



Update Newsletter

N 14: June 2016



Mission Trip To Ukraine: May 2016

A Message from Lesya Krivina:

Children who look you in the eyes, extending their hands for hugs, and who ask you: "will you come back?" Children who lost love of their parents, receive the love of Marina and her volunteers.

I am very grateful to Marina for an opportunity to visit children in the orphanages of Ukraine. What Marina and her volunteers do is amazing! Twice a year Marina travels to Ukraine to visit children. She plays with them, does face painting, just talks and listens. She does it year after year. Marina always comes back to them. By the time those children age out of their orphanages, they have Marina, as an adult friend, who is there for them along with her volunteers.

I visited four orphanages with Marina and Kirill, and I loved every second of our trip. We shopped for basic necessities for the children such as toothpaste, toilet paper, soap, and spent as much time as we could with children. How they love face painting! And how they want for you to come back!

Living conditions of orphanages need a lot of support, as they are greatly underfunded. First orphanage that I visited with Marina, did not have toilets or sinks in the children's dormitory. Children had to use toilet outside and bring warm water from the kitchen to bathe. Another orphanage needed dishes. And every orphanage is always in need of toilet paper and other consumable hygiene products.



Lesya Krivina, Marina James, and Kirill Maksimov

Marina opened a new world to me, a world of children in orphanages. God bless you, Marina, your family, your volunteers, and your work! You do so much for the children! I am forever grateful for getting to know you.
-Lesya Krivina, May 2016.

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Arteom: an update

(the original story is in Newsletter #12, September 2015)

May 3: Arrived in Kiev at 2pm, and as always, hit the ground running. With Yuri Safonov driving me around, we got vitamins **for Arteom**, who is in a TB hospital getting a treatment. (his cast is off now and he can hop on one foot) There was a package for him from a family in US. He was thrilled! I am not sure what his favorite was: it is between a stuffed bunny holding a soccer ball, racing cars, Legos, or coloring book. Thank you for the gifts Thomas and Jessica Letchworth.



For dinner I meet Stasic and his foster mom. I treated them to a meal, which for them was a prohibitive cost, but for me \$9 for both of them! I brought Stasic vitamins (he gets sick often), and a new pair of shoes. Train at 8pm, and off to Khmelnytsky I go.



May 5: Last night and this morning we shopped for an **orphanage of 65 special needs kids** and went there for a visit. Half of the kids here are from all over Ukraine and the other half is from this region. The age range is from four years old up to twenty. Thirty kids can walk and get around and the rest are bedbound. All are handicapped.

There are not many visitors, one boy has his mother visiting monthly; the rest do not have any relatives or relations that care. There is not much help from outside of Ukraine, there are no adoptions from here. Julia Zadvorna, our volunteer, happen to find them and has been trying to help them by organizing local church and others to visit the children and bring donations. (Cont. on page 3)



Julia Zadvorna





Continue from page 2: May 5:...orphanage of 65 special needs kids ...

The saddest part is this: Kids from this orphanage never age out, that is because most of them die from their health problems by fifteen years of age, and few live to be a bit older.

The director, Sergey, is a very good man who does his best for these kids. He knows and loves his kids, same with the caregivers. There is a room for physical therapy. The orphanage is clean, warm, and smells good. We saw many smiling faces and kids wanting to talk to us. There are many needs, we were able to gift them 65 bath sponges and small towels (one for each child); 40 pairs of pants (for every bigger and mobile kid); several shampoo bottles; and corn puff snacks for everyone as well. This made kids very happy! The director asked if we can sponsor 65 sets of bedding and blankets, we are hoping to be able to in the near future.



Kristina, age about 9, was being shy with us when we came to visit.



Therapy room for the kids.

We had a good visit, but left with sad hearts. www.marinaskids.org



May 6: today I am in Odessa, with Kirill from Crimea and Olga, our local volunteer. **Marina D. had her baby** (by C-section) on the 27th, and today the doctors are clearing her to go home. It is a long trip back: by car it is about 4 hours on mostly bad roads. Before picking her and the Baby Valeria up from the hospital, we stopped at supermarket to get her few needed things: diapper for all 3 kids (Marina has a 2 yr. old, a 1 yr. old, and a new born); baby food for 1 month for all 3 kids, wipes, shampoo, tea, sugar, and some grains for cooking food for herself, as well as laundry detergent. We also dropped off clothing that was sent with me by Olga Dimov from PA. Olga Pogorelaya went back with Marina to make sure all went well and to check on her new living quarters.



