Alexey Talai -
Inspiration & Humanitarian

Meeting Alexey Talai is a sobering experience. At the age of 16, Alexey was severely injured by an undiscovered WWII landmine and lost his arms and legs. He could easily be bitter about suffering from this horrific accident. Instead he is very positive and engaging, and not once in his story do you hear self-pity. He is only interested in turning his tragedy into a positive experience for children less fortunate, and to share his message so that others will perhaps be inspired to do the same.

Alexey has taken on an ambitious mission. His dream is to provide adequate housing and educational opportunities for a forgotten group – not only orphans, but also disabled orphans in his home country of Belarus. His first project is a residence in his hometown, but his long-range plan is to expand beyond one house to create a series of “villages” for these children. The residences and villages will ultimately be staffed by residents who are graduates of this innovative project. He also wants to help disabled children with the most basic of needs to improve their mobility and independence, whether they live in his residences or with their own families. In his newsletter, he reports that he was able to provide a motorized wheelchair for a young girl from his hometown, and he describes how her eyes sparkled at this amazing gift. His goal for this year is to complete the office space and firmly establish his international headquarters in Belarus. Through his travels, he is also working to set up a network of sponsors worldwide.

If you attended the meeting in Natchez, you heard Alexey speak at the luncheon and saw the slideshow of the work he has been able to accomplish so far. There is much more work to be done at his orphanage in Belarus, but Alexey’s primary purpose was not to make an appeal for donations. Instead, he wants to learn as much as he can about associations and other non-profits and apply that knowledge to his passion. Acclaimed association expert, Bob Harris, CAE, has taken an active role by serving as Alexey’s mentor in the United States and has introduced him to many associations and organizations. Alexey has also spoken before associations in Europe and most notably addressed the Minsk Association for Business and Employers earlier this year.

Alexey states on his website, “What can I make of myself, how can I be a benefit to society instead of a burden? While I don’t feel like a burden, sometimes I am treated as such. Or people think I can’t add value to society.” This inspiring young man is a lesson to all of us that even in the most dire circumstances, hard work and determination can make a profound difference in just one life.

For more information on Alexey and his projects, including opportunities for sponsorship, please visit his website at cafeindependence.web.com.

To make a donation towards his project make your check payable to MSAE and denote Alexey Talai and mail to MSAE P. O. Box 12467, Jackson, MS 39236.
Mid-Year Conference in Natchez
March 28-30, 2010

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