



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

## **May 2007 Newsletter**

Hello family and friends,

It is good to be back in Ukraine. Everything continues to move forward. The other day I went to the morning market and bought a sickle to cut grass at the park. The blade is a pretty good size. If you were to see me standing there with my sickle beside me, your might want to entitle me "The Happy Reaper." I spend a couple hours each morning at the park. After I get caught up with the grass, I'll be preparing the park for our "Day in the Park" for our children of the clinic. I'm not sure what all we will be doing, but this will be my morning project for the summer. I'll keep you informed of my progress.

Ira and I dropped in on Marina, the city's Director of Social Services, the other day. We met briefly to set up a meeting to further discuss visitors from Slippery Rock University and Palmer Chiropractic College. So the first step has begun on this end of the pond.

On Thursday Ira and I met with Nadya, our drug and alcohol education specialist, to discuss her recent visit to Marganets orphanage. For about three hours we talked about her visit; the children, the teachers, and the future of the program. Nadya not only teaches the children in the classroom. She also gathers them together to chat informally. She shared some problems of her childhood. This encouraged the children to share their own stories. And that they did. Nadya was able to touch the lives of the children in a special way. She is bringing healing to the children's brokenness and fears.

Some of the teachers object to discussion of God in the classroom. Also, some of the teachers are there to teach their subject and that is it. I see some of the old Soviet way of thinking here. They are doing what they were taught to do. But others are more nurturing. They know that the children need more than facts and knowledge to move forward in their lives. So they are very open to what Nadya has to share with the children.

The small vision for the children that we started with last year has begun to unfold in wonderful ways. Nadya has a special goal for the children. Along with drug and alcohol prevention, she wants to teach them to care about each other. She wants to teach and encourage them to become real friends, truly loving friends. She will return in July to spend a longer visit with the children. It is exciting to see how God is directing Nadya to build into the lives of the children.

We continue to see promising results at the Massage Clinic. Vika D, age 15, has Cerebral Palsy and some mental retardation. She began coming to the clinic when we first opened. She was having difficulty keeping her balance while walking and would not speak to me. She was very shy with everyone who was not family. Today, as I was walking back to my apartment, I saw Vika walking with her grandmother. As I greeted them in Russian, Vika had a smile on her face. Even so, when her grandmother repeated my, "How are you?" to her, she turned her head away

from me. She is still shy, but she has made remarkable progress since I last saw her.

During her massage, it is reported that Vika has become more sociable with the therapist. They discuss the films that Vika watches. She understands more when questions are asked of her. She also answers questions more readily when asked. She is walking better, which was evident when I saw her. Because of the good results, it has been recommended that Vika receive massage treatments every other month.

When I see a family of a disabled child, it is clear how they are coping with life. When I first met Vika, her parents, and her grandmother, there was a clear tension in their faces. They were struggling with hopelessness. The specialist who was treating Vika's unique disability was located in Moscow, Russia. This is possibly a 1 ½ day train ride from Illichevsk, Ukraine. With our clinic in Illichevsk, Vika can be treated without any inconveniences to their family. When I see her parents now, they look renewed and at peace. When I encounter Vika's grandmother, she always has a big smile on her face and kind words for me, even though they are in Russian.

As we approach summer, we look to creating recreation opportunities for the children of the clinic that will be therapeutic. Camp will take place in the first week of September. This will be another great opportunity for the children to experience new adventures. Please keep all of us in your prayers that God will move His Spirit in a wonderful way upon the children this summer.

Blessings of love and healing,

*Mark*

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

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