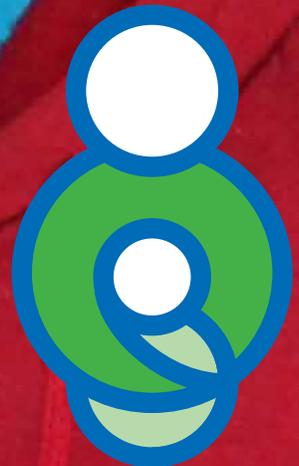




# The Kids First Fund

2013 ANNUAL REPORT



### From the President

“As you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”<sup>1</sup>

This year’s letter will bravely (and perhaps foolishly) trundle into the topic of religious institutions. Last year’s message focused on the unfortunate comments of politicians regarding the rape of women. And the year before that, I discussed the pedophile scandal associated with Pennsylvania State University. This year’s letter will assess the role of the Holy See, commonly known as the Vatican, in a global pattern of child abuse. Unfortunately, this series of letters provides abundant evidence of institutions creating harm rather than preventing it.

This message will focus on a report issued by the United Nations’ Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which reviewed the Vatican’s compliance as a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>3</sup> The scale of the problem faced by the Catholic Church and purposeful enabling of abusers makes it a case worthy of full review by any organization engaged in the prevention of child abuse. For disclosure, I am a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and must sadly admit my church has its share of pedophile scandals involving clergy.

Many will recognize the quote above as from the Book of Matthew as dialogue between Jesus and his disciples. Concern for the oppressed, hungry, widows, and orphans is a constant theme of Christ’s mission; this continues the same pre-Christian message abundantly proclaimed in ancient Hebrew Scriptures. There is complete sadness in the reference to children as the “least of these.” It’s undeniably true and conveyed by the statistic published by the World Health Organization that 40 million children worldwide below the age of 15 are subjected to child abuse each year. The measure of any society can quickly be assessed by how it protects its children, and as a global village ... we fail every day.

The report issued by the UN committee offers plenty of controversy and touches on issues central to Catholic dogma. The report urges the Church to “condemn all forms of harassment, discrimination or violence

against children based on their sexual orientation.” It expresses concern that children born of Catholic priests are not made aware of the identity of their fathers. It urges the Vatican to promote birth control as one of the methods to decrease the frequency of child abandonment at Church-operated orphanages. These issues were broadly presented by Vatican supporters as evidence of overreach by a secular institution into the internal issues of a church. Unfortunately, these headlines often clouded the terrible truths revealed by the rest of the report.

It’s important to note the reason for the issuance of the report. The activities of the Holy See within the United Nations system officially began on April 6, 1964, when the Vatican was granted the status of permanent observer state.<sup>3</sup> In effect, the Church elected this level of UN scrutiny.

Continued on page 3

### Inside:

- 5 Numbers Help Tell Our Story
- 6 Shelter Teaches Life Skills
- 7 Benefits from Training in Moldova
- 9 Support for Foster Families
- 10 Kids First Teddy Bear Awards
- 11 Board Member Snapshot – Irma Kalnina
- 12 Your Board of Directors
- 12 About The Kids First Fund

<sup>1</sup> New Testament of the Bible, Matthew 25:40.

<sup>2</sup> “Concluding observations on the second periodic report of the Holy See” issued by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on 31 January 2014.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Treaty Collection, Convention on the Rights of the Child (New York, 20 November 1989) reviewed UN.org website March 2014.

## From the President continued

The Holy See became a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 20 April 1990. The Church embraced the legally-binding principles with this added declaration, “The Holy See regards the present Convention as a proper and laudable instrument aimed at protecting the rights and interests of children, who are that precious treasure given to each generation as a challenge to its wisdom and humanity.”

The Vatican did not issue reports for its compliance with the Convention from 1994 through 2012. This was a period marked by revelations of child abuse for the Church throughout the world.<sup>4</sup> The lack of periodic reporting by the Holy See, along with news of the pedophile scandal, is what prompted the UN’s compliance review.

