

The Winning Goal

A newsletter from the Eugene Kinasevich Fund

Fall, 2007



Success Stories — On and Off the Ice — Highlight Fund's 2007

Wouldn't Gene be proud?

The 2006-2007 academic year produced a long list of success stories for the **Eugene Kinasevich Fund**, a series of special moments and triumphs for student-athletes, host families, and academic communities throughout the Northeast. Years from now, when the fund bearing Gene's name celebrates a special anniversary, today's stories will be recalled with particular admiration and respect.

There are the accomplishments of **Oleksii Koval**, the first of these remarkable Ukrainian student-athletes to be accepted to college. He earned a 3.0 GPA at Hobart College in just his second year of English study.

There is **Liza Ryabkina**, who brings her considerable talents, on and off the ice, to Harvard University this fall. Said Harvard women's head coach **Katey Stone**, "We look forward to Liza's impact on our program. Her vision of the game and fundamental skills will mesh nicely with the rest of the squad."

There was that wonderful day at South Kent School, when **Sergei Sorokolat** received the Knopf Science Prize, the Mathematics Prize, and the Art Prize, as he graduated into the National Cum Laude Society. In addition, he was awarded the James S. Johnson Cup, given the Sixth Form student who "enriched our community by using all of his talents to their fullest."

There was the overall excellence sustained by **Pasha Kozhokin**, an "A" student who had the highest GPA of the group and earned "top athlete" honors at Canterbury, participating in soccer, hockey and crew.

Given the scope of their challenges, all of these students, whether recipients of major honors or not, have flourished and succeeded. These are success stories to be shared by a legion of supporters who have embraced these worthy youngsters, in their homes, in their classrooms, in their locker rooms, and on the playing fields and arenas.

This observation, from Hebron Academy Head of School **John King**, captures what these 19 students have meant to the 14 institutions that welcomed them this past year.

"We don't truly understand the impact of the students from Ukraine being at Hebron, or any of our schools until you have seen a boy from Canada, a boy from Korea, and a girl from Norway, Maine or Arlington, Massachusetts, climbing up the stands to hang a flag from Ukraine at a hockey game; or until you have heard an advisee group including the two boys from Ukraine explaining customs and singing the national anthem at a school assembly. How else would kids from Augusta or Chicago get to know and be friends with students



Liza Ryabkina proudly holds her Berkshire School diploma. Liza will attend Harvard College this year.

from such different places? These opportunities are the richness of schools like ours."

Said **Debbie Bain**, the school nurse at South Kent School: "All three students (**Artem Gumenyuk**, **Danil Guryev**, and **Sergei Sorokolat**) have spent a huge amount of time at our home working with David (my husband) and me on various projects. They are such nice young men with a very strong work ethic. It is utterly amazing to hear their stories and to begin to understand where they came from and where they are today. They have very strong emotional ties to their homes and want to go back and make a difference there, especially with younger kids. But they also have assimilated well here."

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Gene Scores Again

For the friends of Gene Kinasevich, and the Harvard Hockey family, the photograph to the right is akin to the famous Bobby Orr photo of his Stanley Cup-winning goal in 1970. The ECAC 1963 final against Boston College might not have had the cache of a Stanley Cup but Gene rising to the occasion to win the championship was every bit as fitting as Orr's heroics.

Gene has scored again with the successes of the Eugene Kinasevich Fund which was started only 2½ years ago. The powerful inspiration of this man is the foundation of the fund. It is fitting to summarize his life..

Gene Kinasevich was born into a Ukrainian family, the 13th

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Gene's fund is very grateful to the families who have hosted students. These young men and women have collectively known hundreds of host families in their lives, none more influential than those who guided them through the transition to a new culture. Among those to be acknowledged for their extraordinary efforts on behalf of these students are the families of **Frank and Donna Agostino, Levy and Cathy Byrd, Denis and Claudia O'Donnell, Paul and Joan Parsons, Michael and Jane Byrne, Elaine and Jack Hurley, Sandy and Linda Milley, Ed and Anna Dolan and Peter and Asa Noonan, and The Leo and Michael Rempel Family.**

The impact of Gene's Fund is best found in the words of the students themselves. Speaking in their second language, they reveal a sincere appreciation for the opportunities they have been given. Here is just a sampling of what each of them has said and the experiences they have had.

"I never was a talented kid so the only way I could really improve in hockey was hard work, which **Ivan Pravilov** taught me. And now hard work is one of the principles of my life.

