



# An Unexpected Graduation

## Former Street Girl Finds a New Life after Traumatic Past



By Addie O'Connor  
MP's ambassador

This story comes from Krasnoyarsk, Siberia. Mission Possible has seven shelter homes where street children and abused children find refuge and compassion. Through the dedicated work of our field workers, miracles take place in the lives of these children. They are nurtured back to health, go to school and graduate, begin their own families, and most importantly, all of them hear the Gospel and many commit their lives to the Lord.

Polina, like any other 19-year-old girl, is not only preparing for the prom but she is thinking about her future as she gets ready to graduate at the end of this school year. She considers the big questions of whether

to go to college, whether to take some time off from studies, or whether to enter the workforce right away.

The difference with Polina is this: When I recently asked her if she ever thought she would be graduating from high school, she laughed nervously and said that several years ago she wasn't sure she would survive to ever see this day.

Polina was the youngest daughter of parents who had good jobs and a nice apartment in the city of Krasnoyarsk. They lost their jobs, however, and had to sell the apartment. Within two years all the money the family had was spent on parties and alcohol. Polina recalls that there were always a lot of people at the house and that her parents got abusive with each other and with her.

On one occasion when her father was

very drunk he started beating 7-year-old Polina. She ran into her room, hid behind the bed, and prayed that her father would not see her. She remembers this as her first prayer. Her father came into the room and

looked straight into her eyes, but continued to call her name; he did not see her. She believes God protected her that day.

Polina began the habit of running away from home when her parents threw these parties. They would get so drunk that most of the time they didn't notice she was gone, but when she came home she would suffer horrible beatings.

By the time she was 12 years old Polina had been living with a group of

girls on the streets off and on for five years. She sniffed glue as many street kids do, slept in underground tunnels, and hadn't attended school for years.

On numerous occasions the police had picked the girls up and either taken them back to their homes or put them into city shelters. Polina remembers every time this would happen the police would shave her



head and she would sit and cry for days.

Polina says that within just three months a series of events changed her life yet again. She got word at a city shelter that her entire family perished in an apartment fire. She escaped from the shelter and returned to her street friends. The girls had heard about a lady named Luba who offered meals on the streets to children like themselves. The rumor was that Luba also worked at a warm shelter home where soup was provided.

So one evening, six years ago, four 13-year-old girls set out to find the shelter. They arrived at 1:30 in the morning, knocked on the door, and Luba invited them in.

The girls sat down to devour warm soup while Luba talked to them about God and how He had greater plans for them than a life on the street. She asked each one individually that night if they wanted to change their lives. If so, they could live at the shelter home, go to school and church, and start life anew. Polina was the only one to say yes, and that night was the start of her new life.

That was more than six years ago. Polina ran away a few times as she was adjusting to a new way of living and to a family that cared for her, but returned each time to find Luba waiting with open arms. Polina had to work extra hard to catch up on the schooling she missed over the years, but her approaching graduation ceremony is a testimony to that being overcome too.

Polina recognizes that God had and still has a plan for her life. She still doesn't have clear answers to those typical 19-year-old questions of what to do and when, but with her big beautiful smile she proclaims, "I want to be where God wants me!"



After traumatic street life Polina found a home and family at Mission Possible's shelter

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- Please pray for protection and guidance for MP USA ambassador Addie O'Connor as she travels to all of MP's centers and shelter homes this season.
- Please pray for the brokenhearted children who come to the shelter homes, that they would be healed from their pasts both physically and spiritually.
- Please pray for the workers in the shelter homes, that the Lord would give them wisdom and strength.

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