

# Frontline Bulgaria

## December 2009



### **Dear Friends**

***During the last 6 months we have continued to build strong relationships in Russe with the children and staff at the 'Pink House' and the Centre for Social Services, both run by 'Equilibrium', and with our friends in Friendship Church. We've also received encouraging news from Antioch Church in Vidin.***

**Training** In October, training in Advocacy and Inclusion was delivered by Mike Le-Surf and James Hamilton, representing People First (Havering), an advocacy project administered by Frontline. With combined experience of delivering and receiving support services, Mike and James contributed differing perspectives that enabled participants to explore how we can all offer the best support possible, to enable people with learning disabilities to live their lives the way they wish.

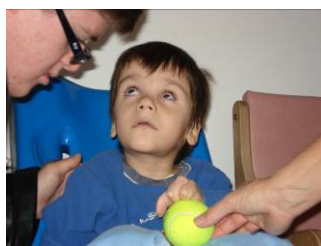
The course concluded with a PATH (*Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope*) in which participants suggested goals and a plan of action for the 'Pink House', the small group home for children from Mogilino. More about this later.



**Friendship Church** continues to inspire us with their work in the community and in institutions in and around Russe. They support many young adults who, when they leave orphanages, and find themselves ill-equipped to find jobs and cope with life in the community. The church was delighted to receive the two 'Light and Love' patchwork quilts that we delivered from Sawyers Church to distribute to needy families and waved their greetings for the camera (below)! James shared his story with the large group of young people and lost no time making new friends!



**Volunteer Programme** One of the goals included in the PATH was a Volunteer Programme to provide additional support for the young people in the Pink House. Frontline has drafted a project proposal to provide volunteers, including young care-leavers, to be trained to work alongside care staff. The aim is to help increase the residents' opportunities and community experiences and to develop the employment potential of the volunteers. Frontline is seeking funding (about £10,000 for the 2-year pilot project), to enable Friendship to employ a Volunteer Co-ordinator. Friendship has strong contacts with potential volunteers including young adults who have themselves experienced long-term institutional care.



**Baba Tonka, Russe** In earlier newsletters we have mentioned a large house on Baba Tonka Str. Sadly, plans for the resettlement of six young adults from Mogilino into this building came to nothing in the end. However, in a recent amazing turn of events, this newly and beautifully renovated house has now been offered to Friendship to extend their work in the community. In partnership with Trussell Trust they plan to provide family style accommodation for four young adults, as well as a Day Centre to support parents with children who have a disability. This ties in well with the proposed Volunteer Programme.



**Antioch Church in Vidin** The new Youth Club set up by this small church continues to go from strength to strength. It is managed by Proletka Petkova (Polly), a gifted young woman. The club meets a tremendous need and attracts many youngsters in a town that offers them very few social opportunities. Many contacts have been made and relationships built through art and craft, story-writing, guitar lessons, song writing, etc. A full Christmas programme has extended these opportunities. The church is also visiting local institutions for children and young adults over the Christmas period.



#### **THANK YOU TO ALL OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS.....**

Including friends and colleagues in Sawyers Church and Frontline, for your continuing help, donations and prayers and to British Airways for help with flights and extra baggage allowance



*If you would like to know more about Frontline's work in Brentwood or Bulgaria, please call Mary Hill on 01277 233889 (Crown Café at Sawyers Church) or Email: [mary@frontlinepartnership.org](mailto:mary@frontlinepartnership.org)*