

The street of the blind

Rusinovo is a street of the blind and visually impaired people in the villages of Ermolino in the Kaluga region in Russia. Until 1995, it was a separate village where the visually impaired were sent from the different regions of the Soviet Union.

In 1948 the basic enterprise for the blind and visually impaired was built here. The main activity of the blind people in the production was the installation of boards for TVs called "Rubin". After the political rearrangement, the development of the village stopped and the construction of new houses and a rehabilitation center was frozen. The village was attached to the city called Ermolino and now it is a separate street which is situated five kilometers away from the city, where people without visual impairment also live.

Nowadays, the workshop production of «RUSiNovoPak" for the blind is only engaged in the collection of medical pipettes and is considered unprofitable for the enterprise. In the neighboring workshop people without disabilities produce cardboard, it helps to cover the losses of the workshop for the blind. Since the Soviet times there is an Assembly hall in the production building, where the choir of the blind, a library and a gym are organized for many years. Blind and visually impaired live in several five-storey houses; also there are private houses behind them on the street and it looks like one of the streets in the usual village. Disabled people know very well where everything is situated. They are able to get to the shops, to the production building and to the post. If it is needful, people without disabilities help them and no one refuses.

The larger half of the blind in Rusinovo are the seniors, who moved here during the Soviet times. Children were born with a full vision and they left Rusinovo. In total there are 115 blind and visually impaired people in Rusinovo.

Captions:

01. Alexander Rakovich works as Chairman of the society of the blind in Borovsky district. He lost his vision at the age of five because of flu complications. He works in Rusinovo and lives in the neighboring town of Balabanovo, where he also has the business.

02. Visually impaired people go to the libraries to take books in Braille and audiobooks on flash drives. Sometimes there are literary evenings: a librarian invites a lecturer from Borovsk, which is situated close by to read the biographies of writers and their works aloud. On photo the evening meeting in the library devoted to A. I. Solzhenitsyn.

03. In 1942 the house of Victor Sergeyevich Solovyov in Prudischi village in Kaluga region was bombed by an airplane: the whole Victor's family was injured by the glass. Victor received an invitation from the Society of the blind and moved to Rusinovo in 1954. After the incident, he had a residual vision, but eventually he lost it completely.

04. The production has a daily standard of 2400 pipettes per shift. Employees say that there is almost no work that should be done. Someone finishes the daily standard before the work shift is over and goes home earlier. Moreover, the work week is shorter than the usual one - people work just 4 days per week.

05. Natalia Vyacheslavovna Belopuhova was born in Rusinovo and lives there till now. Vision problems were inherited from her blind parents.

06. The blind people's daily routine helps them to navigate. Many of them easily find the right way to Rusinovo just by using touch.

07. Table tennis for the visually impaired called Showdown reminds about air hockey, where people are guided only by hearing and touch. The blindfold makes the game equal between the participants with residual vision and the blind.

08. Sergey Valentinovich Ivanov is blind since the time he was born. It was inherited from his visually impaired father. When someone asks Sergey if he wants to be sighted, he answers - «How is it possible to want something that I don't know?»

09. Visually impaired people from Rusinovo do not go outside of the street on their own. Their children and relatives help. They have a habit to go to a few shops where the shop assistants help them without cheating, hence they don't go to a self-service supermarket alone. They go there very rarely and only with the relatives.

10. On the opposite side of the production for the blind there are greenhouses where flowers are grown. Only people without disabilities work there.