AUGUST 2020

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PROGRAM FOR HUMANITARIAN AID

PHA is "Being Family"

For several years in a row I was writing about our camp for PHA's August newsletters. We should never take any things for granted. This year according to the well-known worldwide circumstances, we did not have an opportunity to gather. So, I decided to have kind of a flashback to the previous years.

2015 Summer Bible Camp was quite different from what it was in the last couple years. It was our first one and I still love it. The group of kids wasn't huge, we had kids only from the Zaporizhia region as at that moment Domik was only there. We asked the experienced team of Americans and translators to come from YouthReach International to help. Those kids became graduates pretty soon are now are in their twenties. You can see them in our photos often – they stole our hearts since then.

2016 Summer Bible Camp – first time for Poltava kids to come as Domik Poltava started working. It was the first year for gathering our own team of Americans and translators. First time tie-dying our own camp t-shirts. We also got a chance of becoming closer with some Molochansk orphanage graduates that became a part of our weekly youth meetings.

2017 Summer Bible Camp – More kids, more American team members, more Ukrainian team members. First year to have our own Junior Counselors, our kids that were campers just a few years before! Quest, morning exercises, Bible lessons, river time, lots of hugs and fun.

2018 Summer Bible Camp – More kids again, more Junior Counselors, boat races, camp store. The final talent show was wonderful.

2019 Summer Bible Camp – 5th year Anniversary – The first time for Kamenskoye kids to come, Domik started working there. The first time for two sessions of camp and the Aggies for Christ! We also had a group of younger kids coming that were visiting Sunday church meetings and Domik afterwards. Lots of work, energy, smiles and attachments.

To recall all the parts I had to look through the photos and there are at least a million of them, believe me. Kids grew up, some are still studying, some were adopted, some aren't in contact anymore, some died, some lost their parents and became true orphans, some became parents, some are in the army, some are in the jail. By the end of this article I'm almost crying. There is a blank space for the Summer Bible Camp 2020, but I hope there are many more camp memories to come.

They steal our hearts every year, join us for the next, hopefully 2021 Summer Bible Camp, they will steal your heart as well!

- Tanya Ilmeyeva,
PHA Ukrainian Ministry Partner: Kiev

FAMILY TIME

by Andrey Belokonniy

The Hedgehog in the Fog.

I don't know if you ever watched the 10-minute Soviet cartoon made in 1975 called the Hedgehog in the Fog, but I know that its name became a title for many people in our culture.
For the last several years our family isn't just working with orphans, but truly lives the ministry in cooperation with PHA that is dedicated to the orphans and orphanage graduates. Through all these years we watch the Hedgehog in the Fog. It appears in the different places and ages, could be a girl or a boy, little kid, young teenager or full age young person, but it's the same Hedgehog surrounded by the life fog. Each one of them believes that there is a friend whom is very pleasant to spend time with even doing nothing special, like the Hedgehog and the Bear counting stars and feeling that you're not alone in this world. We all need such a friend.

Look at the kids we're serving with our lives. All of them seem to know where they're going, and they're barely afraid of the treacherous forest and eventual troubles waiting on them on the way. They even look purposeful at the first sight, but they couldn't skip the fog.

Everything seems to be foggy when you're taken away from the place you used to live and taken to the shelter or the orphanage. The fog doesn't leave you and even becomes thicker when you leave the orphanage and continue studying in the trade school or college. It's developing a scaring fantasy; you see the blurred lines of the future. Surrounding society is showing itself from the fog in different figures. Somebody is following in the footsteps, making scary sounds all the time. Somebody you want to watch and figure out their life. Somebody is appearing for a moment to help disinterestedly.

I can call the names of many 'Hedgehogs' that fell in the river and decided not to resist and agreeing to swim with the flow. I often think that each one of us, who decided to help such a hedgehog, could be not known, seen or heard by the hedgehog but can support them. Taking out of the river, not letting them drown, without asking for the gratitude.

Our prayers and wishes are concentrated on the help and support for every hedgehog in the fog. This could be glorious and wonderful if one of us would become a friend that wouldn't leave, would wait call and talk, and talk. The friend with who it's so pleasant to drink tea with the raspberry jam, to watch the heaven thinking how good it is being together.

P.S. In 2003 The Hedgehog in the Fog cartoon was admitted to be the best cartoon of all times and nations. You can watch it with English subtitles if you like: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xaWdPZafl0U

-Andrey Belokonniy, PHA Director of Ukrainian Operations

DEAR PHA FAMILY,

"The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision."