"I knew what Gene was doing for our hockey team but I only met him once. Everybody who was ever talking about Gene wasn't saying he was just a good man. They were saying he was a great man.

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Enjoying a proud moment at South Kent Commencement were, from left, Artem Gumenyuk, Danil Guryev, and Sergei Sorokolat.

President's Message

Dear Friends of The Eugene Kinasewich Fund,

Before he died on February 23, Gene Kinasewich had become devotedly and passionately involved in the lives of 19 youngsters from the City of Kharkov, Ukraine. Gene introduced the idea of combining educational opportunity with sport to these hockey playing youngsters - opportunity that would not be available to them back in their native Ukraine. It became Gene's dream and dying wish to see these young people from his ancestral homeland exposed to some of the wonderful opportunities he was afforded through the caring and kindness of others many years ago.

This past Spring, with the help and financial support of the Eugene Kinasewich Fund (EKF), the student athletes from Ukraine are making Gene's dream come true. Over the past two years, the Fund has provided financial support enabling nineteen of these young Ukrainian student athletes to further their education in the United States. Eighteen were enrolled in prep or high schools (South Kent School, Kents Hill School, Vermont Academy, Canterbury School, Trinity Pawling School, Northwood School, Proctor Academy, Hebron Academy, Winchendon School, Culver Academy, Berkshire School, Dexter School, Brewster Academy and Arlington Catholic High School and one student at Hobart College.

The Board of the EKF is extremely proud of all of these students. Of the eighteen prep/high school students, eleven successfully graduated, and seven others have returned for their senior year. Of those graduating, six will be attending U.S. colleges (Harvard, Skidmore, Southern New Hampshire, and three at Manhattanville). Two will take another year to pursue specific college options in '08.

What a tremendous success story this is! It is because of the spirit, will and effort of Gene that this Fund exists. One month before his death, while weak and in constant pain, he interviewed each of these youngsters, graded their English proficiency, and was directly involved in picking schools for them. True to the inspirational role Gene played in each student's life, they have all survived in school, and in many cases thrived in a totally unfamiliar environment and language. To a person, they have proven to be of tremendous character, hard working, disciplined, gracious, polite and respectful. Above all else they are most appreciative of this opportunity and have made the very best of it.

The Fund has committed itself to continued support for these deserving students through college, but funding remains a huge challenge. While prep schools and colleges do offer financial aid, seldom do the aid packages cover full need. And never do they cover expenses such as English language tutorials, travel, books, medical and dental expenses....all necessary expenses that cannot be covered by low income families from a country where the average monthly wage is approximately \$300.

The ultimate long term goal of the EKF is to establish a permanent endowment (of at least one million dollars) to recruit and support talented young people from Ukraine and elsewhere and provide them with educational and cultural opportunity in this country. In the short term, our commitment is to help this group of nineteen students complete their college education.

This newsletter recounts some of the stories and accomplishments of our current group of nineteen. We are also pleased to announce that a 20th student, Oxana Tkachenko, is attending Southfield School (Dexter).

I hope you find this Newsletter both interesting and compelling. Gene was fond of saying "Small steps taken are better than big jobs planned." This Fund began with small steps, and in a very short time, has facilitated significant experiences and opportunities for nineteen worthy young men and women. With your help, these students will be allowed to complete their education and the EKF can look forward to providing similar opportunities to future generations of deserving young people.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Beckett, President

Gene Scores Again

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child of Katherine and John who immigrated to western Canada in the early 1900's. They settled in farm country outside of Edmonton, Alberta and the children learned to speak English in school only after the first grade. The family moved into Edmonton when Gene was in second grade. When Gene was 10 years old his mother died of a stroke, followed by the death of his father 6 months later. Gene and his younger brother were raised by their older siblings.

Gene grew up playing hockey on the outdoor rinks of Alberta and was coached by his older brothers. By the time he was in high school he was a well-respected junior hockey player. It was a hockey trip to Colorado College that initiated a series of events that would alter his life forever.

Several alumni of Harvard University became interested in him, most notably **Jim Lombard**, not only as a hockey player but as a promising young student.

In order to strengthen his academic skills, Gene was encouraged to attend Deerfield Academy for a year, after which he was accepted by Harvard College to the Class of 1964. While at Harvard, Gene studied hard and endeared himself to his fellow students and faculty members. He made a name for himself on the hockey rink and was ultimately elected as the First Class Marshall of the Class of 1964 in his senior year. At that time he also won a Henry Russell Shaw traveling fellowship. He and his wife, **Janet Mittell**, traveled throughout Europe for 10 months, learning about different cultures and languages.

