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“...serve one another in love.” –Galatians 5:13

## February 2008 Newsletter

Hello family and friends,

I bring you New Years greetings from West Central Ukraine. I have just returned from visiting our second new outreach to children in need. I based my visit at the seminary in Borislav (SW of L'viv), and then traveled 100 kilometers NNW to the city of Dobromel. About 10 kilometers from the border of Poland, Dobromel can be found on the map just above the 49.5th latitude. Vladimir, the pastor of a newly planted church in Dobromel, his daughter Lena, and another American missionary, Miss Lee (from the Borislav seminary) brought me to visit the children. On our way we learned that many of the 130 children at this orphanage were in quarantine with the flu that was spreading throughout western Ukraine. When we arrived, we learned that the director of the orphanage, who knew that we were coming to visit, had gone to L'viv on business.

The assistant director met up with us about 10 minutes after our arrival. As we began to talk, with the aid of Lena's translation, the children who were not in quarantine began to “come out of the woodwork.” As Lena and I were taken on a tour of the orphanage, Vladimir and Miss Lee blended in with the children. It was easy to see that Vladimir not only has a heart for the children, but he has built healthy relationships with them during the past 8 years. When he takes things for the children, he is very personal about how he distributes the items. He knows the children by name and knows their needs. He puts items in a bag and puts the child's name on it. Then he personally delivers the bag to each child. He is truly a pastor of children. The love of God flows through him in wonderful ways.

Lena and I were shown the different improvements that had been made with the grant money received from the government. I was pleased with the decisions that had been made to improve the quality of life for the children. One bathroom had been remodeled, but I had the opportunity to use the one that had not. I was shown the rooms that had been upgraded and those that had not. The building itself still needs much improvement. I hope that the government will continue to assist these needs.

After seeing the facility and getting a good feel for what life is like for these children, I asked what the most basic needs of the children are. I was told that shoes and socks were the biggest need. As is with the children at the Marganets orphanage, children here receive one pair of shoes every two years and two pair of socks every year. She mentioned some other needs which I discussed with Vladimir. I asked the nurse about their medical program. She told me that they did not use massage as part of their program. I was pleased with the openness that the assistant director used to speak to us. Also, I learned that some of the staff truly care about the children, but for many it is just a job. It shows, in the ways that they relate to the children.

It was interesting to me to learn the following facts about the children. Of the 130 children, only 6 are true orphans, having no parents. Twenty four children's parents lost their parental rights. The remaining 100 children come from difficult homes throughout that section of the L'viv Region. We will begin

immediately to support these children. The Christmas Drive has raised money to support this outreach for the year of 2008. By September we will know how successful MUCH has been in changing the lives of the children in the Dobromel orphanage.

### *Ira's Insights*

Several days ago Mark and I visited a new patient of the massage clinic. At 3 years old she has already had 11 operations. (I think the diagnosis was herniated spine.) Apparently, because of doctors' different opinions, the first 6 operations were not necessary. Before the last operation, Ann B. could walk. A shunt was implanted in her lower back by St. Petersburg doctors. Now she is learning to walk again. (In spite of all of these bad experiences, Ann is a very lovely girl.

Ann's mother knew that few masseuses work with special children. In her search for a private masseuse, she found our therapist, Galina. Galina invited her to visit our massage clinic. Ann had one 20 day treatment, but was not able to come when she was scheduled for the next one. She easily gets sick, so Galina visits her home to give her massage treatments.

Mark and I visited her home while Galina was giving her a massage, her second set of treatments. At first, Ann didn't want Mark to take pictures. Later, when she was dressed and active, she was very happy to have her picture taken. Although Ann has no feeling in her feet and little control of her legs, she walks with the help of a walker. I am very surprised at the desire little Ann has to walk and develop other skills. Galina thinks that she has great potential in the future to walk by herself.

*Until next time,*

*Ira*

MUCH marches forward in 2008 for the sake of our children. As God guides, he continues to provide through generous hearts that He speaks to. Thanks to all who hear and respond.

Blessings of love and healing,

Mark

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

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