



The Kids First Fund

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

From the President

“Don’t stop doing what the world needs.”

That’s the message I heard from my pastor today in church. It always seems I get inspiration at the right time when writing this annual message. Earlier this morning I read a small news item in the 28 January 2017 Wall Street Journal, “Russia: Bill Decriminalizes Domestic Violence.” When I combined these two items, I knew I had the content for this year’s message.

It seems impossible the parliament of a major global power would run backwards on the issue of domestic violence and the protection of children. But that’s Russia today. The vote was almost unanimously in favor, with 380 to 3 in the State Duma, to make assault punishable by a \$500 fine or 15 days in jail. Only injuries such as concussions or broken bones, or repeated offenses committed in a family setting, would lead to criminal charges. This weakened legislation applies to women and children. It would appear Russia’s long tradition of allowing parents to punish children without any legal intervention has come roaring back into the 21st century.

An article in the New York Times provides grim statistics from Russia, “In 2013 more than 9,000 women died in criminal assaults and more than 11,000 were badly injured. In 2014 more than 25 percent of all murders were committed in families.” By comparison, the US the rate of death for women from assault is about 6% the rate of Russia. But wait, the madness gets worse. The legislative change was prompted by the Russian Orthodox Church, which said in a 2016 statement that physical punishment was a Russian tradition and thus should be protected as “an essential right given to parents by God.” President Putin is expected to sign the legislation.

I have learned this in my life – tyrants throw darkness on the progress of humanity. That’s why the Kids First Fund spends much effort and your contributions to shine the light of truth into the darkest corner of our culture. Child abuse thrives in the absence of awareness, action, and justice. We seem to be entering an era where tyrants rule. The content of this Annual Report is offered as proof that you have made a difference, and that our organization exists to combat the assault on truth.

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From the President continued

There's a lyric from a song by the 60s group, the Mamas and the Papas that has always confused me, "And the darkest hour is just before dawn." It's silly, but I always tried to understand if the lyric actually attempts to explain scientific fact. Now I think I know the song's intent. It does often feel like the darkest hour is upon us . . . and upon the children we strive to protect. But dawn, and light, are always on the horizon and available if we reach for it. We simply must keep doing what the world needs. Your contributions, work, and prayers keep us pointed in the direction of light.

For the kids,



Jay Sorensen, President and Volunteer

On the cover: The power of images. Here a young man uses photography to monitor the implementation of his rights. Our partner in Moldova, the Child Rights Information Center, helps youth understand the basic right to live a life free of abuse as described in the "Convention on the Rights of a Child." This is a United Nations human rights treaty which sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health, and cultural rights of children.

On page 2: Student in Moldova participating in a Kids First Fund sponsored child abuse awareness campaign.

Images courtesy of CRIC Moldova.



KidsFirstFund.org

Numbers Help Tell Our Story

The 2016 annual report represents a continuing commitment to donor disclosure by including the annual financial statements for the Kids First Fund. In addition, filings made with government regulators, such as the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, are available for download at KidsFirstFund.org.

Revenue from donations and the travel auction represent the engine of our good works. Annual cash contributions have ranged from just over \$7,000 to more than \$22,000 during the last eight years, as shown in the table below:

Cash Contribution Trend – Past 8 Years

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
\$8,143	\$14,397	\$8,023	\$7,270	\$15,709	\$7,596	\$10,280	\$22,033

Kids First Fund, Inc. 2015 and 2016 Income Statement

	2015	2016
Contributions		
Cash donations	\$10,279.84	\$22,032.67
Interest from savings account	\$73.97	\$119.71
Dividends/change in market value securities	(\$330.94)	\$9.75
In-kind items (see note a)	\$0.00	\$578.36
Online Travel Auction for Kids (see note b)	\$19,025.47	\$21,517.77
Total Contributions	\$29,048.34	\$44,258.26
Expenditures and Distributions		
Grants made to support mission	\$22,500.00	\$35,870.00
Salaries, compensation & benefits	\$0.00	\$0.00
Professional fees & fundraising	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Expenses and Distributions	\$22,500.00	\$35,870.00
Excess Funds – Deposited to Bank Account	\$6,548.34	\$8,388.26

Results are not audited, but reflect amounts reported to the IRS.

