



## SUCCESS STORY

# Community Connections

### Disabled Children Benefit from Improved Programs



*Konstantin Kostitsyn observes disabled people working. USA, January 2008*

**Training:**

Rights of the Disabled

**CCF Group From:**

Khabarovskiy Krai

**Dates:**

January 18 – February 8, 2007

**US Host Organization:**

International Visitors Council of Los Angeles

**Host Community:**

Los Angeles, CA

U.S. Agency for International Development  
[www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)

### Success

Konstantin Kostitsyn, a neurologist from Khabarovsk, participated in the Rights of the Disabled Community Connections program in the winter of 2007. It took only a few months after returning to Russia for Kostitsyn to apply the lessons learned while on the CC exchange, implementing projects to improve rehabilitation services at the Amurskii Children's Sanatorium and in the Khabarovsk Health Department's citywide Healthy Generation Program.

### Overview

Kostitsyn adapted programs he observed while in the U.S. to the Amurskii Children's Sanatorium, where he has worked for 17 years. Inspired by the First Steps Program in the U.S., he has successfully established an office for early intervention at the sanatorium. Kostitsyn has also broken ground on a universally accessible playground for children at the sanatorium, an idea motivated by observing a similar project during his CC exchange at Shane's Inspiration Center.

Kostitsyn recently implemented an initiative to provide athletic-health sessions for children with disabilities from throughout the Khabarovsk region. The Khabarovsk Regional Social Protections Ministry and the Khabarovsk Regional People with Disabilities Sport Club supported the project by supplying a trained professional to work with the children. To date, nearly forty children have received integrated medical treatment, and personalized health plans were created for each participant. These sessions not only worked to strengthen physical health, but also to develop children's communication skills.

Finally, on June 23-24, 2008, the sanatorium held the 13th Regional Sports Festival for children with motor skill disabilities.

In addition to conducting projects to benefit children at the sanatorium, Kostitsyn is engaged in scientific research, actively applying knowledge and skills gained during the CC program to present to attendees at the 6th Regional Scientific Practical Conference on the Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities, held in the fall of 2007. In May 2008, Kostitsyn also submitted several scientific articles to the Khabarovsk City Health Department to be published in time for the city's anniversary.

Currently, Kostitsyn works in a special neurological team for the city ambulance service, one of only two such specialized units in Khabarovsk. According to Kostitsyn, this position represents a new level of professional development. With his professional success, he is now taking courses in management at the Priamursky Economics and Business Institute. Upon completion of his academic work, Kostitsyn plans to compete for a post in the Khabarovsk Regional Ministry of Public Health.