His thirst for knowledge did not stop with his undergraduate education. He also earned the following graduate degrees from Harvard: an EdM in 1967, a CAS all from Harvard University in 1972, and a EdD in 1981.

Indicative of his varied interests, Gene also taught at Buckingham Browne and Nichols and served as President of the Western Hockey League.

In 1972, Gene and his friend **Tim Taylor** recruited and organized a group of local Boston area high school hockey players to play on a team that would travel and play hockey in Czechoslovakia, Russia and Ukraine. This was Gene's first trip to his ancestral homeland, and it would lay the groundwork for future trips and connections. The more Gene traveled to Ukraine and came to know his relatives there, the more he became convinced that he wanted to make a difference to those in Ukraine who had so little in material assets, but were rich in culture and work ethic.

Eventually Gene came to know **Ivan Pravirov** and the Druzhba youth hockey team that traveled to the United States and Canada in search of hockey games and tournaments. He was very impressed with their skills and their ambition to play well and to make friends internationally. He wanted them to dream of something more than hockey. He convinced Ivan, that these players should go to school in this country to expand their options in life. He wanted to help them develop skills for the future and to build bridges between cultures and countries, particularly Ukraine and the United States and Canada.

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GENE WITH HIS DRUZHBA 78 KIDS — Gene first met Ivan Pravirov, founder of the Druzhba Ukrainian Hockey Club and School, in the early 1990's. Over the last 15 years of his life, Gene helped Ivan and his kids on numerous occasions by facilitating trips for them to North America, and by organizing trips for American youngsters to travel to Ukraine. Thus the seeds for the EKF were planted. In a letter dated October, 2000, Gene wrote the following: "Druzhba means 'friendship' in Ukrainian and it is on this theme that Ivan Pravirov started his program for Ukrainian youngsters back in 1988. He trained his youngsters with a traditional and effective stern Eastern European discipline. Through associations established outside of Ukraine in the 1990's, Ivan was able to raise funds allowing him to travel to North America to participate in youth tournaments and put on mini teaching clinics. His young players were billeted by local parents and youth hockey organizations, thus creating a unique cultural and athletic experience for all involved. What is most critical, in my estimation, is the worldly exposure these young Ukrainians have received, the opportunities that have been opened for them as a result of Ivan's initiatives on their behalf and the potential positive attributes they bring to Ukraine in these important early stages of its freedom. I recently returned from Ukraine and was moved by the level of poverty and massive unemployment, yet inspired by the spirit of the people who had so little yet gave me so much. The young children that Ivan has exposed to the world through his novel and exciting program will help save Ukraine."

The Students' Own Words

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He had something that everyone loved in him. He was a generous man.

"I got the chance to change my future so in the future I can give opportunities to other people from my country and change Ukraine to a better place to live. Everybody who helped give me a starting point gave me an inspiration for life to change my future and help others." — **Roman Krivda**



Sasha Romanenko (left) and Dima Naida (right) rehearse a scene from "Fiddler on the Roof" with choreographer Julie Middleton and an unidentified student at Hebron Academy. Said Middleton, "Sasha and Dima were so diligent and concerned with knowing their lines, entrances, etc. It meant so much to me that this play came from their part of the world, and is about love, peace and tolerance. Truly, I cannot imagine having produced this show without the participation of these two great boys."



Pasha Kozhokin enjoys the 2007 Commencement ceremonies at Canterbury School. An "A" student, Pasha was recognized as the school's top athlete as well.

"I remember Gene as a modest person who needed nothing in life but to help others. He would come to a locker room after games and talk to us in Ukrainian. He said how grateful we should be to Ivan who taught us knowledge, which we can use as a path in our lives and then pass it on to the next generations. He wanted this program of giving to remain forever. He felt that youth can bring people together through their warmth and passion to work and to play together." — **Oleg Koval**

"As a team, 'Druzhba 78' was very successful, and one of the factors was our coach. Besides hockey lessons, he kept giving us life lessons that were based on simple human life principles: never lie, always give 100% effort, never give up, be useful to society, protect your interests and beliefs. Like all my teammates, I grew up following those life principles, and I can tell that they really helped me to become the person I am right now. I do not consider myself to be religious; however, I do believe strongly in sacred values a person possesses, such as truth, devotion, respect, hard work, responsibility, and true love. I also believe in fortune. It has always been like magic for me. I believe that people who strive to observe those sacred values will have good fortune." — **Sergei Sorokolat**

"I still can't believe that I'm in the U.S., studying in a different lan-

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Coming Full Circle

By Paul R. Parsons

The story of **Gene Kinasevich** has become familiar to many in the hockey world; Gene, the gifted junior hockey player of from Western Canada. Gene, the scholarship student and ice hockey star at Deerfield Academy and Harvard College. Gene, the humanitarian who recognized his good fortune and wanted others of similar backgrounds to have the opportunities that had been made available to him.

