



*"...serve one another in love." Galatians 5:13*

## **June 2006 Newsletter**

Hello family and friends,

As I was returning from the Marganets Orphanage 9<sup>th</sup> grade graduation ceremony, I was reminded that we are all students in life. As a school student, many times I learned my lesson after the test. Of course, I didn't receive any credit for that. Once again, on the train, I learned my lesson late. As the passenger across from me threw up in the aisle, my thoughts were about odor, my shoes, how would it be cleaned up, etc. Moments after he finished, my teacher "spoke" to me. "Mark, where was your compassion." I failed the test, but I learned my lesson.

It was a rainy graduation day morning with hope of some sunshine. The thirteen children who graduated were dressed nicely, boys in slacks and dress shirts, girls in pretty dresses. (MUCH bought clothes for some of the graduates.) There was a nice ceremony with visiting entertainment of song and dance. I said to the director, "This is a great day for the children!" She responded, "This is a great day for us, too." The teachers have a very difficult task in teaching these children. This orphanage for children with mental and physical disabilities is given the task of giving hope to the children thrown away by society. Four years ago, June of 2002, I visited for the first time. I asked for a list of things that I could buy for the children's greatest needs that day. I easily spent \$50 on school supplies alone. How can you teach children without school supplies? During my recent visit, I learned that the government allowance provides one pair of shoes every two years, and two pair of socks every year. If you have growing children, you understand my point.

I don't know how long this has been going on, but I learned in January that some of the children have taken to sniffing glue. When I encountered this during my May and June visits, it broke my heart. Some of the children came to me for attention, but as soon as they exhaled, I could smell the glue. This is a common activity for street children, but I never considered that it would come to the orphanage. The manager says it is due to lack of toys, activities of interest, etc. I see her point, but I don't wholeheartedly agree.

We will approach this problem from a number of different angles. I have contacts in Illichevsk that work with drug and alcohol rehabilitation. Ira and I will do our homework between now and September. With permission from the director of the orphanage, we will create an educational approach to drug abuse for the teachers to use with the children. We are looking for toys that will stimulate the minds of the children. The Legos were a great start. A third direction that we are working on is to connect the children with the Sunday school program at the Baptist church near the orphanage. The pastor is successfully drawing about 30 children from another orphanage and a local shelter. They are providing the greatly needed spiritual nourishment for these children. Finally, we met a young man from the Charismatic church in Marganets who visits our children. He has talked with them about God, drawing some of them away from the glue crew.

As always, God will provide for all that he wants to be accomplished. I will ask though, that you, every reader of my newsletter, pray for our children. Their futures are challenging enough without damaging their brains more by sniffing glue or who knows what in the future. Please pray that God will guide me to the people who can help.

May God fill each of us with His love and compassion for these troubled children.

Blessings of love and healing,  
*Mark*

Illichevsk Free Clinic   Marganets Orphanage  
Emmaus Children's Food Program

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