



[www.albanytula.org](http://www.albanytula.org)

## Tula is Named Russia's Capital of the Year

New Year celebrations are top priority in Russia and this year Tula is going to great lengths to ring in 2019. The city was recently named "2019 Capital of the Year" in all of Russia!

Starting December 29 through January 7th, thousands of visitors from around the world will visit Tula — many for the first time — to enjoy colorful festivities at venues throughout the city, including the Kremlin, museums, theaters, restaurants and hotels.

Father Frost from the northern city of Velikiy Ustyug will visit Tula too! He'll invite others to join him for open tea from samovars and visit child care facilities to help bring a smile to a young person's life.

National monuments will be decorated, singing and dancing will commence and fireworks will light up the skies in Lenin Square. Families need look no further than outside to enjoy free ice-skating and ice sculpting in area parks and firework displays exploding in the skies



A newsletter of the Albany-Tula Alliance • A sister city program of Albany, New York and Tula, Russia • People to People, City to City

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## Joyful Winners of the 2018 Essay Contest



2018 marked the ninth year of our regional essay contest for teens. The topic was, "What can older generations learn from your generation?" We received well-researched and thoughtful entries. Many, as essay contest organizer Dawn Stuart Weinraub noted in her congratulatory speech, focused on one significant area where young people can provide a service to their elders: teaching them how to utilize technology to improve and enhance

their life. Another oft-mentioned theme was that writers hoped the older generations would learn to listen better to young people's concerns and ideas. First prize winner of \$1,000 was Adam Aleksic, a junior at Albany High School. Second prize winner was Ian Moore, a senior at Averill Park. Alexandria Reszyntniak, a junior at Academy of Holy Names, won our third place prize.

Our 2019 essay contest prompt is a quote from Nelson Mandela: "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, it goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart." Two language schools in Tula will also be using this prompt for their students, and our judging team of high school teachers, college professors, and professional writers will adjudicate the essays from both local and Tula entrants and provide prizes. We hope to be able to reinstate travel awards in the near future for youth from both countries.

## Summary of Songs of Nature at Sunset Fundraiser

Important donations were raised at the annual Songs at Sunset Fundraiser in September 2018 that will benefit programs offered by the Education and Culture committee in 2019. The event, held at Franklin Plaza in Troy, kicked off with a short documentary by chair member Sonja Stark entitled "Albany-Tula: Exchanges through the Years." Over the last 10 years, Stark has shot and edited montages on the three trips she has made to Russia with Essay Contest winners.

Host Svetlana Pavlova was interviewed for the video and asked to reflect on what she missed most about hosting American students. The showing was followed up by a singing performance by Rich Miller and Friends. The well-known tenor and attorney-by-day was



accompanied by pianist Evan Mack singing popular songs from Broadway show tunes to operatic arias. If you missed it, donations are still welcome on our website: [www.albanytula.org/donate](http://www.albanytula.org/donate)



# ATA Helps Youth Hockey Attend the EuroChem Cup

In May 2018, the Albany-Tula Alliance sponsored travel to Russia for a local youth hockey team. They competed in the EuroChem Cup which took place in Novomoskovsk, a town of 130,000 in the Tula Oblast Region. This was the first time in the EuroChem Cup's history that a team from the U.S. competed alongside youngsters from Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Switzerland and Russia. Our home team, dubbed the Albany Capitals, included 14 players between the ages of 10–12 coached by former NHL player of the Los Angeles Kings, Brad Chartrand.



“This was an incredible opportunity for our kids to get out there, see the world, learn how others play hockey and forge life-long friendships,” said the 43-year-old coach. “We also recognized the importance of visiting our sister city, Tula. We hope that a Russian hockey team can come to Albany and play hockey in the future as we build this partnership.”

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—Brad Chartrand, formerly of LA Kings

This was Chartrand's third trip to Russia: He first visited the country in 1997, while playing for the Canadian National Hockey Team. “I loved my experience in Moscow,” Chartrand said. “The people, the culture and the strong pride and history they have in hockey.”

Anton Konev, a dual Russia-U.S. citizen and a member of the Albany-Tula Alliance board spent months organizing the trip, added, “It's events like these that will stay in the children's minds

forever. There can be no stronger initiative for building bridges between cultures than this: Bringing children from different countries together at such a formative age to do something they love—play hockey.”

The Albany-Tula Alliance committed \$2,000 to the project. David Smith, chairman of the ATA board of directors and founder of the Troy-based translation/localization company LinguaLinx, and Charlotte Buchanan, founder of the Alliance, added personal donations.

