

# INTO *the* HEARTLAND CAMPAIGN

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

SEP 29 – OCT 16, 2010  
SURGICAL-EDUCATIONAL  
MISSION 2



## THE HOUSEHOLD AND THE FAMILY

Olga lives with her parents, Elena and Sergei, in Novosuhoviy, a village slightly over 100 miles from the Rostov-on-Don Cardiac Center – a four to five hour bus ride. Caring for Olga is complex and challenging, requiring on-going personal sacrifices by every member of the family, including both sets of grandparents. Elena and Sergei sent their four-year-old son to live with Elena’s parents, so that Elena could focus on taking care of baby Olga. Sergei has been unable to secure a full-time position, so he juggles part-time jobs.

Right before Olga’s surgery, Sergei’s parents went to Moscow *na zarabotky* – hiring themselves out as day laborers. This is one of the few viable options that Ruska Roma (ethnically Roma people in Russia) have to make ends meet. Sergei’s parents donated their Moscow earnings to defray Elena and Olga’s travel and living expenses while their granddaughter receives medical care in Rostov-on-Don.

## PATIENT PROFILE

Child	Olga S.
Age	2 years old
DOB	September 6, 2008
Weight	At birth: 7 lbs 8 oz Current: 29 lbs
Home	Novosuhoviy Rostov Oblast 100 mi from Rostov-on-Don
Parents	Elena, 23; Sergei, 32
Diagnosis	Complex subaortic stenosis S/p Resection of subaortic stenosis (2009, Rostov-on-Don)
Open heart surgery	Resection of subaortic stenosis, resection of accessory mitral valve tissue, LVOT myectomy (October 13, 2010)
Discharged from PCICU	October 16, 2010

## CHILD’S DEVELOPMENT AND MEDICAL HISTORY

Olga’s heart defect was detected at birth at the local maternity hospital. At one month, she was diagnosed at Heart to Heart’s partner site, the Rostov-on-Don Cardiac Center, with a rare heart condition called subaortic stenosis. An echocardiogram performed there when Olga was a year old indicated the need for surgery, and Dr. Alexander Kislitsky performed an open heart procedure to relieve pressure and prevent further damage to Olga’s aortic valve.

Unfortunately, since Olga’s surgery, extra tissue has grown around her aortic valve, constricting blood flow. A second surgery is needed to remove the tissue, increase blood flow, and prevent catastrophic obstruction.

## CURRENT CONDITION

Olga is a serene, smiling two-year-old. After her surgery, she was very calm in the PCICU. She lay quietly hugging her toys and curiously watching the nurses. After two days, doctors deemed she was healthy enough to be discharged from the PCICU, and she rejoined her mother on the pediatric ward. Heart to Heart doctors responsible for Olga’s medical care – pediatric cardiologist Dr. Laura Robertson and pediatric cardiac surgeon Dr. Gary Raff – met with baby Olga’s mother and grandmother to explain how the surgery had gone. Upon seeing the doctors, her grandmother knelt down and began to cry, expressing her profound gratitude to the two doctors from the United States.

Olga’s entire family realizes how serious their child’s condition is and are astonished that Olga has successfully undergone two open heart surgeries in her short life. They believe that if doctors have put so much care and healing energy into saving this one child, then maybe Olga truly has a chance to live a healthy and productive life.

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