Moving past the cultural politics associated with the topics described above, the report offers a clear assessment of the failure of the Catholic Church to place the protection of children as an undeniable mandate. The following are excerpts from the litany of abuses by the Vatican and its subordinate institutions:

- No action has been taken by the Holy See to cooperate or investigate the child abuse associated with the Magdalene laundries operated by Catholic Sisters in Ireland (featured in the film “Philomena”). Girls were forced to “work in slavery like conditions and were often subject to inhuman, cruel and degrading treatment as well as to physical and sexual abuse.” Amazingly, the Vatican has not taken any disciplinary actions against the sisters.
- The report indicates “ritual beatings of children, has been and remains widespread in some Catholic institutions and reached endemic levels in certain countries.” The Holy See does not consider physical punishment of children as behavior prohibited by the Convention and has not enacted policies to prevent the beating of children by persons and institutions under its authority.

- A code of silence continues to exist with the Catholic Church on the issue of the sexual abuse of children by clergy. Child sexual abuse, when addressed, has been dealt with as a high crime with the Church. While this appears to be sufficiently grave, the interpretation can allow punishment to occur within church structure and conceal child abuse cases from judicial proceedings. The report credits a code of silence placed on clergy through the threat of excommunication; cases of child sexual abuse are hardly ever reported to law enforcement authorities.
- Nuns and priests are ostracized, demoted and fired for not respecting the obligation of silence, as was reported to the UN Committee along with cases of priests who have been congratulated for refusing to denounce fellow priests who are child abusers.
- Reporting to national law enforcement authorities has never been made compulsory and was explicitly rejected in an official letter addressed to members of the Irish Episcopal Conference in 1997. In many cases, Church authorities, including at the highest levels of the Holy See have shown reluctance, and in some instances, refused to cooperate with judicial authorities and national commissions of inquiry.

*Continued on page 4*

<sup>4</sup> “UN panel confronts Vatican on child sex abuse by clergy” article dated 16 January 2014 at BBC.com.

“A code of silence continues to exist with the Catholic Church on the issues of sexual abuse of children by clergy.”

## From the President continued

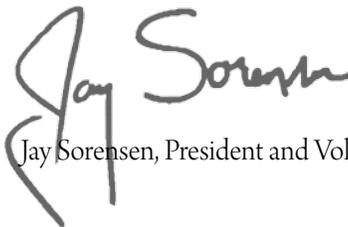
Contrary to the public performances of the Church's hierarchy, the Vatican continues to earn a failing grade for protecting children from abuse. The UN report discloses "child victims and their families have often been blamed by religious authorities, discredited and discouraged from pursuing their complaints and in some instances humiliated." The Church also imposes a code of silence on victims, as confidentiality is imposed as a pre-condition for financial compensation.

The Vatican is an institution in dire need of healing, reform, and a rededication to the "least of these." It is a holy and ancient organization, but nonetheless, it's an institution like any other that has placed self-preservation above the need for transparency and justice. The Vatican's child sex abuse scandal has wrought a terrible transformation from an organization representing every good quality of humankind to one which has focused on denial of truth and protecting perpetrators.

Good will eventually prevail. It always does. I have every belief this story will have an ending in which the needs of children are eventually placed front and center.

But a terrible gap exists between any act of abuse and the healing that hopefully arrives. The gap can be removed through prevention. The gap can be shortened by detection. The gap can end with treatment. This is our role. This is our mission. This is what we do. We advocate for, protect, and heal those who don't have a voice. By definition, our efforts focus on children and through practice our efforts help mothers and women, as well. We do this in places like Latvia and Moldova where the need is made great by the severe lack of resources and awareness. We have so much work to do and your financial support allows us to do it. Thank you for the privilege of allowing the Kids First Fund to be a faithful steward of your donations.

