

ONE
COMMUNITY
THREE PLACES
MANY STORIES



FIRST
DAY CARE CENTER
IN ODESSA



SECOND
DAY CARE CENTER
IN ODESSA



DAY CARE CENTER
IN PETRIVKA

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



One community - three places - many stories

2020 is coming to an end. A year very different from what we had all planned and expected. Suddenly everyone realises how little we humans actually have in our hands. Basically nothing, because none of us can, as it says in the Bible, "prolong our life even by one day by worrying". (Gospel of Matthew 6:27). What a gift to be anchored in faith, especially in times of crisis.

Despite many changes of plans and even a total lockdown from mid-March to May, we have many exciting stories to tell at the end of this year and yes, we have much to be thankful for. We are happy that we are privileged to go through these special times together and that we as a team of "Living Hope" have many opportunities to bring hope to people. Without the support of friends from many different countries, this would not be possible in this way and we thank each and every one of you on behalf of all the children and families who have been reached.



In this annual report, due to lack of space, we can only tell three of many family stories that give an insight into our everyday life and the everyday life of the people with whom we are building a community. Let's look back at 2020 in Odessa and Petrivka.

Unfortunately, the children's fathers in all three families do not play a role anymore - as in most of the families we work with. Many of our children and young people do not have fathers who serve as role models and support them - which obviously does not remain without consequences. All the more important that they feel at home in our day centres and can still enjoy their childhood.

STORY #1 - TAKING THE LAST BUS TO A NEW LIFE

Since 2013, we have known this family that has experienced a real transformation during this year. The mother, a very hardworking woman raising her two sons alone, unfortunately fell into heavy episodes of addiction over and over. These periods also had a significant impact on her health. In many conversations, at the family camp and at the day centre, we would often encourage her to tackle her addiction with God's help. One evening in March, she called me in despair, pleading to find a place for her in a Christian rehabilitation centre. Through an established network over the last 20 years, we did indeed find a rehabilitation centre in Zhytomyr that was willing to take her in at short notice. We made all the arrangements and bought tickets for the bus. As we were to learn later, it was the last bus to leave Odessa before the total lockdown. For us, a miracle and divine guidance. I can only agree with Ben Gurion who said, "He who does not believe in miracles is not a realist."

During the summer, we worked with the two boys to have new windows installed and to start renovating the flat so that we could surprise the mother with it when she returned. After 5 months in rehab, the mother reunited with her sons in August and she is a changed person.

She has not only found a new foundation in faith, she also has new strength for everyday life and takes part in the life of her sons. We thank God for this new beginning and all those who have contributed to the rehab and the renovation of the flat through financial gifts.

STORY #2 - LIFE ON THE THREAD

On 27 July, we received a call from a fifteen-year-old girl who was completely devastated when she informed us that her mother had just been taken by ambulance and she asked us to come to the emergency room as soon as possible. Of course we followed her request and what we got to see did not give us much hope. A blood vessel had burst and the mother had lost more than 3 litres of blood. She was in a very critical condition and



despite all this she was left on a stretcher in the corridor of the emergency room for the next 8 hours. Unfortunately, this is a common reality in Ukrainian hospitals, where people are categorised according to whether they are worthy or unworthy of treatment. Due to her family history, this woman most likely belonged to the second group. Thank God, this changed after countless calls and a place was finally found in the intensive care unit. After several operations, many blood transfusions (we had

to pick up the blood ourselves from different hospitals) and long lists of medicines, which all had to be purchased by one of us, it was confirmed after one week that she would survive and also that she would keep both legs. What a relief and joy especially for her two children.

Special thanks to a couple from Brandenburg who covered a large part of the costs and to everyone who remembered this family in prayer.

STORY #3 - AND SUDDENLY YOU ARE LEFT WITH NOTHING

At the beginning of November, another family was afflicted by a severe tragedy. Due to very old electrical wires, a short circuit occurred, followed by a fire in the flat, which took the life of the grandmother of three boys and destroyed all their possessions.

This is already the second fire within a year that has affected families we support. This has led us to plan an educational event for all our kids in cooperation with the local fire department for the time after the quarantine period, where they will learn how to prevent fires and what to do in case of an emergency.



We are glad and grateful that we were able to quickly and unbureaucratically organise help in case of this family - as well. We informed a church in Germany, which very quickly donated enough money to start a renovation and we hope that the family will be able to return to their own home by the end of the year.

These three stories are just a small part of what we have experienced this year. Of course, the main part of the work happens in the three day centres, where we are able to provide a safe place for up to 100 children and young people daily, with space for learning, playing, laughing and weeping.



Due to the difficult situation throughout the country, we have been able to intensify our work with families and parents, which makes us very grateful. Material help is often a key to the hearts of the people, who then also gain confidence to share their spiritual needs with us. Through our presence on the internet, sometimes even people from other parts of Ukraine turn to us with their concerns - for example, a family from the north-east who lives in a small village in very poor conditions. Through networking with other Christian charities, we were able to transfer 200 Euros to provide the family

with the necessary firewood and food for the winter. We are so grateful to have the opportunity of providing this help.

For the Christmas and New Year season, we are planning to distribute food packages to families and elderly lonely people - as well. Already during the lockdown in spring, we were able to deliver more than 1000 food boxes and help many families through the difficult time. Our children and young people are all involved - some make Christmas cards, others put together the care packages, others help with the visits. We are a well-coordinated team and it makes us happy to see how much our children enjoy sharing with others and giving away what we have.



For 2021, we have a lot of plans. We would like to purchase our own premises for our day centres, as the cooperation with the state is not always easy. We trust that with God's help we can continue to create an environment for children and young people to live a more secure and healthy life, despite all the hardships in their families.

We would like to thank everyone who supported us in 2020. Our ministry in Ukraine would not be possible without your manifold help in word and deed! We thank you for all the emails, calls, prayers and donations!

For the New Year, we sincerely pray for God's protection and blessing, peace and contentment! With warm greetings from Odessa and Petrivka,

Slavik and Nicole Borisuk with the children and staff of Living Hope

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