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## News Release

### **\$1.1 Million Family Shelter Opens in Rugaji, Latvia Co-Funded by the Kids First Fund and other Partners**

*Supporters include the Latvian Children's Fund, CCF Childrens Fund of Germany, Sprott Foundation, and the Republic of Latvia.*

Rugaji, Latvia (13 June 2009) . . . The Latgale Regional Support Center, located in the small village of Rugaji in eastern Latvia, hosted an opening ceremony today to mark completion of the shelter. The event was attended by local residents, contractors and workers involved in construction, local and national government representatives, Gundars Daudze MP (Chairman of Latvia's Parliament), Ambassador Scott Heatherington (Embassy of Canada), Charge d'Affaires Bruce Rogers (Embassy of the USA), and board members of the Kids First Fund.



*The Kids First Fund believes this is the first earth-friendly family shelter. The geothermal system uses miles of piping buried in the ground provide heat and hot water. State of the art technology relies on the earth's natural heat to create a warm interior environment.*

Participating in the ribbon-cutting ceremony were representatives of the primary donors for the project: Gundars Daudze (Representing the Government of Latvia), Andris Berzins (Executive Director of the Latvia Children's Fund), Joern Ziegler (Managing Director of CCF Children's Fund of Germany), and Jay Sorensen (President of the Kids First Fund). The Sprott Foundation of Canada was also a major contributor to the project; the donation was arranged by the Kids First Fund.

The two-story structure accommodates a minimum of 30 mothers and children in 14 private bedrooms and uses earth-friendly design elements. The ground floor includes administrative offices, interview and therapy rooms, full-service kitchen, and a dining room. The ground floor will also feature a conference room that can be used as a children's activity room and a place for older children to do homework. Living quarters for mothers and their children are on the second floor (or the first floor in European terms). This floor features family lounge areas, indoor play areas, bathrooms, and accommodations for nighttime shelter supervisors.



*Support from the Sprott Foundation of Canada provided an extensive outdoor play area adjacent to the family shelter made from locally-sourced lumber.*



*KFF Board Members at the ceremony (Left to Right) Artur Irbe, Irma Kalnina, Jay Sorensen, and Roger Grigulis.*

The host municipality for the family shelter is Rugaji, a village in the Latgale region of Latvia, located 222 kilometers (140 miles) east of Riga and only 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the Russian border. Rugaji is centrally located in the Latgale region. The shelter is unique in Latvia because its dual mission serves abused children and mothers, as well as single women who are victims of domestic violence. The Rugaji government

provided land for the family shelter. The property includes a large outside play area, parking lot, and grounds for self-sustaining vegetable gardens. The family shelter is within walking distance of local schools, shops and a church.

**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 the democratic republic of Latvia located on the Baltic Sea. 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 provided to centers providing care for abused children. The Kids First Fund is an extremely efficient nonprofit organization that 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. Learn more at [KidsFirstFund.org](http://KidsFirstFund.org).