



Bringing Hope to the Lives of the Least

Greetings to All Our Dear Friends and Family,

As we look back on the past year at Ukraine Orphan Outreach, we are again reminded of how much God is at work in our ministry programs – and we are humbled at the thought of how He has provided so many resources and opportunities for us to grow His mission.

Scripture provides several examples of how much God cares for orphans and widows, and how deeply He thinks about their well-being. Scripture is also clear in its directive for us to follow His example of providing care for those in need. Matthew 25:40 has become one of our favorite verses at UOO: **“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”** We can’t think of a better verse to explain our mission of reaching “the least of these” in Ukraine – including orphans, orphan graduates, single moms, widows, the displaced, and those recovering from substance abuse.

As our mission has expanded over the years from primarily an orphan-focused calling to our mission today to reach the “least of these” in Ukraine, our ministry programs have also expanded and grown to meet that need. **We could not do any of this work without your faithful support, and we are excited to share with you in this year-end newsletter our work during 2018, as well as our plans for 2019.**

Thank you for partnering with us last year through the following:

- In March, UOO hosted our annual fundraising dinner and silent auction.
- In July, UOO participated in a summer camp in Ukraine, providing the opportunity for orphan graduates to hear about Jesus.
- UOO grew its coat ministry for orphans, sending more than 250 coats to orphanages.
- We successfully completed a “Raise the Roof” fundraiser to finish the roof at the House of Grace.
- We continued to provide supplies to orphans, including basic necessities such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, and socks, as well as school supplies and toys. More than 120 orphans benefitted from this program this year.
- We continued to support the House of Hope (a transition home for girls in Kherson), the House of Grace (a transition home for boys in Kramatorsk), and Providence Farm (which helps families displaced due to the conflict with Russia).

In addition to the programmatic growth, we also witnessed incredible growth in financial and material resources. Churches across the country – in Washington, D.C., Virginia, Detroit, and Colorado – have helped support our ministry programs by providing Ziploc bags full of toys and hygiene products for orphans. We were also blessed by new grant funding this year from churches, corporate sponsors, and foundations.

Thank you for your continued support and generosity, and **THANK YOU**, especially, for being such an integral part of our exciting mission to serve “the least of these” in Ukraine! We look forward to hearing from you in the New Year!

On behalf of the entire Ukraine Orphan Outreach Board of Directors,

Shonda Werry

UOO Board Member

Ukrainian Christmas

By Sasha Samborska

I'm Sasha Samborska and I'm an exchange student from Ukraine with the FLEX program – Future Leaders Exchange. I come from a city in central Ukraine called Kryvyi Rih. Now, I am currently living in Loveland, Colorado with my host family. I came to America to learn about American culture and to share Ukrainian culture with Americans.

Ukrainian Christmas traditions are very unique. Most Ukrainians are Christian Orthodox so we celebrate Christmas on the 6th and 7th of January. Ukrainian Christmas traditions have very ancient roots. Many centuries ago, Christmas was a very big holiday. The whole house had to be cleaned before January 6th, decorated, and the Didukh had to sit on the table. Didukh is a bundle that's made from wheat and other different dried plants as a symbol of good harvest, wealth, and guardian of the generations. On January 6th, the whole family started preparing the Christmas dinner - exactly 12 dishes total without any meat. These dishes included two special dishes called kutia and uzvar. Kutia is boiled rice with dried fruits, honey, and walnuts. Uzvar is a drink made from dried fruits like apples, prunes, and dried apricots. Every mom had her own recipe of these two special dishes, a secret passed down from generation to generation.



In the evening after food was prepared, people came to the main square where the whole village gathered. The village played games, burned down the Didukhs as a symbol of a new beginning, and sang kolyadka – Christmas songs about animals, good harvest, wealth, and food. After that, families went home and started setting up the table for dinner by decorating it with candles and flowers. When everything was ready, the family got together around the table, prayed, and ate dinner. No one could argue or curse during the evening, as this would bring bad luck to the family.