(a) Items were donated that support the mission of the Kids First Fund.

(b) Net results from the annual online travel auction. All items are 100% donated. Selling expenses associated with eBay auctions were 11-12% of the gross amount raised.

Kids First Fund, Inc. 2015 and 2016 Balance Sheet

	Dec. 31, 2015	Dec. 31, 2016
Assets		
Cash and investments	\$107,235.60	\$115,623.86
Other assets	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Assets	\$107,235.60	\$115,623.86
Liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other liabilities	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Liabilities	\$0.00	\$0.00
Net Assets and Fund Balance	\$107,235.60	\$115,623.86

Results are not audited, but reflect amounts reported to the IRS.

Cash contributions for 2016 more than doubled from the prior year. The Fund benefited from significant, and very likely one-time donations, from travel industry companies IBS Software and Farelogix. Results from the annual travel auction also experienced an increase due to a larger selection of items available to bidders, mainly due to the first-ever online auction of elite status upgrades.

In 2016, two grants were provided to the Center Dardedze. The first in March in the amount of \$13,370, provided support for the second half of the 2015 calendar year costs and expenses, and for the first six months of 2016. The second grant, in the amount of \$15,000, was given to the Center in September 2016 and provided support for activities in the second year of the school-based (Dzimba) and the family-based (Guardian Angel) child abuse prevention programs.

The amount of the second grant was more than was needed and resulted in a surplus of \$5,870. The excess funds will either be applied to a 2018 project, or to fund a 2017 educational program to be provided by the Latvian Judicial Training Center. In April 2016, a grant in the amount of \$7,500 was given to CRIC in Moldova and provided support for the second half of 2016. This project allowed child abuse prevention education through partnerships established with regional districts and their schools. Details for the 2016 activities are provided later in this report.

Our cash and investments balance at year-end was a very healthy \$115,623.86. The Kids First Fund anticipates 2017 grant activity of \$7,500 to support a partial year of work in Moldova, \$10,000 for a series of legal seminars in Latvia on the topic of child abuse, and \$15,000 for our ongoing commitment with Center Dardedze in Latvia. The financial statements were drafted by Bob Bahlman, treasurer of the Kids First Fund. 2016 was the fifth year in a row in which revenue exceeded expenses and this resulted in an increase of our net worth.

Kids First and Center Dardedze Prevent Child Abuse in Rural Latvia

The second year of the Center Dardedze programs, Dzimba and Guardian Angel, continues to experience success in the municipalities of Ludza and Karsava. A primary goal of the programs was to engage children in conversations about child abuse and to equip them with the knowledge to know what actions are right and wrong.

The programs also work to train teachers, school administrators, counselors, and social workers how to have those conversations and to offer support to those who need it. The two programs continue to provide support to the regions and have been encouraged by the willingness of the local governments to contribute resources.

As we entered the second year of the programs, we felt confident that we could use this same approach to reach more children in other regions of Latvia. Despite reports in recent years that the Latvian economy has been improving, there are still many impoverished rural areas of the country that continue to need our support.

With the overall objective of preventing child abuse, especially child sexual abuse, we identified and established partnerships with the rural district municipalities in the Kurzeme region, Kuldiga and Kandava. Consistent with past experience, the school-based and family-based programs were



Child abuse prevention professionals attend Dzimba training in Latvia in November 2016.

repeated in these new districts.

The school-based program works primarily with the educational board of the district, school principals, teachers, tutors, psychologists, and school nurses. The family-based program is designed to work directly with the district's social welfare department, social services, counselors, and social workers. The teams reported the following results:

Dzimba Safety Program

- A team from Dardedze worked to develop materials needed to implement school and family based programs.
- A total of 33 schools and preschools in Kandava and Kuldiga agreed to participate in our program.
- The Dardedze team conducted training for the school principals in child protection and the prevention of child abuse. This training included a one-day workshop in October 2016 for 22 principals of schools and preschools in the two municipalities.
- Working with the local educational board, 38 teachers from both municipalities were selected to be trained to implement the Dzimba Safety program in their schools and preschools.
- In November 2016, Dardedze trainers conducted Dzimba Safety program training of the local trainers (teachers). The first training was dedicated to discussing the child's rights, how to recognize child abuse, and how to respond to it.
- When the trainers (teachers) returned to school, they conducted sessions for the parents to raise awareness of child abuse and to receive permission from them for their children to attend the Dzimba safety program.
- Training was provided to school staff to share the knowledge they gained and to begin implementing the Dzimba Safety program with their students. Following that training, the nine-step safety program was taught to the children. In April 2017, the trainers returned to Dardedze in Riga to provide supervision and feedback.