## ATA Welcomes New Board Member Beth Smith



Beth has had the twin threads of education and multiculturalism wind together throughout her life. She was a foreign exchange student to Turkey in high school, rode her bike through Europe during college, and served as a retreat leader and interviewer for the AFS and Congress-Bundestag programs and as a host family for foreign students from Union College for many years. She is a Brown grad with a

BS and MS in Mechanical Engineering. During her “first career” she worked at GE managing advanced technology projects. In her “second career”, after her three sons asked her to homeschool them so that they could learn more/faster/deeper than they were able to in school, she began what she calls “world schooling”. They have won numerous state, national, and international awards and are all current/graduated students at Stanford. Two of them, Wyatt and Isaac, also won ATA essay contests and once-in-a-lifetime trips to Russia, and Isaac was on the ATA Board

until he left for California. Throughout her careers, Beth also taught in the evenings: first coaching rowing, then, for the last twenty years, tutoring math, science, English, and SAT/ACT material and doing precollege advising for students from public and private schools throughout the Capital District. In addition to this current “third career”, Beth plays orchestral timpani and loves to create. She lives in Clifton Park with her husband and Chesapeake Bay Retriever. In addition to being a member of the board Beth has accepted the position as Education and Culture Committee Chair.

# Professional Internship Selection Underway in 2019

The early years of the Albany-Tula Alliance were focused on humanitarian aid to the people of Tula. However the Alliance soon realized that the people of Tula did not want charity but wanted to improve their lives through hard work and business development. As a result, the Alliance developed a Professional Development program that provided business people in Tula with the opportunity for internships in the Capital Region. With financial support from the United States Department of Commerce, the program invited several eager entrepreneurs from small and large companies to learn, engage and exchange ideas. The Alliance provided home stays with board members including, for several years, a rental apartment to help house interns.



Today, with financial support from the United States Government unfortunately gone, the Al-

liance continues the program with its own resources. The purpose and mission of the Professional Internship Program is to continue to provide an opportunity for professionals from Tula to enhance their experience and to develop new professional contacts with U.S. colleagues. The program is usually between two and four weeks in length partnering with businesses throughout the Capital Region.

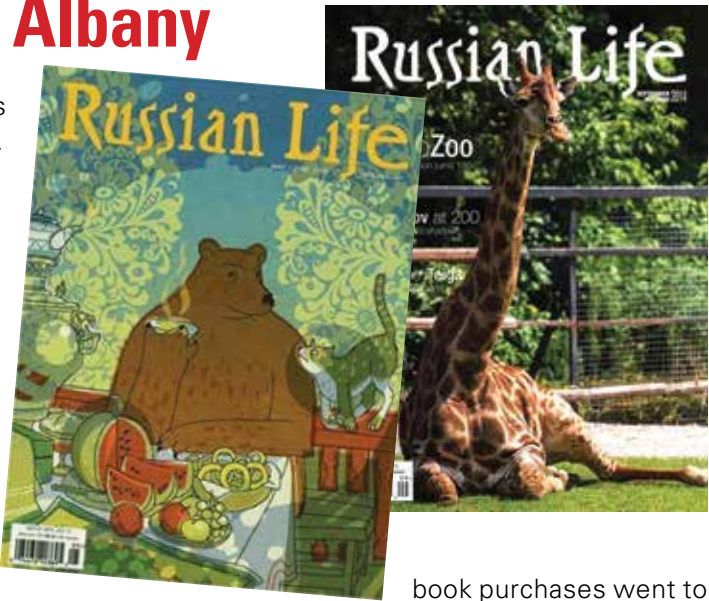
The Alliance has resources to fund three internships in 2019, and the selection process is underway. We hope to have the interns with us this spring. For more information, particularly if you might like to provide an internship, or to host an intern in your home, go to our website, [albany-tula.org](http://albany-tula.org), and contact Mary Williams at: [albanytulaalliance@gmail.com](mailto:albanytulaalliance@gmail.com)

## Russian Life Magazine Editor and Photographer Debuted Special Film in Albany

In April, the ATA invited Russian Life magazine publisher and editor Paul Richardson to present a special showing of his new documentary film and book, both titled Resilience. The book and film were created in collaboration with Russian journalists Mikhail Mordasov and Nadya Grebennikova, after the trio traveled 20,000 kilometers across Russia last summer.

In 1917, Russia was wracked by revolution, famine, war, and unrest. And yet, all that year children were born. Resilience was a film about some of those children, 100 years later, and their remarkable life stories. The film was in Russian with English subtitles.

Of the 50-plus in attendance, the film was well received with many viewers commenting on the inspiration and admiration they felt after watching the film. Richardson offered a short reading from the book followed by a Q&A period and a book signing. Donations and a small percentage of



book purchases went to fund the ATA's mission. Event space was provided by the New Russia Cultural Center in Rensselaer, NY.