The Christmas night has a lot of legends and myth. That's why many girls gathered together on Christmas night to do divinations and make predictions about their future husbands and children. On the next day, January 7th, people went to church early in the morning. Afterwards, they visited their relatives and friends. There is one another old unique custom called Vertep.

Vertep was a moving toy theater that performed small plays about Christmas for different houses and featured performances with kolyadkas. That's how Christmas was celebrated back then, but nowadays we have adopted and upgraded these traditions to the modern world.

My favorite Christmas tradition is spending time cooking cherry vareniki with my mom for Christmas dinner. My family does not go to church on Christmas. Instead, we visit my godparents to celebrate, spend time together, and give and receive gifts. My favorite thing about Ukrainian Christmas is spending time with family and friends, listening to Christmas music, and of course...THE FOOD.



Picture of the House of Grace



Do you buy gas or groceries at King Soopers? Check this out!

There is a great way to support UOO that fits right into your regular grocery shopping. It's quick, easy and the best part is it takes no money from your pocketbook!

Here's the deal: When you purchase groceries or gas at King Soopers using your UOO card, UOO gets 5% back for every dollar spent.

How to participate: Ask Kris for a King Soopers gift card, load it with your grocery money at customer service or the checkout line, then purchase your groceries and gas using this card each time.

Contact Kris if you're interested! KStoesz@aol.com

Why I Volunteer

By Oleg Drukachuk

Our team regularly visits the Novostav orphanage-sanatorium, where children from orphanages are sent to live and receive preventative treatments to strengthen their health. Every time we drive up, a crowd of children run out to meet us at the gate.

Before we can even get our van's doors open, they're running up, greeting each of us with big smiles and bigger hugs.

Their obvious delight in seeing us, the sincerity of their smiles gives each of us greater confidence that we are doing the right thing, coming to visit these wonderful children with bright smiles... and wounded hearts.



While it's a joy to be able to simply love them, at times it's just so hard to see the pain, loneliness, and disappointment hiding in their eyes. It hurts to hear them say "no one needs me!" or "I don't love anyone at all!"

The more we see of their hearts, longing to be loved and to love in return, the more we understand just how much they need support, understanding and love... from us.

And that's why I go. That's why I make the trip every single time. I want to show them one thing through everything we do there. Through being a friend, through games and songs, Christian ethics lessons, and just by spending time with them, I want to demonstrate to them that they are not alone, not rejected – and that they are precious to God, and to us.

That's what brings our team together! Our mission is to show these orphans God as a Loving Father.

A huge shout out and thank you for believing in us!



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Charitable
Anonymous Donor

Mission Trip 2018

By Clarke Stoesz

This year our UOO Summer Mission Team consisted of three Americans and two Ukrainians joining forces with Agape's Ukrainian team. We were blessed to be a meaningful part of this weeklong adventure in the Carpathians at Hotel Nataliya, a facility nestled in the alpine village of Huklyvyi. This tiny settlement is just a quick stop along the winding way to a local ski lift on the other side of the pass. We were so blessed with peaceful hillsides of garden plots, mixed forest and hayfields, and plenty of cows to sooth us with their gentle bells ringing. The setting was incredible, allowing our group of 65 to share some quality time together in a variety of activities.



Our group consisted of boys, girls, and leaders from six different Agape transition homes across Ukraine. This annual get-together is anticipated by everyone in the group and has helped to transform many of these youth into young adults wanting to serve our Lord in their everyday lives. The Agape Team has expertise in conducting Christ-centered camps to at-risk young adults and children alike. They bring with them a worship team, biblical instructors, motivational speakers, sports organizers, translators, counselors, a nurse, and a spirit of love that infects us all! Our American missionaries were given the opportunity to be such an integral part of these activities, allowing us to make new friends, encourage the ones we have known for many years, and to grow just a little more in who we are as Christians.