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Child Abuse Programs continued

Guardian Angel Program

- A partnership with social services of the Kuldiga and Kandava municipalities was established for the family-based program. Four social workers in each municipality were identified to work with families and children. These eight social workers became family-based prevention program facilitators with the parents.
- The social workers have begun to work with eight families in Kuldiga and 11 families in Kandava.
- The training for the family-based prevention program facilitators consisted of several sessions that took place beginning in October 2016 and ran through February 2017.
- The goal of the training was to increase the knowledge of local social workers on child abuse and neglect, risk factors, signs, and symptoms. In addition, the training helped the social workers understand that protecting children from abuse is one of their primary responsibilities.
- The social workers were introduced to the 14-session program that they would conduct with locally formed groups of parents and young children. They also were instructed to supervise, review progress, and report challenges.
- Dardedze continues to provide support to Ludza and Karsava and continues to implement the Dzimba Safety and Guardian Angel programs.



Kids First and CRIC Achieve Near-Countrywide Coverage in Moldova in 2016

The Kids First Fund and its Moldova-based partner, the Child Rights Information Center (CRIC), began its seventh year of work together in July 2016. The CRIC project aims to prevent child abuse in the country by educating teachers and social workers on how to identify cases of abuse, encourages them to report incidents, and organizes parenting-learning activities.

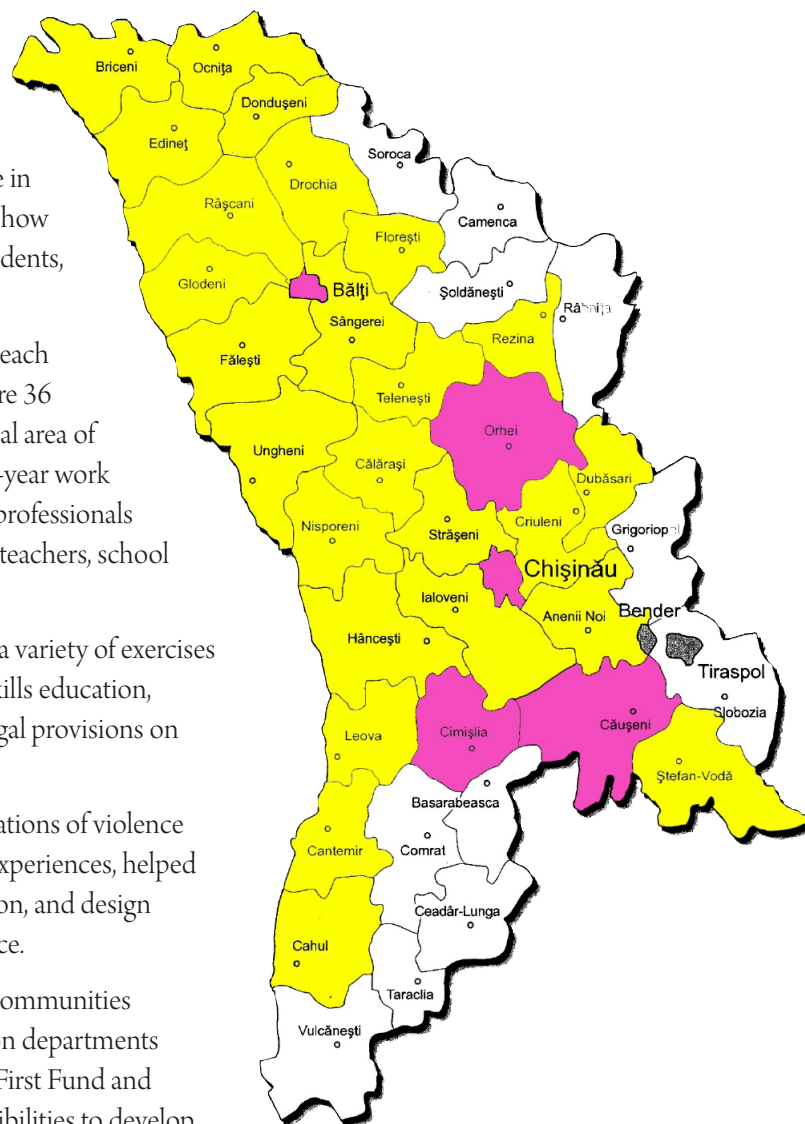
Working with local schools, the CRIC project is able to reach many children in the communities that it serves. There are 36 districts in Moldova (excluding the autonomous territorial area of Transnistria), and the project was able to complete multi-year work in a total of 31 districts as of 2016. In total, 1,060 school professionals were trained directly within the 7-year project, including teachers, school administrators, psychologists, and social workers.