Marina want to thank everyone who has been helping her in this happy, but hard times.

May 7-8: It so happens that a family in the process of adopting 2 girls from a local orphanage are here this weekend as well. The two girls, Irina and Sveta, are part of Marina's Kids transition home program. Sveta is older and studies in Tech School, she lives in the home we rent. Irina is still in the orphanage, and is able to come for weekends to be with her sister. It was very nice to meet the future parents of our girls. We spent the night getting to know each other, and the next day, during the Sunday church service Curt and Peggie shared with us his life and the life of his family. I think it was especially important for Angela, our transition home "mom", who loves the girls as her own. Angela said that she is happy that the girls will have a good family and a future, but sad that soon she will have to say goodbye to them.



May 7: In the morning Angela, Kirill and I stopped at the market to shop for needs of one of the local orphanages. Request from director was 93 pairs of summer/ in house shoes and 50 light bulbs. On top of that we decided to also get 2 soccer balls. This school/ orphanage has kids that are slower in development, most kids that live here have families, but cannot be in regular schools. So this is more like a boarding school than and orphanage. The kids have a therapist, and only 12 kids per teacher. They have classes 6 days a week and have a lot of vocational after school activities, as well as really good soccer team. Last year they won 2nd place in yearly tournament between all of the Odessa region orphanages. Kids work hard to be able to go and play soccer, good behavior and grades are encouraged and rewarded. So to help with that Marina's Kids is sponsoring transportation for this May trip. We did not have much time with the children because they had classes, (they have school six days a week in this location) but we did have a nice talk with the director, **and Angela will continue the work with the children.**



An Update: A message from the director with pictures and thanks came few days ago: , I translated it for you: "Dear Marina, Thank you so much!! All of our staff, and the soccer team are very thankful for this trip!!!...We took 4th place in the region out of 12 teams.

Thank you so much!!!!!!" – Marianna S.

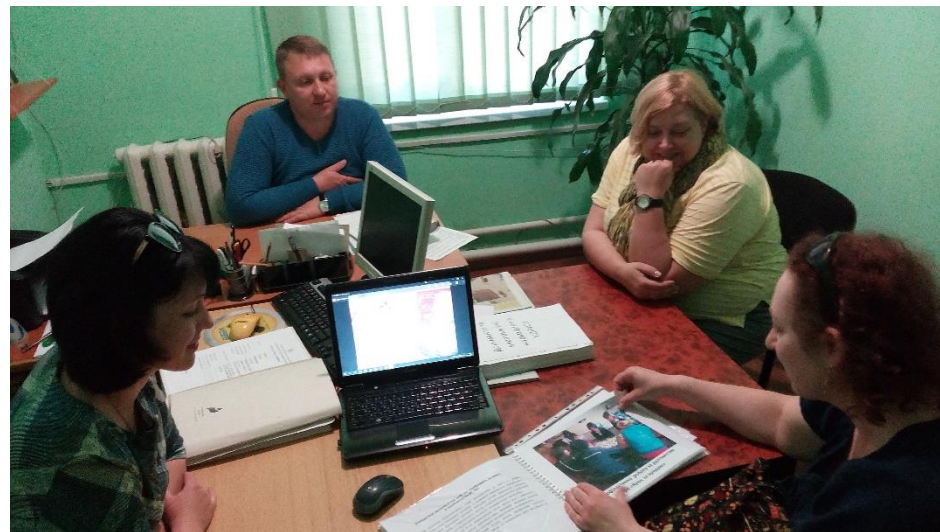


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May 7 (a long day continues☺): There is a reformation of orphanages in Ukraine. Government work with orphans is slowly, very slowly, moving towards foster care and towards working with families in difficult situations. Angela from Izmil is now working with the division/ office set up two years ago. This department was separated from the police and given the task to work with kids on probation, families in need that are at risk of having kids taken away, and rehabilitation of individuals that were incarcerated and their families, as well as education of public to prevent juvenile delinquency. Right now they have 16 kids and about 250 families.