For a many young missionaries and campers alike, these life changing camps can help reset one's own spiritual walk, as well as propel a person into a whole new direction of life. I am so incredibly grateful that our organization has been able to commit to these annual summer camps. Our ability to organize, bring a team, and support the financial backing for these camps have been identified as a key link in a greater holistic approach to reaching, transforming, and sending these youth into a tough world to make a difference. Thank you to all who have made these camps a reality!

Mission Trip 2019

With the ever changing political and military climate in Ukraine, it is always a challenge to begin preplanning a mission trip to Ukraine nine months before departure. Our initial ideas included doing a week-long summer camp at an orphanage outside of the city of Kramatorsk. Unfortunately, the political and military unrest that continues has escalated at the end of November. The result is the Ukrainian government calling Martial Law to certain regions of Ukraine.



That being said, we are looking to stay closer to Kiev and work with an orphanage for younger children. **Tentative dates are July 26 – August 5, 2019.** Our desire is to invite the young men and women who are living at the House of Grace and Hope to help with the day camp. This will be a time of songs, skits, crafts, games and most importantly relationship building with the children! Mark your calendars now! In February of 2019 we will have early sign-up and information packets available. Please email Kris at kstoesz@aol.com with further questions.

2018 – A Year in Review

By Kelly Schwalbert

Capture a glimpse of life in Ukraine at our two transition homes.

SPRING

Maxim and Lena, the house parents at House of Grace, have been diligently developing a ministry to single teenage orphan mothers. They hold weekly meetings in their house, feeding the young ladies and their children. They also purchase and donate diapers, wipes, clothing, and food to the mothers. Maxim and Lena have massive papa and momma hearts!

In early spring, there was a bad flu outbreak in a nearby orphanage that House of Grace visits. They were able to purchase much needed medical supplies to the orphanage.

The young men continue to minister at the technical schools where they lived before moving into House of Grace. Their weekly Bible studies are well attended, and they are able to support the other graduate orphans with donated food and supplies.

Easter was a grand celebration at Emerald City, a nearby orphanage. The group held a play, shared the story of Easter, and distributed supplies.

The young ladies at House of Hope have been busy with their studies. Nadeshda also taught a couple sessions training volunteers how to best serve in the orphanage, she focused on helping and not hurting the relationship with the institutions and the children.

SUMMER

Ukraine celebrated our 27th Anniversary as an independent nation!

In July, we joined with Ukraine Orphan Outreach and Agape International to hold a week-long camp for aged-out orphans. **The highlight of the week was that 23 young adults committed their lives to Jesus Christ and accepted Him as their Lord and Savior!** The camp was held in western Ukraine in the heart of the Carpathian Mountains. Our week was full of hiking, daily devotionals, worship, games, taking lots of photos, and enjoying the company of friends, especially those who came to visit us from America.

We are celebrating at House of Hope, as our dear Vika and Sasha were wed. Vika has spent the last several years living at our home. The happy couple were engaged on Father's Day and married in August. Vika says, "Last year I graduated from a boarding school and went to study in a Missionary Bible School where I met my future husband. We are getting ready to get married in August. Not only will I have a handsome, God-fearing husband, but also his mom and dad as my parents. I am going to have a literal family I always dreamed of."

We also were visited by two of our girls who are now missionaries in other nations. It was a wonderful visit with Masha and Natasha. Even though we eventually move out on our own, the transition home becomes our family for life, and we come back to visit our house Mom and sisters.



In early July, a few of us volunteered as camp counselors for a children's camp. We had a blast and were absolutely exhausted at the end of the week!



We celebrated the birth of the first grandchild for House of Grace!! Congratulations to Artur and his wife, Lena, on the birth of their son.

This summer we started replacing the other part of the roof at House of Grace. The mold and damage were very great, but we are thankful for those who support us and give so we may live in a warm home. We were even able to pop the roof up a bit and add more living space upstairs, which is greatly needed for our family.