For the kids,



Jay Sorensen, President and Volunteer

*On the cover: One of a group of children representing several districts in Moldova involved in a program that includes discussion and analysis on topics such as the rights in their communities (including the right to be protected from violence).*



## Numbers Help Tell Our Story

The 2013 annual report represents a continuing commitment to donor disclosure by including the annual financial statements for the Kids First Fund. In addition, filings made with government regulators, such as the US Internal Revenue Service, are available for download at KidsFirstFund.org.

Results for 2013 reflect the slow recovery for US and global economies with increased donations. Annual cash contributions have largely ranged between \$6,000 and \$9,000 for the 2007 through 2012 period, as shown in the table below:

Cash Contribution Trend – Past 6 Years						
2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
\$6,007	\$8,810	\$8,143	\$14,397	\$8,023	\$7,270	\$15,709

### Kids First Fund, Inc. 2012 & 2013 Income Statement

Contributions	2012	2013
Cash donations	\$7,270.11	\$15,708.80
Interest from savings account	\$80.88	\$90.78
Dividends/change in market value securities	\$456.62	\$835.44
In-kind items (see note a)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Online Travel Auction for Kids (see note b)	\$9,274.11	\$14,390.97
<b>Total Contributions</b>	<b>\$17,081.72</b>	<b>\$31,025.99</b>
<b>Expenditures and Distributions</b>		
Grants made to support mission	\$15,000.00	\$25,000.00
Salaries, compensation & benefits	\$0.00	\$0.00
Professional fees & fundraising	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total Expenses and Distributions</b>	<b>\$15,000.00</b>	<b>\$25,000.00</b>
<b>Excess Funds – Deposited to Bank Account</b>	<b>\$2,081.72</b>	<b>\$6,025.99</b>

Results are not audited, but reflect amounts reported to the IRS.

(a) Items were donated that support the mission of the Kids First Fund.

(b) Net results from the annual online travel auction. All items are 100% donated. Selling expenses associated with eBay auctions were 11-12% of the gross amount raised.

### Kids First Fund, Inc. 2012 & 2013 Balance Sheet

Assets	Dec. 31, 2012	Dec. 31, 2013
Cash and investments	\$89,164.22	\$95,190.21
Other assets	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$89,164.22</b>	<b>\$95,190.21</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accounts payable	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other liabilities	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Net Assets and Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$89,164.22</b>	<b>\$95,190.21</b>

Results are not audited, but reflect amounts reported to the IRS.

Cash contributions for 2013 more than doubled the prior year amount and posted a new high since 2007. We received a single \$10,000 contribution during the year largely thanks to the effort of board member Hamid Ladjevardi to solicit a Chicago-based family foundation. Results from the annual travel auction were up 55 percent from 2012 and totaled \$14,391.

Google Wallet became a less attractive donor channel during 2012 as Google stopped its practice of paying all administrative and merchant fees, an expense that typically ranges from three to four percent. As a result, a new merchant with a modest fee structure for credit card donation processing was chosen during 2013.

Three significant cash distributions were made to fund programs in Latvia and Moldova. The board authorized two \$7,500 grants for ongoing support of the child abuse prevention project operated by the Child Rights Information Center in Moldova. The Kids First Fund provided \$15,000 during 2013 for spring and fall programs in rural regions of the country. Additional details for the Moldova project are provided in this report. In addition, the Kids First Fund chose to support a new organization in Latvia with a \$10,000 grant. The relationship with the Latvian Foster Family Society is introduced in this year's report.

The Kids First Fund continued its tradition of operating on a zero-overhead budget and did not incur expenses related to salaries, fundraising fees, and travel. Our cash and investments balance at year-end was \$95,190. The Kids First Fund anticipates it will provide \$15,000 to support a full year of work in Moldova during 2014 in addition to financial support that may be provided to Latvia. The financial statements were drafted by Bob Bahlman, treasurer of the Kids First Fund.

## Latvia Family Shelter Teaches Life Skills to Kids

The Latgale Regional Support Centre for Abused Children and Women, known as Rasas Perles (Pearls of Dew), provided support to more children during 2013. The number of children served was unexpectedly high and required the Latvian government to provide more funds to cover the shelter's budget shortfall. For social workers, it's the usual theme of "good and bad." It's good the shelter identified and helped more children during the year, but within the higher numbers is increased pain and suffering caused by child abuse and domestic violence.