Participants were trained in two-day programs that used a variety of exercises to identify and prevent violence. A combination of life-skills education, videos, and training that included information on new legal provisions on child protection were included.

The training courses enabled participants to analyze situations of violence against children by reflecting on their own professional experiences, helped them to better understand the complexity of each situation, and design activities with the students and parents to prevent violence.

This continued partnership has resulted in schools and communities fully embracing the program. Additionally, local education departments welcome the support and training provided by the Kids First Fund and CRIC partnership as it helps them to fulfill their responsibilities to develop and implement school child protection policies. After the work of 2016 is added to the total, the project has reached 28,632 children, 6,340 parents and caregivers, and 2,364 teachers – an amazing countrywide achievement.

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Moldova – Pink shaded districts indicate 2016 activity, while yellow districts indicate program-to-date coverage.

“This continued partnership has resulted in schools and communities fully embracing the program.”

CRIC Project continued

In recent years, the project has also benefited from a favorable political interest. The Moldova Ministry of Education, beginning in 2013, demonstrated a strong commitment for child protection and created the needed framework for training professionals in education. This elevated awareness in the government is a promising step toward advancing our efforts throughout the country.

But, we remain cautiously optimistic as the issue of child protection and the government's role is very new in Moldova. Furthermore, cooperation between different sectors of child protection remains weak, and training for other sectors and inter-sectoral workshops needs to be organized in order to improve the responsiveness and intervention in child abuse. Unfortunately, adequate resources are not available to respond to all the cases that are identified. There is a great need for the development of specialized services for child abuse victims, thus validating the importance of our work.



Teachers, school administrators, social workers, and other child abuse prevention professionals receive Kids First Fund sponsored training in Moldova. Image: CRIC, Child Rights Information Center.

More than 47,000 Reached at Modest Cost

The Child Rights Information Center (CRIC) project continues to deliver very meaningful results at a modest cost. More than 47,000 participants have been reached at a very efficient cost of \$1.74 per person since the project began in 2010. The statistics provided here define the audience reached directly by teachers interacting with parents and students. Of course, there is a wider audience in each community that benefits from the awareness-building and behavioral changes generated by the core group of teachers and parents.

Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Project – Moldova							
Participant Groups	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	To Date*
District representatives trained	56	56	213	220	343	174	1,062
Children receiving abuse awareness training	2,416	2,592	6,240	12,235	5,149	7,907	36,539
Parents/caregivers involved in effective parenting curriculum	758	831	1,545	3,206	480	453	7,273
Teachers benefiting from sessions organized by colleagues	469	552	510	626	207	197	2,561
Project Metrics							
Total participation	3,699	4,031	8,508	16,287	6,179	8,731	47,435
Kids First Fund program grants	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$7,500	\$82,500
Program cost per participant	\$4.06	\$3.73	\$1.76	\$0.92	\$2.43	\$0.86	\$1.74

Source: Child Resource Information Center. Project began in 2010.

