



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

July 2008 Newsletter

Hello family and friends,

Summer is in full swing. I was at the sea yesterday with my guests from L'vov, Ukraine. The beach has become a tourist trap, multifaceted business opportunity, including what seems to me to have become semi-private beach areas with lounge chairs and overhead coverings. Things are moving forward!

Another surprise confronted me on the train back from my visit in Marganets. Our train car had one room and a bathroom on one end of the car that was wheelchair accessible. The bathroom did not meet the American standard of accessibility, but it was a big step forward for the Ukraine train system.

While in Marganets I met with the woman who will teach the drug and alcohol prevention program at the orphanage. We had a very long discussion of what I wanted for the children and what she was ready to provide. She will give me a detailed outline of what she will be doing. She will adapt her program for our children and begin in September. This work with our children is a part of her ministry through her church. In that respect, MUCH will help support her work in a small way.

Our year-at-a-time commitment to the transition home in Marganets is going well. We stopped to visit the children and share Bible stories with them. Alina, who was my translator last year also, did a great job telling stories and following them with craft activities. The children had a great time. While speaking with the director, we learned some exciting statistics. In 2007, three children were adopted from the transition home. In the first half of 2008, 10 children have been adopted. All but one of these children have been adopted by a Christian family. Can you imagine; children taken from a bad family situation and put into a transition home for only 90 days while they wait for placement in an orphanage. Then, through God's provision and the loving hearts of local families, some of these children are removed from the clutches of the "system" and given a wholesome family home environment. What a joy for me to experience.

Last March, I had a nice chat with one of those children (age 12) at the transition house. While visiting the youth at the Baptist church recently, this boy came up to me. He had changed so much that I didn't recognize him. Most of all, he had a family, a church youth family, and a wholesome future to look toward. This is the hope for all of our children. As I hear it, the government has made it much easier and less expensive for national and international adoptions. What a pleasure it is for me to be here during this most interesting time of change.

It is so exciting to me to see teenagers take an interest in missions. In the past two years, at least three teens and preteens have made financial contributions to touch the lives of our children. The examples of adults are touching the hearts of young people everywhere. God is preparing for the future needs of disadvantaged children by touching the hearts of youth today. I thank you for your hearts, my young friends.

It's so nice to be a witness of change. Usually when I read about progress that happens, I am thrilled. Being in the epicenter of events, my experiences have been multiplied. I would like for you to get a glimpse of what I saw.

Four years ago one of the directors of the two organizations for disabled children had a vision of a centre where the disabled could gather for social and medical needs. In May, we wrote about the birth of this center. For me it was a doubly meaningful event because of my involvement with the MUCH massage clinic.

The work of MUCH opened the eyes of the Ukrainian people to see what they can do with their own efforts. Of course, it is not complete, but it is what is necessary for our town today. This rehabilitation centre is a big step for our people to move forward.

Recently I stopped at the centre to see one of our masseuses. I didn't expect to see many children there. I thought that I could see only children and their parents who come to have massage treatment and do exercises in the exercises room. (MUCH has one massage therapist in the center and one in the clinic now.) But when I opened the door of the center I was pleasantly surprised. In the playing room there were three or four children who were sitting on the carpet and playing with toys. Among them, I recognized some of our patients of the massage clinic. There was a caretaker who was playing with the children. Their parents were sitting at the tables and chatting. In another room, there were some disabled teenagers who were sitting on the comfortable couch and reading magazines. In the exercises room, there were two children and the exercise trainer. All of this painted a very lively picture. I felt like I was in the epicenter of great progress in our town. It was so nice for me to experience this atmosphere. I think that every person who reads about this progress can be proud. We can be proud because we have been able to change the lives of children who are in need; and we have been able to make the lives of their parents more comfortable. This centre is a victory for everyone who has been and is a participant in the programs of MUCH!

Until next time,

Ira

I thank God for opening the eyes and hearts of all who make the efforts of MUCH an ongoing reality for the children. The children continue to look to us for the opportunity to change their futures. We continue to look to God for direction. We pray that He will continue to open hearts of our readers to help our children in one of the many ways available.

Blessings of love and healing,

Mark

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

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**Your gift may be mailed to:
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