

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: February 29-March 8, 2020 (Saturday-Sunday)

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

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

Program Fee: Approximately \$645 (depending on the number of participants)

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 (~\$280), 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)

Language: Knowledge of Russian is not required

Application Deadlines: November 15 and December 1, 2019

To Apply:

1) By November 15 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 December 1 mail a check for the program fee to: Serendipity, 1403 Kingsridge Drive, Normal, IL 61761-2860. The check should be payable to "Serendipity".

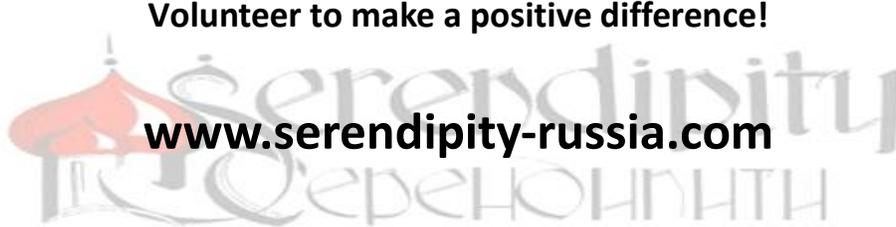
Additional Program Information

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 7-15, 2020 (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 \$645 (depending on the number of participants)

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 (~\$280), 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)

Language: Knowledge of Russian is not required

Application Deadlines: November 15 and December 1, 2019

To Apply:

1) By November 15 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 December 1 mail a check for the program fee 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

"I wouldn't trade this experience for the world. As I sit here, in the bedroom that my host family has graciously prepared, across the world from everything I'm familiar with, I can honestly say that there's nowhere else I'd rather be. **This trip has been the most amazing experience of my life ...**" (*Vanderbilt University student 2017*).

"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*).

"...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*).

"The thing that probably has affected me most is not Moscow, not Red Square, not the countryside, but, Vladimir, and my time there" (*Adam Treml, University of Pittsburgh, Alternative Spring Break*).

"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..., enthusiasm of the participants, 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. I would certainly recommend it to anyone who wants to experience Russia for what it really is..." (*Matt Plischke, Miami University (Ohio)*).

"Not only has 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 ... 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. 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*).