

JOY AND SORROW GO HAND IN HAND IN LIFE

„There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance.“

The Bible, Ecclesiastes 3:1,4

The summer holidays are coming to an end and in one week the new school year will start in our three day centres, with new challenges, goals, some new children and new volunteers from Germany.

In this newsletter we would like to share what we have experienced in the last three months. There are many experiences for which we are very grateful, but also some sad ones.



In June, we were again able to send a transport of humanitarian aid from Germany to Ukraine in cooperation with a partner organisation in Odessa. Ten tons of clothes, furniture, medical supplies and bicycles were loaded into the truck on a Saturday in the Erzgebirge Mountains by a large group of children and adults. All these things will now be used for the benefit of many people in and around Odessa. We sincerely thank all donors, helpers but also the Ukrainians who paid for the transport and took care of all customs matters and the distribution. Once again we have experienced that together we can achieve a great things

We are sincerely grateful that we were able to run again our traditional camp this summer, after a year's break due to the pandemic. What a joy it was for all of us when 126 children, youth and leaders arrived at the well-known site to enjoy a week's holiday together at the Black Sea. For many of our kids, this is the only holiday they know. It was moving to see how especially children who are currently experiencing a lot of hardship, suffering and sadness in their families literally blossomed, opened up and small steps of inner healing could be taken together. On the other hand, these intensive days make us aware again and again of the difficult conditions under which many adolescents in Ukraine live and that the emotional distress, traumatising and neglect in many families seems to have grown in recent years. It is all the more important that they have places in facilities like our day centres where they experience acceptance, care and genuine interest in them and their concerns on a daily basis. Many thanks to ANCL - who again supported the camp financially and with a staff team this year. We are grateful for your friendship!





The day after the camp, we were again painfully confronted with the reality that we unfortunately cannot be of adequate help to some young people and that ultimately everyone makes their own decisions. At 9:00 on Sunday morning, we received a call that a sixteen-year-old girl who had picked up her brother from the bus the day before was lying dead next to him on the sofa in the morning. The girl came regularly to one of our centres when she was in primary school, but chose a different path for herself as a teenager. Nevertheless, we kept in touch and had great hope that she would be able to manage her life. Unfortunately, everything turned out differently. Our NGO took care of all the formalities and the funeral, as the mother was unable to do so due to chronic illness. Grieving together is also an important part of our ministry, but when it involves very young people again and again, it is all the more difficult. We are grateful that in these dark days our faith sustains us and gives us strength to carry on.



And so it went on - with visits to the cinema and the dolphinarium, with the visit of a team from Zwickau, which surprised our kids with a wonderful programme. Everyone could design their own T-shirt and a flower pot and there were no limits to their creativity. Many thanks to the Zwickau team for their commitment!



For the new school year, we are in the midst of preparations to equip our children with the necessary materials, shoes and school clothing, to carry out repairs in our rooms and to integrate new children into our programme. The purchase of one of our centres seems to be finally completed in the autumn. Hopefully more about this in the next newsletter.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your support, friendship, prayers, visits, emails and phone calls. All this helps to make the ministry here in Odessa and the region possible.

Sincerely,
Slavik and Nicole with the children and staff of Living Hope.

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