

Annual report 2014

Dear compatriots!

On behalf of SRCC Kalinka, I am delighted to present this annual report regarding Centre's cultural and educational achievements, as well as plans for the future.

This year our society is stepping in its 6th year. On the Annual General Meeting in the January of 2014 we have elected a new Management Committee consisting of 9 members. In addition to the chairperson, treasurer and accountant, 6 other members were elected. This was done in order to increase the Centre's productivity. On 5th of April 2014 the Committee has decided to rename Sussex Russian Centre Kalinka to Sussex Russian Cultural Centre Kalinka.

Overall last year for SRCC Kalinka was successful. Our organization has significantly broadened its activities and strengthened its position as a centre of Russian culture in the county of Sussex. This was achieved by enthusiasm and hard work of numerous volunteers, members of the Management Committee, teachers and parents of Russian school Kalinka.

During the period from February 2014 to January 2015 SRCC Kalinka has carried out more than 20 different events and activities aimed towards both children and adults. These activities were realized by a combined effort and in addition to regular classes at the Russian school Kalinka. A little bit more than 1000 people have participated in our events, as well as their friends, relatives and members of English public. Thus we managed to move forward with some of our most important goals, which is to promote an integration of all Russian-Speaking persons in Sussex and also attracted more attention to Russian language and our culture.

In the last year there was a significant increase to the number of students of Russian language. Currently there are 32 children aged from 2,5 to 9 years old, who are studying at the Russian school. We have four different classrooms and are in progress of organizing a fifth one. Another two children are homeschooled. This year children also had an opportunity to attend the class of Russian literature and Children's Contemporary Theatre Studio. For about 6 months we ran a Russian Toddler Playgroup 'Cheburashki'. It was aimed towards children from 0 to 3 years old. Last summer we also started Russian language classes for adults. However because there wasn't enough enrolled students, the classes were stopped and remaining students are now studying on one to one basis. We are quite optimistic about resuming the classes in future.

Our Social Club has been successfully working throughout the last year. Every Saturday from 10 AM to 1 PM during the academic year, the Club has been visited by around 40 – 60 people. The Social Club is open for everyone. It is a place to meet people, socialize in Russian – speaking environment and even get advice. Numerous activities within the Social Club were conducted throughout the year. Children and adults had a chance to participate in craft workshops, movie screenings, charity fairs and other various socializing events. We also organized day trips to Newhaven Fort, Dickens Festival in Rochester, Maslenitsa Festival and to Natural History Museum in London. We also had celebrated the Victory Day and Maslenitsa at the club.

The highlight of the 2014 were two of our most successful events – the Open Day and the New Year party for children. The Open Day was held on 12 of July 2014. The teachers of Russian school 'Kalinka' conducted open lessons for children aged from 2 to 10 years old. The last bell of the academic year was rung. Parents and guest of the event had an opportunity to meet and talk to teachers and school administration. They also had a chance to learn about new classes and activities. Volunteers of the SRCC Kalinka had organized a fundraising cafe, book sale and lottery in favour of Katya Polonskaya who is sick with leukemia. Entertainment for children also included face painting and school disco.

The New Year Party for kids was on 20 of December. More than 250 children and adults attended. Kalinka's volunteers had prepared a performance with Father Frost, Snow Maiden and other magical characters. The children received a present from Father Frost. Later they had a chance to participate in a dancing competition and disco. Volunteers had organized a cafe with a range of traditional Russian cakes and sweets.

In December 2014 SRCC Kalinka helped in organisation of Christmas Opera Concert 'Yours Tchaikovsky' at Brighton Unitarian Church. The concert was organised by the director of OperaCoast – Anastasia Witts. We are planning to cooperate with OperaCoast next year, with the aim of making this kind of evening a yearly Christmas tradition in Brighton.

At the beginning of the year, two volunteers had created a new website for SRCC Kalinka. The website is regularly updated with the news and fresh information. By the end of the year, the number of website visitors has reached around 1600-1700 per month. These are internet users from United Kingdom, Russian Federation and other countries. Currently we are in progress of establishing a strategy to promote our website. This can bring a future financial benefit to SRCC Kalinka.