Southwest Airlines, Topbonus, and Delta SkyMiles Receive 2016 Kids First Teddy Bear Awards

The 12th Kids First Auction was launched in May 2016 and included generous donations from many returning sponsors, several new ones, and a first-ever online auction of elite status upgrades.

Donations were made by Avis Rent a Car, Choice Hotels, Delta SkyMiles, Icelandair, JetBlue TrueBlue, Priority Pass, Rocketmiles, Southwest Airlines, Southwest Rapid Rewards, SPG Rewards, Spirit Airlines, topbonus, Tune Hotels, United Airlines, and Wyndham Rewards. A record number of prizes for individual hotel locations were also offered, they included Best Western Plus Austrian Chalet Hotel, Chicago Marriott Suites O'Hare Hotel, Comfort Hotel Downtown Toronto, Delta Toronto Hotel, Embassy Suites Norman Oklahoma, Miracle Springs Resort & Spa Hotel, Palm Island Resort All-Inclusive Beachfront Hotel, Staybridge Suites London Ontario, Stoney Nakoda Resort & Casino Hotel, and Virginia Beach Resort Hotel & Conference Center.

The combination of hotel and airlines passes, elite status upgrades, and destination offerings, created a more competitive spirit amongst many bidders!

The Kids First Fund also recognized the top three highest performers with Teddy Bear Awards at an awards ceremony on the evening of 25 October 2016:

- Southwest Airlines provided unrestricted tickets and elite status upgrades that generated the highest bid activity, which was in excess of \$6,600 – more than any other single corporate donor.
- Topbonus, the frequent flyer program of airberlin, donated packages totaling 400,000 frequent flyer miles, to redeem on airberlin and program partners such as Etihad Airways, which generated more than \$5,100 in total bids.
- Delta SkyMiles provided packages totaling 180,000 miles, which were auctioned at FlyerTalk.com. These generated the third highest bid activity for any single donor company, bringing in \$2,500.

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Thank you to Vermont Teddy Bear for providing personalized bears for the winning donor companies.



Kids First Teddy Bear Award recipients in Toronto on October 25 (left to right): Jay Sorensen, (Kids First Fund), Elmar Trust (Delta), Tony Roach (Southwest), and Sascha List (airberlin).

“The combination of hotel and airlines passes, elite status upgrades, and destination offerings, created a more competitive spirit amongst many bidders!”

Teddy Bear Awards continued

The recognition event occurred during the MEGA Awards Gala in Toronto and was associated with a global airline industry conference hosted by Airline Information.

“The Kids First Auction for 2016 was a tremendous success with an array of airline tickets, frequent flyer miles, car rental vouchers, and hotel certificates. This year we even had a first-ever online auction of elite status upgrades from JetBlue, Icelandair, and Southwest,” said Jay Sorensen, president of the Kids First Fund. “The Teddy Bear Awards have become a regular feature for the evening ceremony at the MEGA Event conference held each fall. It’s fun – and great for the charity – to see donor companies eager to add to their bear collection by increasing their generosity each year.”

The logo for Avis, featuring the word "AVIS" in a bold, red, sans-serif font.The logo for Choice Privileges Rewards, featuring a stylized orange and yellow "C" icon followed by the text "CHOICE privileges" and "REWARDS" in a smaller font below.The logo for Delta SkyMiles, featuring a small red triangle icon followed by the text "DELTA SKYMILES".The logo for Icelandair, featuring the word "ICELANDAIR" in a blue, sans-serif font followed by a stylized blue and yellow wing icon.The logo for JetBlue Airways, featuring the word "jetBlue" in a blue, lowercase, sans-serif font with "AIRWAYS" in a smaller, uppercase font below.The logo for Priority Pass, featuring a large, gold, serif letter "P" above the text "PRIORITY PASS™".The logo for RocketMiles, featuring the word "ROCKETMILES" in a blue, uppercase, sans-serif font with small wing-like icons on either side.The logo for Southwest, featuring the word "Southwest" in a blue, sans-serif font followed by a small red heart icon.The logo for SPG Starwood Preferred Guest, featuring the letters "spg" in a large, lowercase, serif font with "Starwood Preferred Guest" in a smaller, sans-serif font to the right.The logo for Spirit, featuring the word "spirit" in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font with "LESS MONEY. MORE GO." in a smaller font below.The logo for Topbonus Air Berlin, featuring a stylized red and white "a" icon followed by the text "topbonus airberlin".The logo for Tune Hotels, featuring the word "Tune" in a red, cursive font with "Hotels" in a smaller, red, sans-serif font below.The logo for United, featuring the word "UNITED" in a blue, uppercase, sans-serif font followed by a small globe icon.The logo for Wyndham Rewards, featuring the words "WYNDHAM REWARDS" in a blue, uppercase, sans-serif font with a horizontal line above "REWARDS" and the tagline "You've earned this." below.

