



## *Kinasevich Fund Update: Liza Ryabkina, Harvard Class of 2011*

The Kinasevich Fund has created a number of unique success stories in its five years of operation. Few have played out on as large a stage as that of Harvard University junior Liza Ryabkina.

Her hockey saga began in Karkiv, Ukraine, where she spent ten years playing with boys as there were no other hockey opportunities for girls. When she took a hockey trip to New England back in 2004 and first met Gene Kinasevich, a whole new world of opportunity opened up for Liza and she has taken advantage to the fullest, thanks to support provided by the Kinasevich Fund.

In the fall of 2005, she enrolled at the Berkshire School and a transformation began. “It gave me time to grow and adapt to a new way of living and working,” she observed.

She spent two years at Berkshire, learning a new language, a new culture, and adapting to so much in the classroom, on the ice, and with her new world of friends.

In the fall of 2007, she enrolled at Harvard and in her first two years in Cambridge, she has immersed herself in a variety of pursuits in a manner that would have made Gene so proud.



As a freshman, Liza made yet another transition, from prep school to university life, playing varsity hockey for an ECAC championship program. She didn't just “play,” she was put on the power play, was used as both a defenseman and a forward, and recorded 10 goals and 17 assists for 27 points, an impressive output for a first-year player.

As a sophomore, Liza hit her stride away from the Bright Center hockey rink. A Government major with a minor in Sociology — she has an interest in international affairs — she was on the Dean's List last year. With no grade lower than a “B” last year, she acknowledges part of her success came from an altered outlook to her American university experience.

“I always thought I was on my own entirely and in the last two years,

I have finally learned to ask for help.”

In addition to her academic success, she found time to participate in other activities beyond ice hockey. Among her extra-curricular pursuits, Liza lists the Small Claims Advisory Program, a public school initiative called the Cambridge After School Program, and she recently received a position on the Board of Harvard Relay for Life.

On top of all this, she earns her spending money with jobs at Lamont Library and the Harvard Pub.

Ukraine has a long tradition of independence, even under Soviet rule. The pivotal battles of World War II, which turned the tide against Nazi Germany, occurred in Ukraine. That spirit of independence is very much alive in Liza.

Says Harvard women's varsity hockey coach Katey Stone, for whom Liza has played 66 consecutive games in two seasons, “Liza is a dynamic, energetic young woman who always leaves an impression of strong will and independence. She would be the first to admit, that in the past, her stubbornness has gotten the best of her. However, while at Harvard, Liza has matured into a person who asks for help when needed and is much more accepting of constructive criticism when given. Liza is one of the most gifted athlete's in the women's hockey program.”



Liza (second from right) enjoys a moment with her roommates.



## The Eugene Kinasevich Fund, Inc.

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Gene Kinasevich slips the puck past Boston College goaltender Tom Apprille to win the 1963 ECAC final in overtime.

## The Eugene Kinasevich Fund: How It Began

The Eugene Kinasevich Fund was established by Gene and his friends and family to foster opportunities for educational, cultural, athletic and artistic exchanges from and between Ukraine and North America - in recognition of Gene's contributions to humankind and lifelong interest in helping young persons have better lives.

Inspired by the cultural impact of his own educational and athletic experiences, Gene appreciated not only the individual benefits of his own opportunities but also how understanding differences and shared goals could contribute to a safer world with greater economic opportunity for all.

One of Gene's efforts in this regard was his work with a hockey club from Eastern Ukraine called Druzhba (which means "friendship"). Many times from approximately 1995 to January 2005, Gene helped arrange for travel, billeting and competition in North America for youth from this club. During their January 2005 tour, the high school aged children of the Druzhba'78 Hockey Club from Kharkov, Ukraine played against a number of prep school teams and were exposed to the concept of combining education and sport.

During the winter of 2005, Gene and friends worked with the student-athletes of Druzhba to develop opportunities to continue their education and pursue their passion for hockey, opportunities that would not be available to them in Ukraine. A number of these student-athletes wrote applications for admission to prep school. After Gene passed away and the Kinasevich Fund was formed, the Druzhba project was the first project embraced by the Fund.

The Kinasevich Fund currently supports 19 students from Ukraine. During the 2009-2010 school year, 16 students are attending colleges and three are attending prep schools. The fund has made commitments to support the progress of these applicants in several ways. The fund has committed to provide grants to those students admitted to school for expenses including travel, insurance, books, lab fees and certain other non tuition related expenses. In certain instances, the Kinasevich Fund may also provide significant scholarship support as well.

## How You Can Help

The generosity of the many host schools along with Gene's friends, family, teammates and classmates have made this effort the tremendous success that it has been. It costs an average of \$10,000 per student per annum in this age of \$50,000 prep school and college fees.

Any help you can provide to assist us in this most gratifying project would be greatly appreciated." Please make your check payable to The Eugene Kinasevich Fund and mail to:

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