Maxim and the young men are steadfast and faithful with their visits to different institutions around the conflict zone.

Maxim reports, "We also we visited orphanage in Druzhkovka for disable kids and found out that kids are dreaming about ice-cream because nobody buy for them. We bought ice-cream for all of them!"

The kid's faces were full of joy at the simple gift of ice cream.

FALL

Fall is the time of new beginnings. Each September, the new school year begins for all students in Ukraine on September 1st. House of Grace brought school supplies and treats for the students to celebrate. This is also the time our weekly Bible lessons start up at the various orphanages we work in, along with our weekly evening meetings with the orphan graduates at the technical school.

The young men are busy with their studies but have taken an active role in planning the various lessons and events to put on at the orphanages. We've also had a good harvest from our large garden and everyone has been part of the process to put up our food for winter.

At House of Hope, it has been a busy season of putting up our small garden into the pantry. All of the girls are active in helping to harvest our crops.

The girls spend their evenings studying, at Bible study, and singing in the youth choir.

Our house mom, Nadezhda, taught a course to educate volunteers who want to work with children in the orphanages. She shared her years of wisdom and experience. She is active in training up the next generation of house parents and those who work with vulnerable children.

WINTER

We just celebrated Andrei's 20th birthday at House of Grace. We enjoyed an incredible spread of tasty treats, tea, and wonderful company. Birthdays were not often celebrated in the orphanages, so these days are especially treasured.

We are busy holding weekly Bible lessons in nearby orphanages, getting ready for Orthodox Christmas on January 7th. The lessons with orphans include a Bible lesson, song and dance and craft time. Last week we made Christmas tree ornaments and shared about the birth of Jesus.

We continue to minister to the single teen mothers. Recently we visited with several of our precious families, distributed children's Bibles, clothing, gifts, and food. They are slowly becoming our extended family.

On November 11th, we participated in the international event Orphan Sunday. We held our weekly class for the young kids at the orphanage, and we passed out children's Bible history story books to everyone in the class. We love this time of year!

At House of Hope, our young ladies have been busy with their studies, while counting down to Christmas break. Evenings are spent on homework, helping prepare dinner, attending choir practice and visiting with each other.

Nadezhda Shtefan, house mom at HOH says, "Our girls have definitely changed for the better; they're becoming more and more responsible and mature in many different areas. Their attitude towards their studies has greatly improved, as well as their response to any task given them. They're becoming more responsible by the day, trying harder to do well any job they are given. I think what impresses me most of all is how enthusiastic they are in taking part in the life of our local church. They not only gladly attend services, but also are eager to be a part of whatever is going on. They're very active in ministry, willing to serve others. That's the most important thing for me, to see that they've made serving the Lord the highest priority in their lives."

We continue to be thankful for all our supporters. Your prayers are appreciated!

Welcome Home

By Maxim Batik

Hello dear friends! We are so thankful for a great time and for the opportunity to serve guys from internat (a place an orphan lives and goes to school) and graduates from orphanages. During our time of ministry, God many times was showing us His grace and that He has plans for orphan's heart and that only He can heal wounds of orphan. During time in orphanage child feels lots of pain, many not answered questions that so hard to find answers to. Often such hearts get closed for people, get offended on whole world, hate and blame everybody in his problems, and sometimes just give up and leave expecting the worse.



When my wife and I were asking God at the beginning of our ministry - what should we do? Does God want us to serve to orphans? One morning God answered us with one verse from the Bible - Proverbs 24:11 - **"Save those who were taken for death and hold back those who are destined to be killed."** Each of the guys that come to the center is a separate book, a separate life. Sometimes it takes years for the heart to become open to God's love and accept Father's love of God.