The work they do is revolutionary for Ukraine. The kids do not just come in for a monthly check in, they come in for a workshop, and can always find caring staff that will listen and help (very unusual for Ukraine). They have volunteer policeman and staff visit local school and give talks. Angela gives workshops to girls on teen pregnancy and prevention of it, on abortion and how it affect the woman, and workshops to moms of troubled kids, to talk a lot about teen behavior and the role of a mother. There are many good responses and results.



Marina's Kids also provides food packages as well as clothing donations to the families in need, that have possibly lost a job and have nothing to feed the kids, and are on the brink of sending kids to the orphanage, because in the orphanage the child would at least be able to eat.

I was very impressed with what this small staff was able to accomplish in such hard conditions (the building given to this department only has 3 rooms in working order, and a staff of 4, including a psychologist, who works with kids in the same room as the secretary.



May 9: There is a boy in a local Izmil orphanage, Ricardo, which was moved there from Tuzli, he is also one on my originals. I met him when he was 7 years old, and he is very dear to my heart. He knew I was coming, and has been patiently waiting for me, and I, with all of the running around, had only few minutes for him. Right between shopping with Kristina and face painting in another orphanage. I did not even have in my hands anything to give him.

You should see his big smile when he saw me approaching. I promised him, that on my next trip I would ask the director to let him stay in the transition home for the time I am there, and later asked Angela to pass a package from me with a letter, apologizing for such a short visit, and some gum from US and candies.

Recardo is the last one on the right- the one with the big smile☺



May 7: this orphanage is our regular stop for several years now. It is a temporary intake orphanage and this time only few kids remained the same as last time. Kids from this orphanage are either moved to a regular orphanage when their documents are ready, or things at home get better and they return, or some relative might claim them. The relationships started here between our team in Izmail and the children are built on later, in the regular orphanage or we have a chance to help a family in need, which is on the verge of losing children.

This time we came to visit the kids, it was Kirill, Angela, Curt and Peggy (Americans that came to adopt two girls from Izmail), and me. Angela led a fun game to learn each other's names. We gave the kids a horse that was donated by Wells Fargo Bank, and shipped by me ahead of time. And we gave kids each a banana, and promised to come back to face paint the next day.



May 8: On the second day at the temporary orphanage we did face painting, as promised to the kids and gave each of the 24 kids an orange. Oranges are apparently hard to peel for small kids with no nails! So we all helped 😊



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Work in Izmail:

We are now on our third group of aged out orphans! Up till now we have rented apartments and houses for our transition home, but this poses a few problems: moving almost every year and not being able to start veggie gardens and have farm animals. This summer our Izmail transition home is entering a new stage: we are building up!

That is, we are adding a second floor to the house of our transition home "parents". Angela and Oleg are willing to take down the roof of their home in add a second floor with 3 rooms.

This will allow a constant place for five aged out orphans at any time to have a place that is home. The work has already started on the building. A garden has been plowed and rabbit cages built for the first few rabbits.



Sergey worked hard on building rabbit cages, and now we have five rabbits 😊



Oleg and Sergey are plowing the yard for vegetable garden!

Foster care in a new way

May 10: Today we traveled to a village with one street, and only about 15 houses left standing: population about 20 people. Most of whom are part of two families who has decided to take foster care to an all new level. The idea is to resettle several families with foster kids from the city environment to the land living. In the summer they run camps, and all year around work with kids from neighboring villages (with in five km. walk). They already have a horse, a donkey, and just picked up some bees for honey production. The goal is to have kids work the earths, which makes surviving the difficult life in Ukraine a lot easier. Teach them to work with and care for animals. This will show them simpler living that could be very rewarding and fulfilling.



“Nasledie” summer camps

May 14: today we met with Slavik Puzanov, president of “Nasledie”/ Odessa Without Orphans. We got a grand tour of their transition home, which doubles as after school programs location for local kids from difficult situations families, and summer camps site. Camps will be set up this summer for 8 weeks of 8 different groups of kids, 140 kids for each week. Most kids are from orphanages, but there also will be a week for autistic kids, and their mothers, offering counseling as well as a time of rest for the mothers. There will also be a week for the kids from the war zone area. The camp dining hall as well as other parts needed were being built right then, and after our meeting, Slavic changed into his work clothe and joined the workers, with only 3 weeks till the opening of the camp, there is no time to spare.