The Centre offers welcome sanctuary and healing for children and mothers that visit for a standard period of 30 to 60 days. These children and moms reside in Latvia's poorest region of Latgale, which comprises the eastern portion of the country. During these stays, they receive psychological counseling, rehabilitation, schooling, and life skills instruction.

Thanks to support provided by Electrolux, the Centre recently added a specially designed training kitchen to teach boys, girls, and moms how to cook. And much of the fruit and vegetable bounty is grown on premise in a large garden along with fruit trees and bushes. Next to the kitchen is a sewing room where kids and moms learn how to repair or make their own clothes. For those long Latvian winters, when the weather is frightfully cold, the kids have access to an indoor exercise room to spend their youthful energy. The entire concept of the Centre is designed to create a caring and comfortable safe haven to encourage recovery.



Children and moms learn how to cook nutritious food in the shelter's new teaching kitchen.

With support from the Latvian Children's Fund, the leadership team for the Centre, have become very effective fundraisers. Proceeds from the NATO Charity Bazaar held in Riga were nearly €10,000 (US\$13,840). This money was used to buy new furniture made by local carpenters for the children's rooms. The Latvian State Forest Company donated 7,000 lats (US\$13,800) to ensure children and mothers would receive adequate psychologist and social worker support. Still, the majority of financial support originates from the Republic of Latvia and its municipal governments.

The allocated budget for 2013 was 139,213 lats (US\$274,000). Due to increased family referrals during the year, actual expenditures were 159,326 lats (US\$313,900). Fortunately, the central government provided additional financial support to meet the deficit. In addition to shelter operations, the facility hosts a number of educational workshops that attract participants from all over the Latgale region.

Family Shelter Statistics				
	2010	2011	2012	2013
Children served in shelter	142	199	208	248
Total days of care	6,200	6,119	6,663	6,845
Mothers served in shelter	31	34	30	31
Total days of care	900	822	823	720

Statistics provided by Latgale Regional Support Center

Family Shelter Statistics – Primary Referral Reasons			
	2011	2012	2013
Emotional abuse	98%	91%	85%
Abandoned and neglected	53%	60%	48%
Physical abuse	30%	24%	30%
Sexual abuse	16%	18%	12%

Statistics provided by Latgale Regional Support Center for all children served with multiple referral reasons possible for individual children.

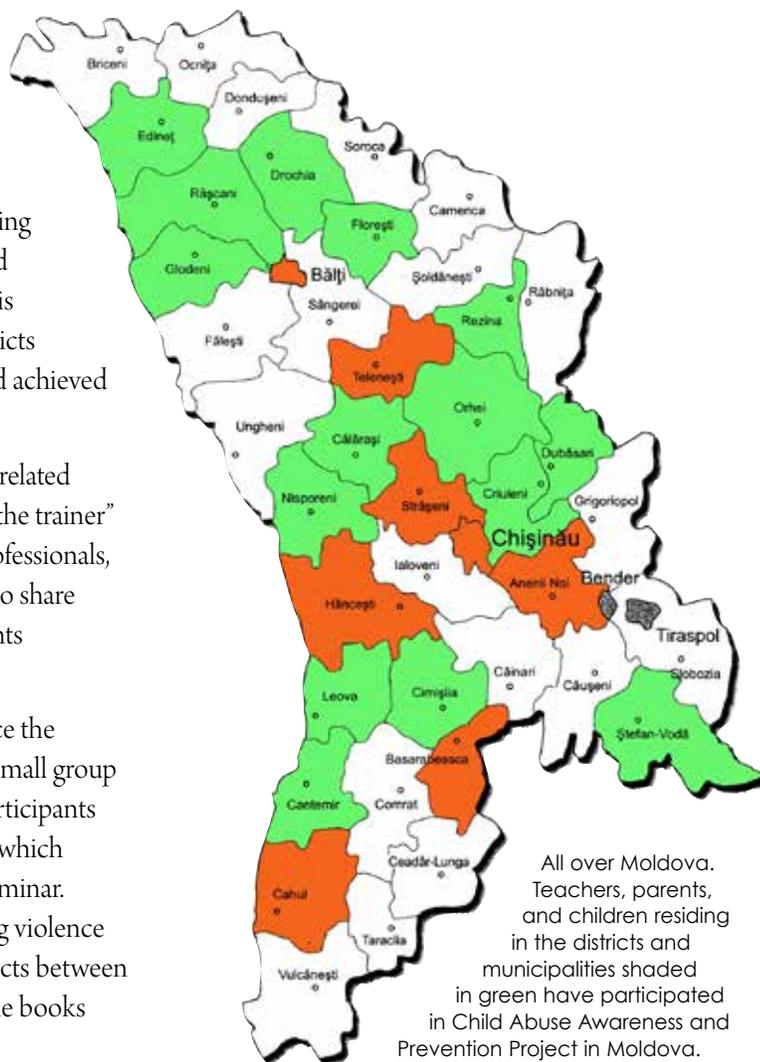
## Year-Over-Year Results Double the Number of Teachers, Parents, and Children Benefitting from Training in Moldova

