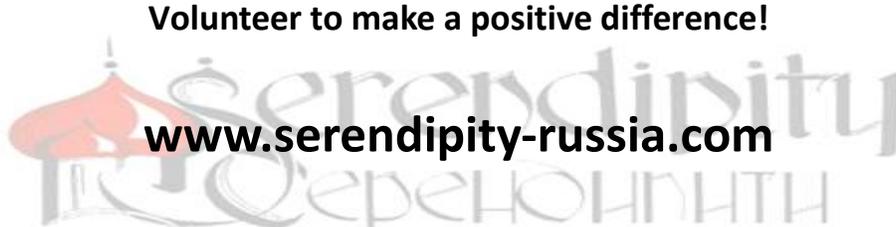
Additional Program Information

For additional information and comments, stories, pictures and TV reports about the program and other American Home programs and projects, please visit: <http://theamericanhome.blogspot.com>, www.facebook.com/americanhome

Experience the warmth and beauty of ancient, provincial Russia!

Volunteer to make a positive difference!

www.serendipity-russia.com



Alternative Spring Break in Russia (2)

Service Learning Volunteer Work in the Ancient Russian City of Murom

Help university students at the Murom Institute improve their English language skills and prepare audio and video materials for the Institute's language program.

During the Soviet period Murom was a closed city. Today it remains off of traditional tourist routes. Foreign language faculty and students are eager for contact with native English speakers.



Dates: *March 4-12 and 11-19, 2017 (Saturday-Sunday)*

Housing: *Homestays (with home-cooked breakfasts and dinners);*

Excursions: *Historic and cultural sites in the city of Murom and surrounding areas;*

Program Fee: *Approximately \$390*

Fee includes room and board, excursions, transportation from/to Moscow airport, visa invitation, basic Russian language lessons, on-site administrative support;

Fee does not include visa application expenses (~\$340), airfare, lunches, public transportation in Murom (~\$0.25/ride), health/travel insurance

Leaders: *Professors and students from the Murom Institute's English Department*

Group size: *5-10 participants (a minimum of 5 participants is generally required for each group)*

Application Deadlines: November 1 and November 10, 2016

To Apply:

- 1) By November 1 email David Johnson (david.matthew.johnson@vanderbilt.edu) expressing your interest in the program and include a scanned copy of the picture page of your passport (for your Russian visa).
- 2) By November 10 mail a \$500 deposit check to: Serendipity, 1403 Kingsridge Drive, Normal, IL 61761-2860. The check should be payable to "Serendipity".

Additional Program Information

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The American Home (Vladimir, Russia)

Comments and Observations

"What you've done is truly incredible. The excitement and positive energy that we witnessed was something that I'd rarely seen before. **You deserve hearty congratulations!**" (*US Embassy Official, visiting the AH (2010)*).

"...**any expectations I could possibly have had were surpassed. ...I participated in a culture without being a tourist...and spent [time] outside of my carefully constructed comfort zone. The experience was nothing short of changing my worldview.**" (*Vanderbilt University student 2015*)

"**The thing that probably has affected me most is not Moscow, not Red Square, not the countryside, but, Vladimir, and my time there.** My heart and soul are still in that strange and beautiful city, with those people who helped to create **one of the best times of my life**" (*Adam Trembl, University of Pittsburgh, Alternative Spring Break 2012*).

"I'm a big supporter of the American Home in Vladimir; **You have been doing such an amazing job for so many years!**" (*Professor Maia Solovieva, Faculty-in-Residence, Lecturer in Russian, Oberlin College*).

"I am extremely impressed by...the educational opportunities..., the enthusiasm of the participants, **the careful planning the American Home staff puts into each participant's experience.** In the post-Soviet period there are many opportunities for Americans in Russia; I find the Serendipity program **one of the most exciting**" (*Dr. Judith E. Kalb, Russian Program, University of South Carolina*).

"I don't know if the American Home staff realizes what **an amazing comfort zone they provided for us American[s].** [T]hey were truly a safe harbor...provid[ing] that amazing place where we could stand at the side of a swimming pool and dip our toes in before deciding whether or not to jump in." (*Carol Kirsch, 7th grade social studies, Westview Junior-Senior High School, Topeka, Indiana*).

"Vladimir offers a real opportunity to immerse yourself in Russian language and culture. Such immersion can be very frightening at first, and that is why...the American Home is such a plus. Here I am given the opportunity to work with Russians in an atmosphere that is very familiar, fostering, and comfortable. **I would certainly recommend it to anyone who wants to experience Russia for what it really is...**" (*Matt Plischke, Miami University (Ohio)*).

"Not only have the staff at the American Home helped facilitate my travel, they also have offered kindness and hospitality. **They are truly wonderful. I don't know what we would have done without them!**" (*Wendy Woith, PhD, RN*).

"**Galina and the [rest of the staff] made a profound impression** with their efficiency and helpfulness. If only everyone we worked with on [our] trips was as reliable and efficient as [the AH] staff" (*Diane Ignashev, Professor of Russian, Carlton College*).

"**You have a fantastic program here.** This is cooperation at its finest, and the skills and respect that you are giving your students is invaluable" (*Patrick Buzzard, NASA, US Embassy, Moscow*).

"**Vladimir and the American Home are ideally situated.** Vladimir is a part of Russia's famed Golden Ring, and the American Home lies in the heart of downtown Vladimir. Here, you have all the advantages of Russian city life, but with all the charm of the nearby dachas. **The American Home really is the meeting and mixing point for two cultures.** The longer I stay, the more I discover how much Vladimir has to offer me" (*Erika Boeckler, University of Wisconsin at Madison*).

"Every night when I come home from work I'm greeted enthusiastically by my 15-year-old host brother, Pasha. After dinner we drink tea, and Pasha usually launches into one of his favorite conversation topics and doesn't stop for quite some time. **Living in Vladimir...has provided a rich assortment of unique experiences that I know I wouldn't have encountered elsewhere**" (*Joanna Greenlee, Gordon College, Wenham, MA*).

"Thanks to the people who have worked so hard and who remain committed to its success, **the reputation that the American Home has earned with the people of Vladimir has to represent one of the most successful relationships any American organization has developed anywhere in Russia.**" (*Karen Hasara, former state legislator and former mayor of Springfield, Illinois*)

"The American Home is **easily the single most influential American presence in [Russia] outside Moscow and St. Petersburg**" (*Dr. Nils H. Wessel, Professor of Government, Emeritus, US Coast Guard Academy*).

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