Marina's Kids would like to sponsor Kids from Izmail orphanage to be there for one of the weeks.



May 11: Today's agenda: travel from Tuzli, where we slept, to Odessa. On the way: shop for an orphanage of about 80 kids; visit the kids; take few to a store for a special treat (my transferred Tuzli kids); stop in Illichevsk for 2 hour coffee shop stop to have dinner and meet few aged out orphans; and finally get to Odessa. Our companions and helpers today are two sisters from Tuzli, Tania and Olia, which need to get back to technical school. Total work day: 7am-9pm. Shopping went well, we were able to fill 5 carts and be out of the store in 45 minutes! On the purchase list were laundry detergent, shampoo, cleaning supplies, toothpaste and toothbrushes; loads of toilet paper; light bulbs; girl products; soap; cleaning supplies.

This orphanage has 4 kids transferred from the original Tuzli orphanage. Olia and Kolia (brother and sister), Igor and Marina. The first three I took out into town for a bit. The first half of the time everyone was happy, the second half- like we are at the funeral. I asked Kolia if he has such a long face because I am leaving soon. He said: "almost, it is because you are leaving soon without me". We got Olga a b-day present: a small blanket that she picked herself at the store, and Igor got new shoes. Kolia refused everything even ice cream. We also picked 80 apples, so that every kid would have one for a snack that day.



The stops like this are always hard, I wish we could spend a week at every orphanage, but that is not possible, and not stopping there, after you know and love the kids is not a good option either.
-Marina James





May 16-18: This was one of our special stops with 2 night sleeping at the orphanage. Lesya Krivina hosted two boys from here last summer, and I took one in as well for part of the program, as well as having two kids here from the original location: Tuzly. There were lots of hugs and happy tears, we passed a package to Igor from his host family as well. The Director, who is extremely good at what she does, I would even say, she is on of the best I have met, tirelessly working from early morning till late at night. She showed us a green house, very impressive, kids get to have fresh vegies year a round! Many good developmental programs, and all of that with 250 kids, the biggest number of kids I have encountered in one orphanage in all of my latest years of travel. *We have brought with us a donation of dishes: 100 sets of plates, bowls, cups, spoons and forks.*



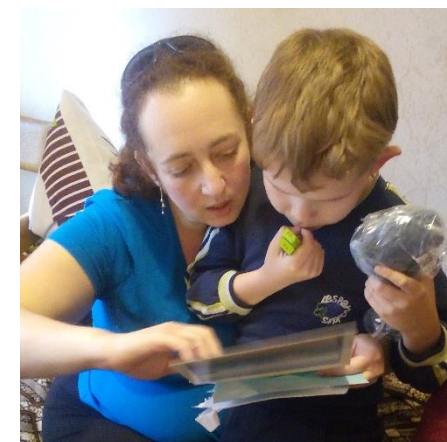
Gifting 100 sets of dishes



Lesya is reunited with her hosted boys: Sasha and Tyoma



We got to spend lots of time with the kids we know, plus added a few more to that number, one of the days we went for a long walk to a park with swings, and got soccer balls on the way. ***We ate in a cafe and had some good conversations. On the way back we got hygiene supplies and snacks to share.*** This was a hard place to say goodbye, as these were the kids that have come to our homes, a lot more tears from the kids and from us.



Reading a letter to Igor from his host family

May 15th: Today, at 6am, we are meeting Lesya Krivina at the train station, she arrived from US yesterday. We are starting our trip to the north of Odessa region together. Before leaving the city we need to do some shopping, this will be for 3 different orphanages. We stopped at the world famous Odessa bazar market: "7th Kilometer", this is an amazing place! We were able to get 100 sets of dishes for one of the orphanage (bowls, plates, cups, spoons and forks) and socks (90 pairs) and soccer balls. Now the market: a laundry machine, some laundry detergent and, as well as 90 rolls of TP and some light bulbs for the second orphanage we will stop in today. The first orphanage got hygiene and cleaning supplies mostly: 90 toothbrushes (one for each kid), 18 toothpastes (2 for each group); laundry detergent; 90 soap bars; shampoo; 90 rolls of TP; girl products; and some cleaning supplies, as well as bananas for kids to eat that day. We also had medicine for them that was purchased ahead of time by Olga Pogorelaya, our Odessa volunteer.