The Kids First Fund and its Moldova-based partner, the Child Rights Information Center Moldova (CRIC), began its fourth year of cooperation during 2013. CRIC operated the Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Project with 100 percent of grant support provided by the Kids First Fund. The initial three-year project concluded during the first half of 2013 and was extended by the Kids First Fund Board for an additional three years through 2016. To date, this program has reached participants in 23 of 40 Moldova's districts or municipalities, reached more than 18,600 participants, and achieved a doubling of year-over-year participation.

The project reaches three groups with a broad array of topics related to child abuse and abandonment. The first step takes a "train the trainer" approach through two-day seminars with teachers, school professionals, and social workers as participants. This group is encouraged to share knowledge and experience with two additional groups: parents and students.

The seminars use a variety of activities to deliver and reinforce the educational message: brainstorming, individual reflections, small group exercises, viewing and discussing videos, and role playing. Participants are provided a take-home library of 14 publications, most of which are proprietary works created by CRIC specifically for the seminar. Publications include training support materials for preventing violence in schools such as child-focused cartoons for resolving conflicts between friends, brochures defining the rights of children, and multiple books addressing Moldova's problem of parents working abroad.

The design of this program provides a cascading effect by reaching thousands of parents and children. During 2013, a core group of 213 teachers, school administrators and psychologists, received the full two-day training. In turn, this group involved more than 500 additional educational professionals in child abuse prevention and awareness activities. The next layer of awareness-building engaged more than 6,200 children and 1,500 parents and caregivers during 2013.



Reports from teachers indicate students appreciate the instructional method used, which CRIC calls "Grain of Sand." It uses real-life situations in the lives of children, and effectively

Continued on page 8

“The design of this program provides a cascading effect by reaching thousands of parents and children.”

## Training in Moldova continued

encourages them to reflect on the many aspects of violence. Kids share stories about difficult situations, but many choose to be silent and less involved in the discussion. But learning certainly occurs when the taboo subject of physical and sexual abuse is openly discussed. Most importantly, the kids are learning they have rights and how they can seek protection from abuse.

Parenting all over the world occurs without the benefit of training with the assumption that anyone can raise a child. This program seeks to change this tradition by describing better parenting methods. Teachers reported more than 100 volunteer-led activities that reached an amazing number of parents and caregivers – more than 1,500. These meetings tackled the following issues: violence in the media, identifying child abuse, consequence-based versus disciplinary-based punishment, parental responsibilities, importance of communication, non-violent methods to resolve conflict, and helping children face difficult situations.

The project continues to deliver very meaningful results at a modest cost. More than 18,600 participants have been reached at a very efficient cost of \$2.82 per person since the project began in 2010. The statistics provided here define the audience reached directly by teachers interacting with parents and students. Of course, there is a wider audience in each community that benefits from the awareness-building and behavioral changes generated by the core group of teachers and parents.

