

This story was forwarded by e mail from Alan Molod, HUNAS Co-Chair 2006 – 2007. Also included at the end is a story that appeared on the website for CBS 3.

Sent: Monday, January 01, 2007 11:45 PM
Subject: Diana's Story

I'm hoping, hoping, hoping that Golden Slipper (or any other contacts you have) can provide some help to the family of Diana Murtazova, a brave and beautiful 16-year-old survivor of the tragic school siege in Beslan, Russia in September 2004. Diana, her two little sisters, and her mother (the school nurse) were among the 1200 hostages herded into a small gym by 32 terrorists from Chechnya on September 1, 2004, the first day of the school year in Russia --and prior to 2004 a gala holiday called "The Day of Knowledge" celebrated by the children, their teachers and all their families. At the time, Diana was 14 and her sisters were 12 and 6.

The school siege in Beslan was among the worst attacks aimed specifically at children in history, Russian or otherwise. The stories of what was done to the children are too horrific to comprehend. Their parents were killed in front of their eyes, many were killed in front of their parents' eyes, many were brutalized, many were tortured, all were kept in the sweltering gym packed together almost on top of each other for three full days and allowed no food or water. They drank their own urine to survive. Over 300 people were dead by the time the siege ended, 176 of them children. Hundreds were terribly wounded and maimed.

Diana was very, very badly wounded by mine explosions when all hell broke loose on the third day. Her mother and sisters received no physical wounds, just terrible psychological damage, as is the case with hundreds throughout Beslan.

Diana was left totally paralyzed. After two years of various surgeries in Russia and Germany, she can sit up and has some use of her hands and arms. In October, Diana and her parents were brought to Philadelphia for treatment by a volunteer organization called moscowhelp.org, founded to fight terrorism in Russia and elsewhere. This is run by a group of young Russian men now living in the U.S. -- some are businessmen, one teaches film at Drexel, one is a theatrical agent, etc. Several are graduates of Columbia University. The group is based in Bensalem. Their website, www.moscowhelp.org, explains the scope of their work and contains information about the siege at Beslan.

Diana began her Philadelphia treatment at Shriner's Hospital, where she has been doing physical therapy to strengthen her arms since October. Two weeks ago, she had extraordinary vascular surgery at Temple University Hospital which hopefully has given her greater use of both arms and hands. The surgery also corrected a life-threatening condition involving her heart. The surgeon's fees and all other expenses were contributed by the doctor and by Temple.

Diana and her mother, Fatima, have been housed in a basement apartment on Welsh Road since their arrival. Her father, Murat, had to return to Beslan shortly after Diana arrived to care for the other two daughters, so Fatima is alone with Diana.
And that's the problem.

The constant lifting and moving of her paralyzed daughter is very, very difficult for Fatima and she badly needs help with her home-care. Anything that anyone can do to provide somebody to assist Fatima for a couple of

hours a day for perhaps several days a week (I'm not sure how much time is needed -- Fatima would have to tell us) would be so gratefully received.

I don't know how long Diana will remain in Philadelphia, but for as long as she's here Fatima would be so relieved to have assistance. I don't dare hope that whoever could come to help also could speak Russian, but that certainly would be miraculous if it were possible. If not, Diana understands some English and Fatima makes herself understood despite language barriers.

The following was the initial diagnosis for Diana, just days after the mine explosion. She was totally paralyzed. As we know now, she subsequently had a major problem with veins and arteries threatening her heart, which, ultimately, would have killed her. Her vascular surgery at Temple University two weeks ago corrected that problem and other issues with her arms and hands. She is still confined to a wheelchair and still does not have full use of her hands, but physical therapy will be ongoing at Shriner's Hospital

Murtazova, Diana Age: 14

Mine explosion wounds. Shell fragment wounds in the region of fifth cervical vertebra and spinal cord with abnormal neurility of spinal cord. Surgery aimed to improve spinal cord neurility is performed on 9/6/2004. Tetraparesis. The state on 9/7/2004: she breathes without apparatus, conscious. Hemodynamics is steady.

She's a girl who suffered some of the worst injuries of all the surviving children, and yet she smiles and laughs and is warm and friendly and hopeful. Everyone who meets Diana loves her. I hope we can help her.

If you need any additional information, let me know.

Love,
Linda

After some conversations with Adam Levine and Sara Goldberg we decided HUNAS should get involved. After further inquiry I learned that Diana needed not a home care helper (relatively inexpensive) but a trained therapist (\$75 per visit) twice a week who spoke Russian. After pursuing some leads I honed in on a company called Prestige Home Care, which has a Russian speaking therapist. Diana is scheduled to return to Russia in March. I found Prestige in mid-January, so approximately 8 to 10 weeks of therapy would be needed, at a cost of \$1200 to \$1500. After some negotiations I got Prestige to agree to take \$500 from HUNAS and then to continue the service without charge until Diana returned to Russia in March. The therapy started in mid-January. Yesterday I received the following letter from Linda Brodsky Cooper.

Dear Alan,

On behalf of Fatima and Diana Murtazova and their family, I send heartfelt thanks to you and Golden Slipper for the wonderful, wonderful assistance the organization has provided to Diana.

Your response was so immediate and so very perfect. The additional physical therapy which Diana has received has made a real difference in her condition.

You've all performed a great mitzvah for a brave and loving young girl – your contribution to her recovery is immeasurable.

All of the people of Beslan know of your kindness and generosity. It won't be forgotten.

Thanks so much for everything.

Love, Linda

Dec 20, 2006 9:49 pm US/Eastern

Russian Teen Receives Much-Needed Surgery



[Karen Adams](#)

Reporting



(CBS 3) PHILADELPHIA Five years after a terrorist attack on a school in Russia, a 16-year-old girl is still battling her injuries. Now, she's miraculously made a 5,000 mile voyage to Temple Hospital where doctors have performed life saving surgery. 16-year-old Diana Murtazova sits calmly as the chief of Vascular Surgery at Temple University Hospital uses an ultrasound to show the vascular damage in her right arm.

"Blood flows abnormally from the artery into the veins, straight back to the heart, putting a stress on the heart," said Chief Surgeon John Blebea. Without corrective surgery, Murtazova would lose the use of her arm and would ultimately suffer heart failure.

"It's significant not just for her arm, but for her life," said Dr. Blebea.

Murtazova suffered the vascular damage to her arm and other injuries in the September 2001 terrorist attack on a school in Beslan.

Hundreds of children, teachers and parents died in the bloody 52-hour siege. Speaking through a translator Murtazova smiles,

looking forward to the day she'll be able to use her hand again.

"Hopefully she will be able to write and eat without help from other people," said Diana through translator Zhenya Kiperman.

Diana's surgery is made possible by the non-profit organization; the International Federation for Terror Act Victims. It has helped bring five children including Diana to the United States to receive critical surgery and it would like to help several more.

"There are more children in line that have been hurt very severely. There is a boy who has horrific burns that are just not healing. There is something that can be done, but not in Russia," said Andrew Mogilyansky of the organization.

Diana hopes the other children injured in the attacks will have the same opportunity she's been afforded.

"She wants very much for the other kids to come here and get help because she's still in touch with many of them," said Diana through the translator.

She said she'll never forget them or the event that changed their lives forever. Doctors at Temple said the surgery was a complete success. They also said Diana is doing extremely well and could be out of the hospital as early as Thursday.

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