

QNI announces Russian winners of the new Moscow travel bursary



The Queen's
Nursing Institute

2 May 2008

Community nursing charity The Queen's Nursing Institute today announces the names of the two Russian community nurses who have won the Vera Lebedeva Memorial Bursary.

They are Elena Perfilyeva and Irina Ostrovskaya and they arrive in London on 4 May for a two week programme of observation, learning and sharing knowledge. They will be accompanied by their interpreter Olga Zinoveva.

The bursary was set up in memory of Russian nurse Vera Lebedeva so that two Russian nurses could come to Britain and two British nurses go to Russia to spend time with nurses from the Moscow Red Cross. The two British nurses, Caroline McGraw and Janice Roberts, travel this autumn.

The two week study programme includes visits to Tresham Dementia Unit in Westminster, St Luke's Day Centre in Islington, the Florence Nightingale Museum, University College London Hospital and the Manor House Nursing Home in Gloucestershire, among other facilities. The Russian nurses will also have extensive interaction with staff and trustees of the QNI during their stay and will meet their two British counterparts who are going to Moscow. A major highlight of their visit will be to attend the Florence Nightingale Commemoration Service at Westminster Abbey on the evening of 14 May.

Rosemary Cook, director of the QNI said, "We very much look forward to welcoming our bursary winners from Moscow to a very busy programme of visits and meetings with key people. It is very appropriate that Vera Lebedeva's life-long dedication to the care for older people should be remembered through this international exchange of learning and good practice."

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Notes to editors

About The Queen's Nursing Institute

The Queen's Nursing Institute, a registered charity (number 213128) maintains close links with community nurses and their patients, primarily through our awards programmes and professional networks. Our remit extends across the entire community nursing universe, including district nurses, school nurses, practice nurses, nurse practitioners, community midwives, health visitors, mental health and learning disability nurses. Much of our professional activity focuses on the future role of nurses in primary care, and we work to influence policy relating to community nursing in the new National Health Service agenda. Through our increasingly busy welfare department, we also provide both practical and emotional support for community nurses who are no longer able to work, in the main through illness, injury, old age or disability.

About Vera Lebedeva

Vera Lebedeva was Director of Nursing at the Moscow Branch of the Russian Red Cross. She had a long career as a community nurse, working in difficult circumstances to provide care and improve the well-being of some of the most disadvantaged people within the Russian Federation. She fought to provide not just nursing care, but shelter, food and education for homeless and street children in Moscow. Most recently, her work centred on the needs of older people living alone.

Vera demonstrated great leadership and personal courage, having been personally involved in delivering care to those caught up in the Moscow Theatre siege and the Beslan school siege, and in training nurses in war-torn Chechnya.

Vera secured funding from the UK Government Department for International Development for a joint project with Age Concern England to improve the delivery of home nursing services for older people in Moscow. This has developed community nursing training programmes which have already been completed by over 300 community based Red Cross Nurses. As part of this project Vera visited the UK, sharing experiences of good practice. She was made a Fellow of the QNI and after her premature death in 2006, the QNI launched the bursary to enable community nurses to follow in her footsteps and travel between Moscow and the UK to learn from each other in order to improve patient care.

QNI Chair Rosalynde Lowe and Jean Rowe were technical advisors on this project, working closely with Vera and her colleagues to ensure that the project properly met their needs, and that it was sustainable after the project funding come to an end.

Vera's achievements were recognised nationally and internationally: in 2004 she was awarded one of the International Red Cross's highest awards – the Florence Nightingale Award for Excellence. She was only the second Russian to win this prestigious award.

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