About fifty years later, Gene's legacy has come full circle in the persona of **Yelyzaveta (Liza) Ryabkina**. Liza excelled on the best boys' ice hockey team in Ukraine since she was 8 years old (in 1995). When she was 11, her team traveled to Ottawa for the first of what were to become annual visits to North America for summer tournaments, and a relationship developed between her coach and team, and some U.S. parents and players who were impressed with the incredible skill and approach of the Ukrainian team. To a degree, these Ukrainian kids experienced being raised without parents, since the Soviet training approach included their parents consigning responsibility of their child's education, discipline and training to their hockey coach (often during long periods of time away from home.) In a way, Liza was raised by her coach and her teammates on Team Druzhba.

When Liza was 16, Gene and a core group of friends orchestrated visits and interviews for the team to New England prep schools with strong ice hockey and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. Liza was accepted at her first choice, Berkshire School in Sheffield, MA. After two years of excellent educational and athletic training and performance, Liza was accepted to Harvard College, where she will study and play varsity hockey beginning in September of 2007.

Throughout his life, Gene wanted others to have the opportunity that he had been given. Somewhere now, Gene is undoubtedly smiling. Because of his vision, Liza will don the Harvard Crimson hockey sweater and be exposed to the extraordinary opportunities that were once made available to him. Equally important, Liza and her teammates have been instilled with a sense of purpose to "pay it forward" to other deserving people in the future. It is that combination of providing opportunity and helping others that is truly Gene's legacy.

Paul Parsons is a Director of the EKF. Paul and Joan Parsons served as Liza Ryabkina's host family for two years. Their daughter Sarah, a 2006 Olympian who trained with Team Druzhba, is entering her sophomore year at Dartmouth College.

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Oleksii Koval (left) in action for Hobart College this past season.

Individual Progress Reports

Name

2006-07 Grade/School

Artem Gumenyuk **12, South Kent School**
Artem attends Manhattanville College. For two years, his GPA rose consistently. He is a powerful skater who had an excellent two years at South Kent School academically and athletically.

Danil Guryev **12, South Kent School**
Injuries slowed him at the start of the year but he emerged as a top defenseman. He is skilled at 6-4, 200 and hopes to play a year of junior hockey and enroll in college in the fall of 2008.

Roman Khromushkin **11, Kents Hill School**
He made a successful transition from Wyoming Seminary (Wyoming, PA) to Kent's Hill, showing a dramatic improvement in his English. He is returning to Kent's Hill.

Oleg Koval **11, Vermont Academy**
Following a year in Kentucky (public school), he enjoyed success at VA. He scored the winning goal vs. Hebron in the prep semifinals.

Oleksii Koval **Freshman, Hobart College**
The first of the group to go on to college, he had a 3.0 GPA and made the first line on the Hobart College team, before an injury slowed him. He scored 8 points in 14 games. (He had 33 goals as a PG at Albany Academy in 05-06.)

Pasha Kozhokin **12, Canterbury School**
He was voted "Top Athlete" at Canterbury and is being actively recruited by several colleges. He will play junior hockey this year and pursue an engineering degree at a college to be identified next fall.

Roman Krivda **12, Trinity-Pawling School**
Roman is a gifted artist. He is also a D-1 hockey prospect. He is scheduled to play junior hockey in 2007-08.

Sergei Laptyev **11, Vermont Academy**
He is paired with Oleg Koval (in Kentucky and Vermont) and has developed as both a student and player.

Oleksandr Mykolenko **12, Northwood School**
He was accepted early decision and attends Skidmore this year. A great skater, he is also a talented hockey player.

Vika Mykolenko **11, Proctor Academy**
An outstanding student, Vika sets the bar high for herself. She will be an attractive college candidate for fall of 2008.

Dima Naida **12, Hebron Academy**
Dima is attending Southern New Hampshire University this year. He is a good player who was injured much of the year.

Ivan Oliinyk **11, Winchendon School**
After Grade 10 at Arlington H.S., Ivan moved to Winchendon. A natural goal scorer, and returns to Winchendon this fall.

