



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

March 2008 Newsletter

Hello family and friends,

As I opened my folder to begin writing my newsletter for this month, I saw folders for the past 6 years. I wrote my first newsletter in January of 2002. It continues to amaze me that God chose me, the least likely in my eyes, to manage this mission. With His guidance and provision, MUCH continues to care for the children of Ukraine. I believe that the greatest gift that we can give as an organization is to help the people of Ukraine help themselves. That has been the underlying theme of MUCH since it began. That was my original goal when I came to Ukraine about 2 years before MUCH was created to assist my mission.

As this country continues to undergo political and economic changes, God introduces me to more of the "least likely" that He has chosen to do His work. The teams of MUCH here are made up of Ukrainian and Russian people living in Ukraine. They are people who have unique gifts with a primary love for children. MUCH gives them the opportunity to become what they were created to be. Our teams include massage therapists, translators, Ira (my assistant), Zoya (Emmaus Club manager), Anatoliy (Manager in Marganets), Volodya (manager in Dobromel), Ludmilla B. (founder of House of Hearts – non-profit for children with disabilities), and even Marina (director of social services for the city of Illichevsk).

Recently, I had a meeting with Marina who had just finished having a meeting with the mayor. First, she spoke with enthusiasm about the letter that the mayor received from the Slippery Rock University Therapeutic Recreation Department in Pennsylvania. The mayor is very interested to begin an internship and practicum program between American and Ukrainian universities. Marina is highly focused upon bringing Recreation Therapy to Illichevsk for the children and adults with disabilities. This is a perfect example of how MUCH helps Ukraine help itself. Marina has a great desire to help the children and to improve family situations in her city, but she needed that connection. For 4 years, Ira and I have been building this team relationship with Marina.

At the Emmaus Christian Club here in Illichevsk their focus is to provide a healthy meal for children who live in homes of alcoholism and poverty. Their program has been losing funding over the past few years. Even so, Zoya wants to do more for the children. When I introduced the idea of helping the children move to higher education, she was very encouraged. Zoya has a nurturing heart and she truly loves the children. The newest program that MUCH has provided is the computer lab. The children will be learning computer skills. They will learn typing skills, writing skills, strategy, creative thought, management concepts, and other educational processes. This will help to prepare them for university, college, trade school, or the job market. Together, our goal is to break the cycle of poverty.

Ira's Insights

Thanks to MUCH, the Emmaus Club will run a new program soon. It will be a computer lab for children who attend the club to develop their computer skills. The teacher, (Zoya), who works at the Club, has told me, "We need the computer lab for

the children, especially for the boys. They like to play computer games, so we will choose games for them that will help them in their school system or prepare them for the time when they graduate school.” Today the computer and printer were purchased. The director of the Club is anxiously waiting for all of the teaching programs to be installed soon, and the new computer lab will begin to bring its results.

One girl, her name is Sveta, who attends the club told me that once at her school she was asked by a teacher: “What do you do there? (at Emmaus) Why is this club so attractive to you?”

She told that for a few first minutes she couldn’t answer the teacher’s question because she had never thought about this. But then she told her, “The club is my life, This is my home. You must know that every person who feels good in his or her home always strives to return.”

I know that some programs of Emmaus club are supported financially by MUCH. For me it’s so wonderful to hear that children who attend this club say that Emmaus is their home.

*Until next time,
Ira*

I will be in Marganets from March 21st until the 27th. I look forward to spending time with the children; I miss them so. Many things are developing in Marganets. I will share all of my findings in the April newsletter. Until then, may God guide you in your daily adventures.

Blessings of love and healing,

Mark

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

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