

# INTO the HEARTLAND CAMPAIGN

**SITE: ROSTOV-ON-DON  
DISTRICT: SOUTHERN  
COLLABORATION LAUNCHED: 2009**

**SEPT 29-OCT 16, 2010  
SURGICAL-EDUCATIONAL  
MISSION 2**



## PATIENT PROFILE

Child	Natalia Y.
Age	17 years old
DOB	October 29, 1992
Weight	Current: 100 lbs
Home	Novocherkassk Rostov Oblast 20 mi from Rostov-on-Don
Parents	Larisa, 43; Oleg, 48
Diagnosis	Tetralogy of Fallot, PFO S/p Right thoracotomy and right central shunt (2004, Moscow)
Open heart surgery	Takedown of Waterson shunt, repair of right pulmonary artery, Tetralogy of Fallot repair October 11, 2010
Discharged from PCICU	October 14, 2010

## THE HOUSEHOLD AND THE FAMILY

Natalia is seventeen years old. She lives with her parents, Larisa and Oleg, in a town about 20 miles from Rostov-on-Don, called Novocherkassk. Curious and outgoing, Natalia has always attended school. After ninth grade, she transferred to a local junior college, from which she will earn the equivalent of a GED. Then, she will take classes leading to a degree in economics.

## CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT AND MEDICAL HISTORY

Natalia was diagnosed with a congenital heart defect at six months of age. At the time (1993), open heart surgery was rarely performed on babies in Russia. Cardiologists continued to follow her case, conducting periodic echocardiograms to assess her condition. At a routine appointment in Rostov-on-Don, Natalia was examined by visiting heart specialists from the Bakulev Center in Moscow; they recommended a surgical procedure to improve blood flow. When Natalia was twelve, Bakulev surgeons placed a shunt to increase her pulmonary circulation.

Back in Rostov-on-Don, over 600 miles south of Moscow, head pediatric cardiologist Dr. Larisa Zhivova continued to monitor Natalia's condition as she grew. In 2009, Heart to Heart examined Natalia on our first surgical-educational mission to Rostov-on-Don and recommended her for surgery. Unfortunately, she fell ill, and her surgery had to be cancelled.

## CURRENT CONDITION

On this mission, Natalia is the very first of one hundred patients examined by Heart to Heart specialists. She tells us that she has spent most of the last year in a hospital, recovering from an infection — and hoping to regain enough strength to undergo open heart surgery by the time our next team arrived. She is desperately hoping for surgery that will change her life — or, more to the point, that will save her life. And this year, her overall health condition allows us to proceed quickly. She is recommended as a good candidate for surgery to completely repair her defect, Tetralogy of Fallot. At seventeen, she is by far our oldest surgical case.

Natalia remains at the hospital, awaiting her open heart surgery. Her parents come every day from Novocherkassk to bring her lunch and talk about her day. After Natalia's operation, her mother will stay with her until she is ready to go home. Natalia recovers quickly, and is discharged from the PCICU four days after her surgery.

The joint Heart to Heart-Rostov team was overjoyed to be able to provide Natalia with the life-saving surgery that had eluded her throughout her entire childhood. After her successful operation, everyone involved shared a profound sense of satisfaction and reward — this child could so easily have been lost. Natalia's case is also a sobering reminder that tens of thousands of children of all ages all over the world are still needlessly suffering from highly-treatable heart conditions.

*Based on an interview conducted in Rostov-on-Don, in Russian, by Albina Popov, Heart to Heart staff.*