Several hours on the road till we got to this special needs orphanage/ boarding school. All of the kids have some kind of developmental delay. The grounds are in need of repair, but are clean. Kids are under good supervision and the staff is caring. We got the grand tour, and then did face painting (Lesya got a 5 minute lesson on stencil stamping, and was a very good help). We started with the younger kids and worked our way up, to a total of 64 kids in the orphanage that day. Kids were very happy, and we left tired, with a lot to think of, but very satisfied with the



All of the cups for 65 kids orphanage, they eat in shifts



Hand washing station with only 2 working faucets, after washing hands kids walk to the dining room, which is the white building in the background...in any weather!



Older kids dorms were supposed to have running water when the dorms were built in 1990's... but the project was never finished...this is where the sinks and toilets supposed to be...



This is where the older kids get water for daily washings

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Coal stove is still being used in the kitchen to heat water and cook

May 15-16: we got to this orphanage in the second part of the day. We delivered the laundry machine and other goods, hugged many old friends, and got to know few new ones. Kids asked to be face painted, and even though I was really tired, I did. After dinner Kirill, Lesya, and I went to spend time with the smaller kids. Buffy, one of the host moms' from our hosting program she was here waiting to pick up two boys she was adopting. This was the first time we met in person, and we ended up talking till very late. Another good, busy, exhausting day (up at 4:30am and finally in bed at 11:30pm). The morning of the 16th, after giving out tons of bubble gum to the kids, we had to say goodbye for now.



Meetings with aged out kids: Over the last week, or even two, Kirill and I have met many aged out orphans that I have been keeping in touch with. They are all over Odessa region, some come from other parts of Ukraine. Every town or village we stop in, there are a few. I do my best to spend individual time with them, listen and give advice and make sure they are OK.



...Dinner in Illichevsk with several kids...



...shopping for needed supplies for Kristina and her family...



...Taking few kids on fun rides in the park...



...walking the streets of Odessa with Bogdan and Veronika...



...Tanya came several hours by train to see me...



May 21: My trip is at an end, this was a very full schedule. We slept in new locations every day or two. I slept very little on this trip and drank lots of coffee. We met with over 45 groups of people or individuals. Lesya Krivina from NJ, US, joined as part of the trip, and Kirill Maximov, as for many trips now, was my companion and support for most of the time here. The schedule was a bit changed from original timeline (just like it always is). The hardest part is that I was not able to get into Crimea this time, but hope to get there in the fall (my next trip).

There was so much done that I cannot tell it all to you in this Newsletter. Our Facebook page has a lot more pictures, but even then... **I would love to be invited to your church or any other gathering and tell you in person of what Marina's Kids is doing, and answer any of your questions.**

I want to thank you for all of your support, and encouragement. Please continue praying, for there is still so much to be done, and being done every day in Ukraine to make lives of so many orphans, kids, and young adults better.

Kirill, and others asked me on this trip several times: "How are you still standing and able to function with such a schedule?" ***-The Lords presence uplifts me and keeps me going. -Marina.***

Marina's Kids is hoping to sponsor this summer, if funds are raised:

- Special needs orphanage bedding: 65 sets and blankets: (we were able to purchase 33 sets so far), still need about \$600
- Summer camps: cost \$60/ kid/ week; we are hoping to sponsor 30 kids. Need: \$1,800
- Transition home Izmail: building second floor to the house: cost about \$7,000
- Special needs orphanage repairs, (see page 12) cost and timeline: TBD
- Graduating orphans: leaving orphanages to go to technical schools, need clothing, bedding, towels, bags, some food. 50 kids in several orphanages at \$200 per kid= \$10,000
- Basic aide of consumable items and medical checks to specialist for several kids for summer month: \$2,000

*****All of the donations for the above projects please mark "Orphanage Assistance"**

Praise, Prayer, and Plans

As always funds are needed to run our many programs.

Donations of any amount are greatly appreciated. If you wish to contribute please go to our JustGive Site:

<https://npo.justgive.org/nonprofits/donate.jsp?ein=30-0687266>

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http://smile.amazon.com/ref=smi_ge_rl_rd_gw?encoding=UTF8&ein=30-0687266

Please continue to pray that God would give wisdom and guidance to the leaders, volunteers, and children we work with.

Thank You

*For your support,
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