Board Member Snapshot – Diana Cronan

This year's annual Board Member Snapshot takes a look at Diana Cronan, one of our Board Members living in Alexandria, Virginia, a suburb of Washington, D.C.

Joined board: 2013

Family: My boyfriend (Paul) and I have a dog and cat, Barley and Hops, both are rescues. In addition, I grew up in a large family, being one of six children, and I am fortunate that my three sisters live in the Washington, D.C., very close to me, even though we didn't grow up in the area.

Current profession: Communications Director, American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers. My organization represents the U.S. refining and petrochemical industries and my role in the communications department gives me the opportunity to work with the entire staff and many people outside my company. I enjoy meeting people and hearing about their interests and experiences, and my job gives me ample opportunity to do so.

Favorite destination: Any place that is new to me. I love traveling and exploring and enjoy learning the history of every place I visit. A few of my recent and favorite trips include Budapest, Hungary; Prague, Czechoslovakia; and even destinations much closer to me, such as Santa Fe and Taos, New Mexico; and Austin, Texas.

What interests you about the KFF mission? I grew up in a large and loving family and it's important to me to give a little of my time to help children who have not been so fortunate. It's sad to think that anyone could hurt a child, but it's a tragic reality and I wanted to help. When Jay approached me to get involved, it didn't take much for him to convince me. The number of children that have been helped by the programs we provide is impressive! It truly shows that a little can go long way.



Diana and Paul are standing on the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge, which goes across the Rio Grande Gorge, in Northern New Mexico, United States.

“I grew up in a large and loving family and it's important to me to give a little of my time to help children who have not been so fortunate.”

About the Kids First Fund

The Kids First Fund helps abused and abandoned children. We protect children from abuse. We empower young adults with a positive future. We strengthen families. We build awareness of child abuse. We operate in countries where resources are very limited. Current projects provide support for children in Latvia and Moldova. The Kids First Fund supports programs to educate child welfare professionals such as police officers, judges, social workers, and prosecutors on child abuse issues. Direct assistance is also given to centers providing care for abused children. The Kids First Fund does not incur any expenses since all staffing and services are donated. The organization has been granted special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

Special Thanks

This annual report is courtesy of the services contributed by Amy Thomas, who operates field|works, a graphic design firm in Glendale, Wisconsin, and Diana Cronan, who wrote and edited the document.

Hosting and updating of the KidsFirstFund.org website is donated by Matthew Frederick, who operates DigitalPerceptions.com, an interactive web media development firm in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The Kids First Fund is a charity recognized by Airline Information, which provides generous financial support and includes the Teddy Bear Awards in its annual MEGA Event airline industry conference.



Scott Wiseman and the crew at Auctionjam have been excellent administrators of the annual Kids First Auction for 12 years.



Vermont Teddy Bear provides custom crafted teddy bears for the annual Kids First Teddy Bear Awards.



Learn More and Donate Online

KidsFirstFund.org

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Arturs Irbe, Director
(Riga, Latvia)

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(Washington, DC)

Indra Petersons, Director
(New York City)

Jay Sorensen, President
(Shorewood, Wisconsin)

United Nations Representatives

Jay Sorensen and Doug Mullen are designated representatives to the Economic and Social Council at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

Roger Grigulis and Irma Kalnina are the designated representatives to the Economic and Social Council at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva and Vienna.

Kids First Ambassadors to Children

Dr. Valdis Rande
(Riga, Latvia)

Dr. V. George Nagobads
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