



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

April 2008 Newsletter

Hello family and friends,

In Ukraine, April 15 is not tax day. It is the day that the city stops heating the homes and all city buildings.

In many cities they also stop heating water for household use. I realized that would happen in Illichevsk yesterday when I started my shower. Instead of getting warmer and warmer, it got colder and colder. The last two years we have had hot water the whole year in Illichevsk. But, I am reminded of my blessings each time that I visit Marganets. The city has not provided heat OR hot water for about 12 years.

Speaking of Marganets, I promised to report on my visit to the orphanage. First let me recap the special projects of the past 6 years, which have been funded by your response to our holiday-fund-raising challenges. These are the improvements that we have made. We bought a sound system to promote the choral and dance education, two small washing machines, replaced 142 beds and bedding, created an inhalation clinic, bought sports equipment, started a drug and alcohol prevention program, bought 67 pleasure reading books, bought toys for the children one year at Christmas, provided funds to teach a computer class, provided funds to begin massage treatments, and provided funds for updated education material for the teachers. I hope that I didn't forget anything. Our regular monthly program of clothing and shoes during these 6 years totaled about \$11,520. We have spent a lot of money to help these children. But, has it changed the children? Have they appreciated what we have done to improve their living conditions and personal comfort? We see many changes in the children. The best news is the children have stopped running away from the orphanage! The orphanage is now a more desirable place where children can grow.

We are at a maintenance plateau now and will keep the children clothed and with shoes. Our special project goals are changing to focus on health and education. In September we initiated the **computer and massage programs as pilot programs and began a reading program in December**. I have received excellent reports on each during my visit. **Eight children have been receiving computer instruction**. I was very surprised to see some of the results that these children were showing. A report of their program will be posted on the web site soon. **The massage program has helped seven children**. The ten-to-fifteen-day massage treatments have affected their self esteem, physical health, posture, scoliosis, and for some, their walking gait. **For all of the children, the pleasure books have relaxed and inspired them**. They never had pleasure books available, so they would hang out at the book store and magazine racks in town. Now the children who are able to read take great pleasure in reading at "home." For many of the younger children, bedtime stories, (not previously available), are like a sedative. Their little minds can now dream with creative ideas while they sleep and when they are awake. Reading is fundamental, (if I may quote a great mind).

The **drug and alcohol prevention program** began two years ago, but the logistics didn't work out. I have found someone to revive it. She lives nearby in Marganets, so she can teach the children on a very regular basis. I will have more details after my July visit. I had a very positive meeting with Pastor Oleg on this subject. He tells me that this woman is very good with her presentation. The four programs that we want to promote beginning in September of 2008 are massage, computer, reading, and addictive

behavior prevention. The total cost per month will be between \$135 and \$175 a month. I will provide the details to the board for approval at their June meeting. Here is some news from Ira!

Ira's Insights

This time I'd like to share with you about one of the first patients of the Massage clinic. This patient's name is Valya K. This girl has severe Cerebral Palsy. She is not mentally well. When she was a little girl doctors told her mother that she wouldn't be able to walk by herself. When she began to have massage treatments she was 7. She lives in the village nearby Illichevsk. Every time when Valya was invited for the massage treatment her mother had to bring her daughter to the Massage clinic by public transportation. At that time Valya couldn't walk at all (she just crawled) and her mother had to carry Valya in her arms from the bus stop to the Massage clinic. Gradually Valya had some good results. Every time when Valya had some new skills her mother told the masseuse about these. At home Valya's mother did some exercises with her daughter to help her daughter to keep the results that she got from the massage treatment.

Now Valya is 11. Massage treatment helps Valya to keep her skills and get new ones. Today her mother doesn't have to carry Valya in her arms from the bus stop to the Massage clinic. Valya can walk by herself holding on her mother's hand. Valya's mother tells that Valya can walk by herself at home but when she is in her "good mood."

I am always impressed when I hear such stories like Valya's story. It proves again that what people from America do in Ukraine is not in vain. It helps our Ukrainian people who have children like Valya to be encouraged and to have a great hope for the future of their children.

*Until Next time,
Ira*

As a young missionary, I am constantly learning. As a young organization, MUCH is learning and developing a new understanding of what it means to serve the children of God in Ukraine. I extend a humble "thank you" to all who make what we do possible. I thank each of you who read my newsletter and pray for us. I am most grateful for your interest in our children.

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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