The results of this project are very powerful. Prior to exposure to training, most participants are not aware of the child protection system. Teachers do not understand the principle of the “best interest of the child” being of paramount importance, and that “protection” is not a component of their job as a teacher. Few teachers know how to report suspected abuse cases according to established procedures. The belief that “the school has no right to intervene in family issues” was overwhelmingly prevalent. It’s clear from teacher disclosures, that that prior collaboration between schools and community social services are virtually non-existent.



**Cezar Gavriluc is the Executive Director for the Child Rights Information Center in Moldova and a tireless advocate for children.**

The project is designed to remove these barriers, dispel myths, and educate teachers on their professional obligations. The Kids First Fund requires CRIC to monitor the effectiveness through pre- and post-training surveys. Teacher knowledge and attitudes towards violence against children improved by 4.88 points as a result of the training from an index score of 14.56 to 19.44. Next year’s annual report will provide additional details regarding program effectiveness.

Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Project – Moldova				
Participant Groups	2011 Totals	2012 Totals	2013 Totals	To Date
District representatives trained	56	56	213	351
Children receiving abuse awareness training	2,416	2,592	6,240	12,568
Parents/caregivers involved in effective parenting curriculum	758	831	1,545	3,812
Teachers benefiting from sessions organized by colleagues	469	552	510	1,899
Project Metrics				
Total participation	3,699	4,031	8,508	18,630
Kids First Fund program grants	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$52,500
Program cost per participant	\$4.06	\$3.73	\$1.76	\$2.82

Source: Child Resource Information Center. Project began in 2010.

## New Program in Latvia Provides Support for Foster Families as an Option to Institutions

Grant making activity for the Kids First Fund is not limited to direct support of family shelters and abuse awareness programs. The Latvian Foster Family Society represents an alternative method to address child abuse issues. The development of foster family support is a welcome addition to any social service network. It can provide a placement solution for children who are victims of abuse. In Latvia, foster parents can be adults unrelated to the child, or distant family members.

Latvia is a country with limited resources and has one of the EU's lowest levels of household income. Every little bit helps when candidates consider becoming foster parents. The support provided by the Kids First Fund paid for everyday items such as supply packs for the school year and a first-ever series of support group meetings for foster families.

The Kids First Fund authorized a \$10,000 grant for the Latvian Foster Family Society during 2013. From this, 228 children received school supplies at the start of the school year, 160 foster families were provided a food basket filled with everyday staples, and the Society operated 16 educational sessions. The food baskets and school supplies were designed to lessen the level of poverty that exists for many foster families.

Foster parents and guardians had the opportunity to get together and experience a sense of unity as foster families. For most, this was a first experience to share their stories and learn different methods for parenting and childcare. The sessions occurred February through December 2013 and included the following topics:

- How to solve conflicts in a foster family.
- Whether and how to establish relationships with biological parents.
- Accepting a foster child, and strengthening family relationships.
- Establishing rules within a family system.
- Having courage to be honest in unfortunate situations.

In addition to the group events, the grant allowed for individual consultations to discuss in-depth questions that were touched during



Two Latvian foster kids who received school supplies courtesy of the grant provided by the Kids First Fund.

the support group. Individual consultations were provided in crisis situations when relationships between child and guardian become aggravated. The Society is a careful steward of grant monies and has low overhead expenses and emphasizes volunteer support. Hamid Ladjevardi became a member of the Society's board and Jay Sorensen became an honorary board member during 2013.

The Kids First Fund authorized a \$10,000 grant for the Latvian Foster Family Society during 2013.

