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Cheryl Durand and her husband, Paul, are missionaries and currently live in Chile, South America. Home educating their eight children, Cheryl enjoys her time with the children, growing blueberry bushes, reading good books, and teaching English classes to some interested neighbors. She has a love of her German heritage passed down to her from her father.

Forget the Past, Flunk the Future

What is important? Some would say fame, fortune, and glory! These things are interesting to be sure, but not *important*. Besides, what does it profit if you gain the whole world with fame, fortune, and glory and lose your own soul? What is *really* important? That is a question that the Germans from Russia Heritage Society can help you answer. Seek and you will find. It is important, vitally important, that you be a part of the Society today, tomorrow, and always, that you might know your heritage.

Today you may go to the Society's web site - www.grhs.org - and read what's new, browse the store, or check out the youth program, among other things. You see, there is a ditch on either side of the road, to quote an old saying, and when dealing with family there are two serious problems. We want to honor our parents and ancestors but we must be careful not to fall on the one extreme side of ancestral worship or on the other side, more prominent in our society, of forgetting altogether our heritage. By providing chapters, meetings, library resources, and programs, the Germans from Russia Heritage Society helps us to avoid either ditch. Their site is an excellent link to today's world, connecting the past with the present.

Tomorrow's children need to know their heritage and find answers to those perplexing questions of who we are, how we got here, and what life is all about. The Germans from Russia Heritage Society stands in the gap between today and tomorrow to provide our children with the information they need to start answering these questions. What was important to their ancestors? What is the lasting impression that they give? My children have benefited greatly from the youth essay contest. It has helped them dive

deeper into history and develop their research and creative writing activities in the process. They have asked their grandfather numerous questions, received pictures and genealogical information from him, and interacted with members of the society in their quest for answers. Why did these brave Germans leave their home country? What was happening in their country that propelled them to leave? What was their experience in Russia? What caused them to endure the dangerous trip over the ocean to a new home in the west? We have a limited view as we grow up in the United States. Therefore, it is vitally important that the Youth Program of the Society open the window of the past to help the children of tomorrow answer those questions, helping them grow into respectful, honorable adults that are a blessing to their family and nation.

Always is a word that implies constancy, for ever and a day as some might say! How can we keep the Germans from Russia Heritage Society active into perpetuity? First, by teaching our children and helping them connect with the past, making it interesting in the present, and passing on the love and desire to teach their own children their heritage. Second, keep the Society financially solvent by donating your time, talent, and funds to support the Society. Consider attending one of the Annual International Conventions - consider donating to the two million dollar fund raising campaign - consider that your constant investment will help the Society to be at hand always!

So what is important? The Germans from Russia Heritage Society is helping us answer that question and gain a wealth of knowledge and insight into our own soul. Let us not fall into the ditch of forgetting our past, not teaching our children, and not giving of ourselves to this worthy cause. As you consider what is *really* important - today, tomorrow, and always - may you find that participating in the Germans from Russia

Heritage Society is an admirable way to enable you to preserve your memories of your ancestors and help you make new ones for your children. Remember, if you forget the past, you flunk the future.