

# From Lanky's Corner In Russia

*Danny "Lanky" Kollaja of Corpus Christi, Texas*

For two weeks in January, 1996 ten clowns from the USA went on a **Good Will Tour to Russia**, Danny "Lanky" Kollaja organized this trip. Photo of Lanky with Russian woman by Bets Testone photographer on



It has been said many times that clowning takes a big heart. With "the caring clown" it truly takes a big heart. I have seen clowns that are fantastic stage performers/entertainers, yet when they enter a room with one or two kids, the magic is gone. Without a separating line between them and their audience they lose "the touch." The caring clown makes the patient the focus . . . the stage upon which a show begins and ends.

On our recent Good Will Clown Tour to Russia this was quite evident. Each of the ten clowns had the HEART to allow the patients/children to be the star. For however long we were present at each hospital or orphanage, the children at that time had relief from their pain and discomfort. Even the faces of parents and staff magically transformed into smiling happy individuals. This was accomplished by the clowns involving the patients in whatever routine or activity was taking place. The children were not spectators, but

participants. Hospital clowning is an opportunity to bring about a healing process that we do best . . . make people laugh! Many studies are being done, focusing on the healing aspect of laughter. It has been found that laughter increases the amount of oxygen and endorphin in the blood system.

Think of the last time you had a really good laugh. All of life's little stressors were forgotten, you became relaxed in the moment. Imagine what this can do for an ill child surrounded by machines beeping, ticking and gurgling.

Now go to a hospital and bring joy to people with your big heart and healthy laugh!

-- Danny "Lanky" Kollaja

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Please See Vol 1 No 3 for Stories from the Russian Trip.