

Jesus Loves the Little Children of the World

Imagine a town of 5,000 population without a playground. That was SookPak, Russia, until last summer. Now, thanks to two InterAct partner churches, the kids of SookPak have a safe, and incredibly fun, place to run and play.

SookPak was home to Jim and Kari Capaldo and their three children, until new immigration laws forced them to leave in 2008. As local residents, they knew that their neighbors needed something for their children. They also knew that this Buddhist community needed a demonstration of the love of Jesus Christ.

The project represents a four-way collaboration. Jim (InterAct Ministries USA) and local Tuvan believers (InterAct Ministries of Russia) networked with New Bethany Baptist Church in Buford, Georgia, and Evangelical Covenant Church of Des Moines, Iowa. Each church sent a team of workers ... as well as funds to purchase supplies ... to work with the local crew.

Over 12 weeks, a gravel lot was transformed into a beautiful new structure. The playground includes 18 towers, a hanging bridge, lots of mazes and runways, swings and three enormous slides. And, on any given day after school, lots of happy kids.

Some local officials were concerned about the intent of these Christian churches. But one woman, who represents the government of the Republic of Tuva, voiced her support. "We know your hearts," she said. "We are glad for your support." She is one who is moving toward the claims of the gospel as it is being lived out in her community.



Jim Capaldo (center) is honored by local community leaders (left) for his inspiration to build the playground.