Max Podkosov **12, Trinity-Pawling School**
Max is a very popular student. A skilled playmaker, his plans for 2007-08 are still undecided. He hopes to play junior hockey.

Oleksandr Ponomar **12, Culver Academy**
A strong defensive player, Sasha hopes to play junior hockey or attend university in Ukraine.

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Cathy Byrd (far right) and husband Levy were among the many host families. Also above, from left, Vika Mykolenko, Luciana Huff, and Emily Byrd.



Druzhba coach Ivan Pravilov (center) enjoys an evening in New York with Vika and Oleksandr Mykolenko.

Gene's Scores Again

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The "Go To School" program established by EKF was exactly how Gene envisioned the Kinasevich Fund working. His dream was to see these talented young people go on to college and ultimately do their part by making the world a safer, more peaceful and prosperous place and, in turn, to help other young people as they have been helped by the Kinasevich Fund. Gene's three children, **Rob, Greg** and **Tanya**, along with their mother **Jan** were all incorporators of the Eugene Kinasevich Fund.

The Eugene Kinasevich Fund was established in time for Gene to have input before he died. The immediate project became the Druzhba team. The success of these students over the last two years surpassed what anyone believed was possible and would make Gene very proud and happy indeed.

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Now, about "The Goal"!

Gene had battled eligibility issues at Harvard throughout the 1962-1963 season. Because he had received expenses during his junior hockey days in Edmonton, the ECAC ruled Gene ineligible early in that season, even though the Ivy League had reversed itself and ruled otherwise at the very start of the year.

With a chance to speak on his own behalf, and with a window of opportunity provided by a clause referring to "exceptional circumstances," Gene requested a hearing with the ECAC and won back his eligibility, setting up the storybook ending to the 62-63 season.

George Frazier, the flamboyant columnist for first the *Boston Herald* and later the *Boston Globe*, described "The Goal" in the *Herald*. The opponent was Boston College. The venue was the Boston Arena. The occasion was the 1963 ECAC Championship final.

"Now, on this midnight in this madhouse, you suddenly knew that this was how it would have to end. Now you knew that there could be no other way — that any other ending would be an indignity. This way, so suspenseful and storybook that hearts stopped beating, was inevitable. This was the hurrah for man's hope — so fit and proper that anything else would seem trite and contrived. For if ever there was a moment of truth, this was to be it. And then, with the hands of the clock standing at four minutes and forty-nine seconds of the 'sudden death' overtime period, he shot the puck past the goalie into the net and the red light flashed on and the game was over. Any other way and all our bright dreams would have been smashed to smithereens."

Would you like to help?

If you are interested in contributing to the **Eugene Kinasevich Fund**, please contact the EKF via www.genesfund.org. or Bill Beckett, President 603-766-4444.

The Students' Own Words

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guage and next year going to a college that only a very few people get a chance to go to. It's still hard for me to understand why people help me, and some of them, like the Parsons family, get involved in almost every aspect of my life, even though I'm not their child. I still can't understand why people would be so welcoming to a stranger, but I hope that one day I will be able to take a stranger to my home. I will believe in someone, and that someone would use the chance to do something bigger than he would ever think of doing. I think that is what Gene was all about.

"Gene gave me dreams. He gave me hopes. He believed in me. And now, people who believed in him also believe in us, kids from Ukraine. Believe that we will take advantage of the education we will get, the relationships we make, the opportunities to try new things. I just hope one day that I can give my family the life that they deserve. I hope that one day I can make all of them proud. And I hope that maybe one day people will believe in me the way they believed in Gene." — **Liza Ryabkina**

Student-Athletes' Progress Reports

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Sasha Romanenko 12, Hebron Academy

Sasha attends Manhattanville College. He is an excellent soccer player and a real competitor. He led all of New England prep players with 35 assists last year.

Liza Ryabkina 12, Berkshire School

Liza is enrolled at Harvard and is expected to contribute to the nationally-ranked Crimson program

Sergei Sorokolat 12, South Kent School

He attends Manhattanville College. A talented goaltender, Sergei enjoyed stunning success at South Kent, earning major prizes in art, mathematics, and science.

Igor Yegorychev 11, Brewster Academy

Igor is possibly the best overall player among the 1989 group. He is a skilled forward looking toward a breakout year in 2007-08.

Artem Zemelyev 11, Arlington Catholic H.S.

He played both soccer and hockey at ACHS. Unfortunately, he separated his collar bone on the day he advanced to the first line. He is a gifted skater and heady player.