## KLM, Southwest, and United Airlines Receive Kids First Teddy Bear Awards

The Kids First Fund proudly recognized the star performers of the 2013 International Online Travel Auction for Kids. Although many airlines and hotel brands generously donated to the Fund, the awards honor the three highest performers in the auction each year. The 2013 awards were presented on November 13, 2013 and honored:

- KLM Royal Dutch Airlines donated airline travel from the United States to any European destination that generated a total bid activity in excess of \$3,800 – more than any other single corporate donor.
- Southwest Airlines provided six unrestricted tickets that generated the second highest bid activity, which was in excess of \$3,300. The tickets also created the highest level of interest as measured by page views for the listed items.
- United Airlines generously provided tickets valid for travel within the continental U.S. and Alaska, Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean. These generated the third highest bid activity for any single donor company, bringing in nearly \$2,200.

KLM, Southwest and United Airlines each received a Kids First Teddy Bear Award in recognition of their support for this year's auction. Each bear has been custom crafted by the Vermont Teddy Bear Company with the logo of the Kids First Fund and a sash recognizing the recipient company.

The recognition event occurred during the MEGA Awards Gala on November 13, 2013 in Vancouver, Canada and was associated with a global airline industry conference hosted by Airline Information. The Kids First Fund looks forward to its continuing relationship with Airline Information and to return to the stage in 2014 to recognize the companies that donate to the next International Online Travel Auction for Kids.”

Donor companies for the 2013 auction included: Aeroplan, Air Arabia, Avis Car Rental, Flynas, Iberia Airlines, Icelandair, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Pegasus Airlines, SATA Airlines, Southwest Airlines, Tune Hotels, United Airlines, Virgin Australia, and Wyndham Hotels and Resorts.



Kids First Teddy Bear Award recipients in Vancouver, Canada on November 13, 2013 (left to right): David Oppenheim – United Airlines, Fabien Pelous – KLM, Jay Sorensen – Kids First Fund, and Jonathan Clarkson – Southwest Airlines.

## Board Member Snapshot – Irma Kalnina

This report continues an annual tradition – the board member snapshot. Irma is pictured at right with her husband Ojars and very loveable grandsons Laris (left) and Niklavs (right) at home in Riga, Latvia.

**Joined board:** 1999 (founding member)

**Family:** Ojars (husband)

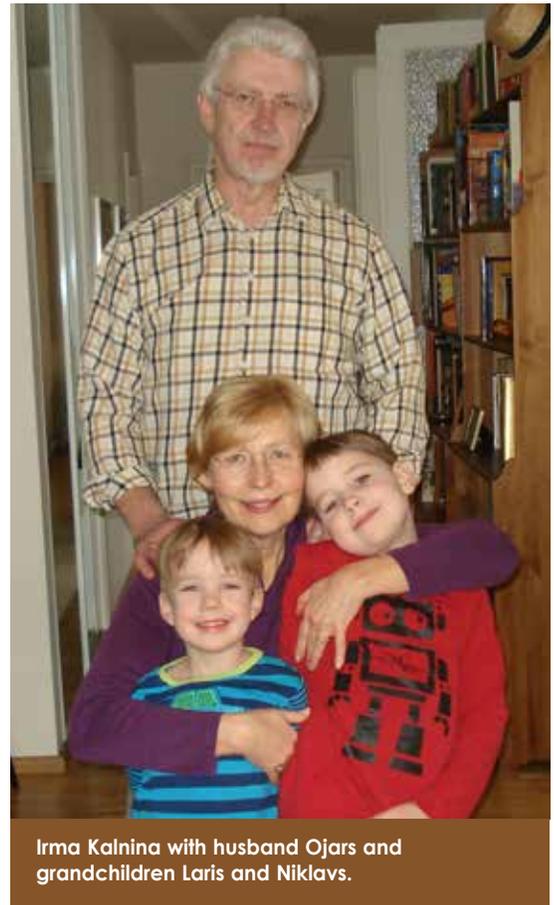
**Residence:** Riga, Latvia. Born in New York, lived in Connecticut and Washington, D.C.

**Current profession:** CEO of Irma Kalnina Consulting. Training, consulting, lecturing on business etiquette to corporate and government representatives. Before starting my own company, I was responsible for developing corporate philanthropy and corporate social responsibility at the Non-governmental Organization Center in Riga.

