



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

January 2007 Newsletter

Hello family and friends,

May the year 2007 bring each of you happiness and peace. In Soviet times, there were wonderful New Year's toasts and greetings for the New Year. It was an attitude of hope for change and a better year than the previous one. In these post-Soviet times, Ukraine is a country in the midst of change. Ira shared a saying with me that applies. "I wish for you to never experience a country in the mist of change." In the almost 5 years that I have been here, I have experienced a lot of change. Slowly but surely, Ukraine is changing for the better. Not everyone can see it. Not everyone is experiencing it. But I will say that the children of MUCH are numbered among those who do see and experience change.

I will not take our situation for granted. We have not had any government interference with our work with the children. As a matter of fact, in both Marganets and Illichevsk, the government has helped the children. In 2006 at the Marganets orphanage, the government provided a grant for material and equipment for programs that are much needed. I will share more after meeting with the MUCH Board of Directors to determine how we can become involved with these new programs.

In Illichevsk, the city government has been very encouraging toward our work with children who have Cerebral Palsy. Almost three years ago we were given a room at the hospital to use for massage therapy. The neurologist down the hall refers her patients to us regularly. The Chief Doctor stands behind our effort with his support. The director of Children's Services cooperates with us with great enthusiasm. And as I reported in the last newsletter, the director of Sports and Recreation is very interested in helping us provide more opportunities for our children.

For the children of MUCH, 2007 has begun as a wonderful hope for change in their lives.

The Give a Child a Gift drive was a roaring success. Anatoliy, our representative in Marganets, the Director and the Manager of the Marganets orphanage went shopping for the stuffed animals. As they met with the vendors, the generosity of the Christmas spirit was alive. The vendors gave such big discounts that Anatoliy was able to purchase additional larger toys. When we presented the toys to the children, they were delighted. They came alive as I had never seen them in the past. I believe that this may have been their first real Christmas experience.

Sometimes I get caught up in my activities and forget my own need for massage therapy. When I finally scheduled an appointment for myself in December, the patient ahead of me was three-year-old Nastya, whom I had not met previously. She had just finished talking with Tanya, the massage therapist, about Santa Claus. As she walked out of the office, Nastya looked up at me and asked, "Are you Santa Claus?" What a pleasant encounter!

Nastya has Cerebral Palsy that affects mostly one side of her body. She has more spasticity in her lower extremities than her upper extremities. She walks on tiptoe, holding her mother's hand for balance. The therapist's goals are to reduce spasticity in the dominant muscles and stimulate and strengthen her weak muscles. After her 20 day massage treatment, Nastya is physically more active. The spasticity in her lower extremities has been reduced. She moves more freely. She had more success doing the exercises with the big plastic ball. I look forward to seeing her continued success as Nastya receives future treatments

God has certainly blessed the efforts of MUCH. We look to 2007 with great anticipation of how we can more deeply alter the lives of our children through the provision of new opportunities. It is our desire to help the Ukrainian people who run our programs to create better opportunities that will prepare the children to compete in their changing country. It seems that the country is changing in business and economy faster than in education and preparation of its people to deal with the changes. I personally would like to ask each of my readers to seek God's direction in your lives concerning MUCH. There are many ways to be involved if God is leading your heart in this direction. If you have questions, please contact me at mark-ua@triad.rr.com.

I will be in America in March and April. I will be in Pennsylvania March 2-14 and Florida March 24th through April 2. The rest of the time I will be in Greensboro, NC. I will be available to show PowerPoint presentations and share more personally what is happening with our children. If you would like me to meet with you or your church, please contact me by email at your earliest convenience.

May your 2007 be filled with joy and prosperity.

Blessings of love and healing,
Mark

**Illichevsk Massage Therapy Clinic Marganets Orphanage
Emmaus Children's Food Program**

**If you would like to support this ministry financially,
You may contribute online from our website,**

www.muchhope.org

OR

Your gift may be mailed to:

1 Kinbuck Point

Greensboro, NC 27410

Make checks payable to Mission Ukraine Children's Hope or MUCH

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