His name is Alexey Talai...

His name is Alexey Talai and he hails from Belarus.

The country is sandwiched between Russia, the Ukraine, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania,

Alexey is 26 years old and a family man.

"I have two children, Mark, and Vladik, 6 and 4 years old, and my wife Maria."

Alexey has also taken on a special project. He is building an orphanage in his hometown of Orsha, northeast of Belarus capital city of Minsk.

"Just I want to help orphans children, I want they to have the possibility to grow up and to be successful in life."

"So I want to do all my best to help these people because I know everybody can be successful."

And if anyone has an excuse not to be successful --- it is Alexey Talai.

That’s because 10 years ago he was literally blown apart by a landmine buried since World War II.

Alexey has no legs and no arms.

"Everything is possible when you have dreams. I have dream in my heart to see happy children --- they smile and are successful."

"Now I am here in the United States, it is also like gift from God that I meet so much people and so much people who can really work with me to help orphans."
One of those people is longtime Tallahassee association guru Bob Harris. He’s been counseling Alexey on how to set up and run a nonprofit charitable entity. Something that isn’t as common in Belarus.

During his stay in the US Alexey also found something else very different from his homeland.

"Oh yes, much surprise. First surprise and very important is accessibility for disabled people. Every where, where I was, it’s absolutely no problem for access for people in wheelchair."

Although Alexey certainly didn’t spend all of his time in that wheelchair.

"Also I was skiing in Vail. It’s like in my dream -- I never think that I can do some day in my life. Also the Gulf of Mexico, I was swimming there in salt water. It is amazing."

Now Alexey is heading back home to Belarus.

"It will be very happy hours, happy days to be with my family. I miss them very much. Also I miss very much Belarus."

"I want to see my city, my country, my people. Maybe some days my children can also see a little bit of America – what I saw for this eight weeks. It will be great gift."

Perhaps the greatest gift of all though is the inspiration and warmth Alexey Talai brings to every life he touches. That includes his many new friends in the United States.

For WFSU-FM, I’m Tom Flanigan.

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