**Favorite activity or destination:** Being an active grandmother to two fantastic boys (Niklavs 7 and Laris 4). We love Saturday night sleepovers and lazy summer days at our beach house on the Baltic Sea. Sport: swimming, cross-country skiing.

**What interests you about the KFF mission?** As a mother and grandmother, it simply breaks my heart to see and hear about abused children and women – no matter what nationality they are. Giving these children a chance to live normal healthy lives free of physical and psychological abuse. Kids First Fund has sponsored seminars for police, judges, social workers that have resulted in raising the overall professional competence of all individuals involved in abuse cases. Rasas Perles will continue to need additional support for: housing improvements, equipment, additional social worker consultations and extending of the days that children can stay in the Centre, if necessary.

**Where do you see the Fund five years from now?** Five years from now, our core work should be with NGO partners and charitable organizations that align with our mission of supporting children and families in crisis. Continuing education for social workers and counselors in early detection and intervention.



**What is the most important thing we do?** Giving hope to children and mothers. Freeing them from abuse and giving them practical skills to find employment so that they can support their children and be free to live a normal life. Whether a child is in a crisis centre, orphanage, guardianship or fostercare – we can raise awareness, raise funds and influence decision makers to improve the lives of children in Latvia.

“As a mother and grandmother, it simply breaks my heart to see and hear about abused children and women. . . .”

## About the Kids First Fund

The Kids First Fund helps abused and abandoned children. We protect children from abuse. We empower young adults with a positive future. We strengthen families. We build awareness of child abuse. We operate in countries where resources are very limited. Current projects provide support for children in Latvia and Moldova. The Kids First Fund supports programs to educate child welfare professionals such as police officers, judges, social workers and prosecutors on child abuse issues. Direct assistance is also given to centers providing care for abused children. The Kids First Fund does not incur any expenses since all staffing and services are donated. The organization has been granted special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

## Special Thanks

This annual report is courtesy of the services contributed by Amy Thomas, who operates field|works, a graphic design firm in Shorewood, Wisconsin.

Hosting and updating of the KidsFirstFund.org website is donated by Matthew Frederick, who operates DigitalPerceptions.com, an interactive web media development firm in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

SWISS International Air Lines and airBaltic generously donate travel for board member trips to Latvia and Moldova. Parking is provided by the Crowne Plaza Chicago O'Hare. All official trips rely on corporate donations and are otherwise self-funded by board members.

The Kids First Fund is a charity recognized by Airline Information, which provides generous financial support and includes the Teddy Bear Awards in its annual MEGA Event airline industry conference.

Vermont Teddy Bear provides custom crafted teddy bears for the annual Kids First Teddy Bear Awards.



## Learn More and Donate Online

[KidsFirstFund.org](http://KidsFirstFund.org)

**The Kids First Fund**  
1916 E. Kensington Blvd.  
Shorewood, WI 53211, USA  
414/961-1939



## Your Board of Directors and Officers

**Bob Bahlman, Treasurer**  
(Neenah, Wisconsin)

**Stuart Benzal, Director**  
(Chicago, Illinois)

**Diana Cronan, Director**  
(Washington, DC)

**Rogers Grigulis, Director**  
(Riga, Latvia)

**Jason Handal, Vice President**  
(Mequon, Wisconsin)

**Arturs Irbe, Director**  
(Riga, Latvia)

**Irma Kalnina, Director**  
(Riga, Latvia)

**Hamid Ladjevardi**  
(New York City and Riga, Latvia)

**Maria Marinuta, Director**  
(Chisinau, Moldova)

**Jeff Patrias, Director**  
(Eagan, Minnesota)

**Jay Sorensen, President**  
(Shorewood, Wisconsin)

## United Nations Representatives

**Jay Sorensen** and **Stuart Benzal** are designated representatives to the Economic and Social Council at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

**Roger Grigulis** and **Irma Kalnina** are the designated representatives to the Economic and Social Council at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva and Vienna.