One of the new guys in our center was Tolik. Tolik studied in the Emerald City orphanage and after graduating went to study at technical school. At first, he was coming to the center for weekends with friends and then stopped coming. We did not stop praying for Tolik and found out from his master that the boy had gotten into bad company, stopped attending school, became rude, started to fight, and often got into trouble with the police. This often happens with orphan graduates, especially when they borrow money from someone.

After a while, Tolik was kicked out from the school and was left on the street. School administration called us to Kramatorsk and asked for help, because he could soon be sent to prison.



In May 2018 Tolik came to us. When he was playing football with the boys, he got a bad arm injury that required surgery. It was a difficult period in our life, we lost a baby, but God led us, the boys and our children in a special way, which was comforting to our hearts.

Step by step, Tolik started to become part of our family, stopped arguing with boys, started to like working with wood.

After some time, Lena and boys went to the camp in Carpathians. In this camp Tolik met his biological sister, who lives in Rovno in the center for orphans. They were very happy to meet each other, **Tolik liked the camp, found many friends there and, in the end, opened his heart for Jesus. Praise God!**

After the camp, Tolik came a different person, he saw meaning in life, started to pray, was asking Lord to help him continue studies and get an education. God heard his prayers and Tolik was taken to Kramatorsk College, by his profession as gas-electric welder. Lord helped fully restore all his documents and he started his studies. But after a while, he met his old company at the college and went to live with them. For about two months we were praying for him and Lord made a miracle. In the evening we received a text message from him that he loves us very much and misses and that he so sorry for what he did.



In Tolik's life we saw once again how great is our God! Administration from the school that he was kicked out told us by phone that the boy is hopeless, that he is very difficult and could not live anywhere, but God came to Tolik's life and saved him. I really liked Tolik 's words that he wrote to us in text message - **I want to go back home!**

This is our biggest dream and a prayer to God that children in our center feel that they are home. That they accepted and loved in this house, then God's healing will come into their lives and our God will be glorified!

Today Tolik works with us for God, attends ministry and loves to read Bible with the boys. We meet so many lives and God restoring and change totally.



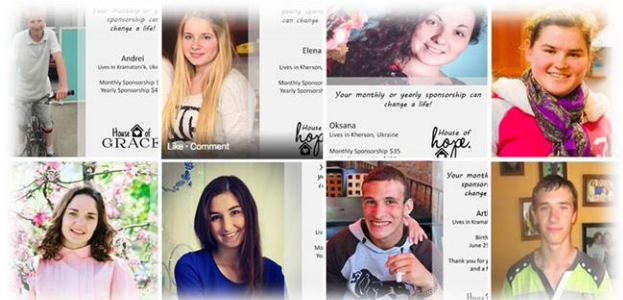
A similar situation was in Arthur's life, he did not want to live and did not believe that God can change his life. But God showed him His strength and now he and his wife are praising God!

Friends, asking you to pray for these guys and we are so thankful that you are doing everything to develop this ministry, support us and pray for us!

May God bless you!

Sponsorship Opportunities

An important opportunity to share with our supporters is one of sponsoring an aged-out orphan. As we tracked through 2018, we have calculated that we are at 45% of our sponsorships, which means we still have over 50% of our monthly commitment to go. As we move into 2019, **our goal is to reach 100% commitment** of sponsorship for the young aspiring adults currently living at both transition homes.



Please consider praying for how you might be able to help reach our goal by pledging a monthly donation to UOO. We have different levels to offer flexibility: \$35, \$70, \$105, and \$140 is a full sponsorship. Having a monthly commitment and reaching our goal will allow us to be able to designate more resources into our other programs and special projects. God is so good and has given us very well-defined programs that he would like us to serve. We appreciate all your prayers and support to be able to care for the least in Ukraine. To learn more about how to sponsor a child check out our website and please let us know if you have any questions.

<http://www.ukraineorphans.org/sponsorships.html>

Thank you to our ministry partners in Ukraine!