One of the most important of our activities in the past year was charity. Volunteers of our Centre managed to run several successful campaigns to fundraise money for people sick with cancer. By the collective effort we managed to fundraise £457 for Ljudmila Lunjova and £2040 for Katya Polosnkaya and her family. Katya is a young girl from Belarus who is sick with leukaemia. We would like to say special thank you to our teacher – Ljudmila Gerus. She had organized the fundraising lotteries and marathon in favour of Katya.

In spring of 2014 with the effort of two compassionate people – Aljona Krumgold and our teacher Tatiana House; was resolved a long lasting trouble of disabled Sandra Balchune. Sandra was living in Littlehampton. She lived in completely unsanitary conditions which were hazardous to her health. Thanks to Aljona's and Tatiana's efforts Arundel District Council has provided Sandra with new accommodation.

Last year SRCC Kalinka has carried out a tremendous job by collecting humanitarian aid for citizens of Donbass. Thanks to volunteers from Brighton, Hove, Worthing, Crawley, Southampton, Birmingham and London; we had collected more than 850 kg of humanitarian aid. Among the donated items were adult and children clothing, footwear, food, toys, books for children, personal hygiene products, pushchairs, nappies and etc. £1173 were donated as well. Thus we would like to say a special thank you to Tanya Taylor from Crawley, Kateryna Slobodyanyuk, Alisa Cehacova and Andrey Bikadorov from Brighton. As well as to Veronika Peskud from London, Krisitina and Dmitry Arhipov from Birmingham and to Aleksandr from Southampton. Special thanks also go out to everyone who made a donation or helped in any other way.

As a part of Volunteers Week celebration; on 7 of June SRCC Kalinka has awarded 30 of our volunteers with the Great Volunteer Award.

In the autumn of 2014 we have started working towards establishing a Russian Orthodox congregation in Brighton. Father Vadim from Russian Orthodox Church in London has visited us at Social Club Kalinka on 21st of December. During the meeting we agreed on a specific plan in order to establish a Russian Orthodox congregation. We are going to continue working in this direction in 2015.

In December of 2014, Brighton & Hove City Council has provided SRCC Kalinka with a grant of £2000. The grant was awarded for cultural and educational purposes. Part of the grant will be spent on registration at Ofsted, which is currently underway at the Russian School Kalinka. We are hoping to complete it in the near future.

In September of 2014; the Management Committee of SRCC Kalinka has decided to start registration at Charity Commission. The registration will be completed during the first months of the new year. After the registration our Centre will acquire a status of charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) and a registration number. It will give an opportunity for our Centre to grow both financially and socially.

The financial year at SRCC Kalinka is from 1st of September until 31st of August.

The combined income from 1st of September to 31st of August is £11,598.59. The combined expenditure amounts to £15,244.07. The combined balance as of 31/08/2014 is £1,671.03. The combined balance as of 10/01/2015 (the date of this report) is £4,366,01. The detailed financial report for the financial year 2013/2014 is available on our website.

Last year the principal activities of our organisation were conducted within the walls of BHASVIC college. On behalf of SRCC Kalinka, I would like to say a big thank you to all the college staff for their help and support. I would like also to express my gratitude to the staff of Sussex Central YMCA Centre in Hove, who accommodated our toddler playgroup 'Cheburashki'. A huge thank you also goes out to the staff of Brighton & Hove Resource Centre. They have been of great assistance throughout the year and we used their services to hire necessary equipment, print out booklets and consulted regarding accounting. We would like to thank Rossotrudnichestvo in UK for providing us with free educational materials. Special thank you also goes to London based school 'Znaniye' and to Dyke Road Park Cafe in Hove for their cooperation.

2014 was a first year for me in capacity of a Chairperson of Sussex Russian Cultural Central Kalinka. It was difficult year, full of events and activities. At the same time I met many good and interesting people. Many of them had become my good acquaintances and co-workers. I would like to sincerely thank everyone for their understanding, help and support. I would like to especially thank my colleagues: members of the Management Committee and teachers of Russian School Kalinka.

Respectfully,
Dina Bikadorova
Chairperson of Sussex Russian Cultural Centre Kalinka.