

## Our Buddies:

# School for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired Children "Prof. Decho Denev" in Pavlovo, Sofia

**Urgent Needs:** a playground for the youngest students; fix the roof; equipment for the computer room, for the science lab, for the PE gym; basic equipment for the changing rooms (chairs, benches, hangers, rugs); tablecloths for the lunchroom; rugs for the Kg rooms; visuals (globes, maps, chemistry, physics, geography models and materials, vocab and grammar posters in English); display and decoration materials; bins.

Goals for the future: Continue relationship; food/ clothes/ school supplies donations; more regular visits to each other's schools, art, science and sports projects; deaf students' visits into classrooms.

**Characteristics:** About 330 students (deaf or hearing impaired), age 3-19 (a year and a half at this school equals a year at a mainstream school so students are older than their grade level!), 1-3 classes in each grade, 7-12 students in each class; 60 staff (very well qualified). Subjects they study: special speech classes, art and crafts (cooking, wood processing, tailoring). Students pass a special prep year and assessment before they enter gr.1. English is studied in gr. 10-12. The school relies on state budget and donations; in 2001 it won a funding competition from the World Bank for renovation of water pipe system (not in work yet due to the constant change of governments).

**History:** 6 years of relationship. We communicate by phone regularly. They visit us twice a year (for the Christmas Concert and for the Spring Fair), or more often for sports and cultural events, e.g. soccer



tournaments. In 2001 we arranged a Spring Concert performed by "Jestime" synchronous singing formation and the "Mime 7" pantomime group at the school. The above also participated in the closing concert at the CEESA volleyball tournament in Sofia in May 2001. We supported financially the project they presented to the World Bank applying for construction works funding. We send food and clothes donations and Christmas presents. In September 2001 we bought two tennis tables for their PE programme. In 2002 gr.5, AAS invited gr.5, Deaf School for an Art lesson and for the Science exhibition.

**Their staff's ideas:** "We could do together: Kg age - board and floor games, drawing and coloring, simple crafts, video, playground play; gr. 1-3 - same as above, add simple sports games, simple science experiments, Bulgarian studies (visual!); gr.4-6 - same as above, add simple geometry. They could teach us simple items of the sign language. Most students are very artistic, like sports. They use sign language, but are expected to lip-read; they have specialist supervising all the time.