Tiny House, Big Potential

By Kris Stoesz



It is a common saying to “think out of the box.” This powerful suggestion often finds us in an uncomfortable situation where we are vulnerable yet expectant for God to show up! After much research, prayer and discernment, we are excited to announce a new business venture that will serve the least in Ukraine.

The fascination of a tiny home on wheels (THOW) has found a way into our life. We will be unveiling the brand new THOW called miniStays this week as an official AirBnB and VRBO for your traveling pleasure. miniStays is a beautifully designed and custom-built THOW that can accommodate up to 5 people and offer a pleasant time in the country.

The awesome features of this THOW are many:

- Offer a peaceful, relaxing get-a-way for those wanting a break
- Ukraine Orphan Outreach will get a chance to tell their story to their guests!
- Clarke and Kris have committed to donate a percentage to UOO to help continue funding the existing programs. At this point, an estimated 20-25% of profits will be donated to UOO!
- The benefit of owning an AirBnB allows flexibility of our schedule to be able to travel long and often to Ukraine.

Looking Ahead to 2019

By Kris Stoesz

We celebrate what God has done in 2018 and welcome in 2019 in an open posture of serving.

A start of a New Year seems to bring a plethora of memories, reflection, contemplation as well as much pondering of what 2019 might look like. We are so grateful to all our supporters, friends, missionaries, Ukraine family, and partners as we collaborate with the goal of bringing hope to the lives of the least in Ukraine. A very heartfelt thank you from all of us who serve with UOO!

Moving into 2019, we feel blessed to be entering our 13th year of ministry. This could not have been accomplished without your loving support, volunteering, love, prayers, and financial gifts. We are privileged to serve in this capacity and give thanks to our good Lord for leading us in his mission to care for the least!

In 2019 we will continue to stay committed to our existing programs, including:

- **House of Hope** – Transition home for girls in Kherson
- **House of Grace** – Transition home for boys in Kramatorsk
- **Providence Farm** – Helping families displaced due to the conflict with Russia
- **Single Orphaned Mom ministry** – helping to break the chain through prevention
- **Supporting widows** by partnering with our ministry partner Samaritan Ministry
- **Orphan Prevention** – program to help families living in extreme poverty
- **Adoption** support and mentoring
- **March Fundraising Dinner** – a huge success because of our supporters!
- Orphan **awareness** and **advocacy**
- **Humanitarian help** as needed
- **Yearly Mission trips** – 2019 tentative dates are July 26- August 5
- Finish the **construction project** at the House of Grace

In addition to sustaining our existing programming, we will be reviewing each one to see how we can serve better, in a deeper and more involved way. We will also be evaluating how we can better plug-in our local volunteers in a more meaningful way by encouraging engagement of shared ideas, passions, and skills to come alongside those we serve and serve with. **We pray that UOO's leadership waits on the Lord in prayer and discernment to know how to serve His children in a manner that pleases Him.**

How You Can Advocate for the Least with Ukraine Orphan Outreach?

- Make a one-time end of the year donation to UOO*
- Pray for an orphan by their name
- Sign up to sponsor an orphan graduate
- Donate below or through our website*: www.ukraineorphans.org
- Volunteer your time to help us with our programs
- Go on the 2019 mission trip
- Like us on Facebook and Instagram
- Have a coffee break with one of board members to learn more!

** Ukraine Orphan Outreach is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Donations are tax deductible.*

Name _____

Address _____

City, State _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

Country _____ Email _____

I/We would like to:

Pray for an orphan

Make a one-time donation of: \$ _____

Sponsor an orphan graduate: \$ _____

(full sponsorship is \$140/month)

Make your check payable to "Ukraine Orphan Outreach"

and send your tax-deductible donation to:

Ukraine Orphan Outreach

18519 WCR 5

Berthoud, CO 80513

* Please go online for donations with a credit card or for donations with monthly, quarterly, or annual frequency (www.ukraineorphans.org)