

# FOCUS NEWS



MISSION WITHOUT BORDERS | AUGUST 2011



Rehearsing



Bojena and her double bass

## Triumph Through Adversity

This is Bojena's story.

Bojena Nikolova is now nearly 20 years old and lives with her grandmother in the city of Burgas, Bulgaria, by the Black Sea. She is the unwanted child of a teenage mother. When she was very young, her mother abandoned her. Her grandmother, Polina, raised her like a daughter. She has never known her father.

When she was 13, Bojena went to her first Mission Without Borders summer camp, and there she made a Christian commitment. Bojena is very talented in music. In the next two summer camps, she helped in the praise and worship team she is also a talented classical singer, and took up the double bass while at school.

Her grandmother could see the obvious talent in her granddaughter, and sacrificed financially to ensure that she received music tuition in singing and double bass. In 2007, she sold her apartment in another town and together they moved to an apartment in Burgas. Polina did whatever work she could to supplement her meagre pension, including house and office cleaning, but her health was not good, and often she was not paid fairly and taken advantage of.

*“Life has always been tough.”*

Two years ago, Bojena gained admission to the National School of Music and Performing Arts in Burgas. However, the cost of living in their simple apartment and paying tuition fees were just too much. The church in Burgas that Bojena and her grandmother attended would lend small amounts of money to tide them over, but this just increased the financial pressure on them.

Bojena's and Polina's needs came to the attention of a Belgian sponsor. The sponsor offered a scholarship to fund Bojena's costs while she was studying. Bojena says, “Life has always been tough for my grandmother



Bojena, with her grandmother, in their home

- ▶ *and me. We were totally unable to make ends meet and were always in debt, even for food. The scholarship helped us so much and meant we could cope during this difficult time."*

In September 2009, Bojena was baptised in the sea. She said, *"I had been reflecting on my relationship with the Lord and I decided to enter into a covenant with Him. On September 20, 2009, something exciting happened: I was baptised in the name of Jesus Christ. It only took a few minutes, but I didn't want it to end. I realised that from that day on, even greater trials and challenges would follow. However, I know that God loves me and therefore tests me and everything happens because He wants to draw me closer to Himself."* Mission Without Borders presented her with an adult Bible, her first, after her baptism.

By the time you read this, Bojena will have graduated. She recently competed in a national opera singing contest and won first prize. If you have access to the Internet, you can listen to her winning performance, singing an aria by Bulgarian composer Cherkin, on YouTube ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3zwqApDqiM&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3zwqApDqiM&feature=player_embedded)).

She is also taking English lessons as her dream is to continue her musical education abroad. Thanks to her participation in the youth Philharmonic orchestra and the recent performances arranged by their conductor, Bojena had the chance to earn some money to help her grandmother.

Bojena's story is still being written, and all the indications are that she will continue to enjoy God's favour in her life and career. ♦

\*We have put the link on our website.



Bojena being baptised in the sea



Bojena was really happy to receive her first Bible



Bojena – Christmas programme, Bethel Baptist Church, Burgas

## Summer Camp



Thank you to all those who have contributed finances to help with Summer camps this year. Camps started in June and have continued into August across our six field countries. There will also be follow up events after the holidays. If you had intended to contribute to this effective and life changing part of our work, and haven't already, you still can. Please just write "Summer camp" on the coupon with this newsletter. More news about camps will follow in a later Focus News and on our website.

## OPERATION COVER UP

August and September are the months when all the hard work of knitting, sewing, collecting items and fund raising pays off. Huge containers full of goods are being sent off to Eastern Europe. Thanks to all those who have contributed this year.



Children in Chisinau State Home, Moldova, winter 2011

## More sponsors needed

From Bojena's story, you can see how important sponsorship can be. If you listen to Radio Rhema in August, you will hear us asking for people to take on child or family sponsorship. This a way for New Zealanders to become involved in a vital part of our work in Eastern Europe. Please encourage family, friends and groups to become sponsors (\$40 a month). For more information, please call us 0800 469 269.



## MISSIONWITHOUTBORDERS (NZ)

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