Imagine being blind. Close your eyes just for just a minute. Think about all you would no longer be able to see if you were blind- light, colors, sunrise, sunset, blue sky, green grass, flowers, hay in a field, and the list goes on.

That quote is from Helen Keller, who was blind, but overcame her handicap to live a full life of helping others. What's worse than being blind? Having eyes and full eyesight, but failing to see. Jesus addressed the same topic when he asked his followers, "Do you have eyes but fail to see and ears but fail to hear?"

One advantage of being blind is the opportunity to develop the other senses to an even greater degree than normal. Those who are blind have often developed a keen sense of hearing, smell, taste and awareness of the presence of others.

And being aware of others is at the very heart of Jesus. As well as His example for what our lives should be about, which Paul addressed, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others."

And that is at the heart of what we are doing at PHA, as we continue to serve children who are often overlooked, discarded and dismissed.

Thank you for being a PHA partner and helping us "see" those who are hurting, as we provide help and hope. Which reminds me of another quote from Helen Keller.
"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

-Sid Walker, Vice Chairman of the Board, PHA

POLTAVA THOUGHTS

by Fedor and Nastya Chernichkiny

Peace and love to you in Jesus Christ!

Thanks to everyone who is watching us, praying and helping here in Ukraine.

All our short stories we were sending were positive and cheering. And this time I wanted to write about one girl from the orphanage, but something went wrong. A week before sending the article we had a case that is still keeping me strained.

In 2015 Chris and Christy Hill with Andrey Belokonniy and Tatiana Ilmeyeva brought us to the orphanage administration and since then we started our ministry with the kids in Poltava. We got acquainted with many teenagers and were communicating and making friends, sometimes arguing, but we knew a lot about them and they found lots about us.

In 2015, when we started the ministry with the kids, we had the 7th graders youngest and this year they're graduating. You know Valya and Lida from this class, they're now our sisters in Christ, all the kids are great in this class. There was a girl there named Katya Bulakh, she was at camp in Zaporizhia in 2018. She was constantly visiting Domik lessons. She was always open and smiling and we were saying that somebody would be lucky having such a wife someday.

As I was writing earlier – something went wrong! Katya died. She wasn't drinking alcohol, didn't take drugs, led a healthy life, but on the way to the store she was eating a mulberry and suddenly fell down. When the Ambulance took her, the doctors said she was clinically dead. After a week under the life-support machine her heart stopped beating and the autopsy showed a mulberry in her trachea (she was suffocating) and the oxygen wasn't reaching her brain.

Neither us, her mom, brother and sister, nor Katya herself thought her future after the school would cease like this, without even starting.

We are all making plans for tomorrow, for a year etc. but no one is planning death, especially young people!
This example in my life showed me again that we have to spread the Gospel for the youth, talk about Christ and His Kingdom, and our Katya's fortune will be an example for many, that we shouldn't wait for the future when we will be ready to accept Christ. As our thoughts are not God's thoughts and our ways are not God's ways!

-Fedor and Nastya Chernichkiny
PHA Ukrainian Ministry Partners: Poltava

DOMIK KAMENSKOYE

by Ilya and Zina Parkhomuk

Zhenya is a 17 year old Kamenskoye orphanage graduate. During the quarantine we had an experiment – this young man lived with our family for 2 weeks. We had a great time – Ilya taught Zhenya carpentry, we were working in the garden, having sports time, campfire cooking, praying, reading the Bible. It was a first time for Zhenya to visit a church meeting and even driving a car.

This time turned out for the best for us and we hope for Zhenya as well! Recently he called us bragging that he quit smoking and is not hanging out with a bad gang anymore! This is God's work!

Last month we were taking home Zhenya and his younger sister also. We had a great time – we went horse-riding, watched Christian movies and were reading the Bible (we presented them Bibles). This time spent together was both a happy and serious step for our family, as it was our first time to take kids from the orphanage home. Thanks to PHA non-profit and Domik for this opportunity!

-Ilya and Zina Parkhomuk
PHA Ukrainian Ministry Partners: Kamenskoye

FROM THE DOMIK KITCHEN

by Marina Belokonnaya

Cake with Fruits and Berries

The summer is presenting us with lots of fruits, lots of sun, and time spent with the friends. Let's use this time with benefit. It's very hot outside now and we're not interested in spending hours in the kitchen. But there is always a place for tea and desert. Having many fruits in this season we can make many tasty things. Right now we have lots of apricots and raspberries.

Ingredients:
200 grams butter
200 grams sugar
3 eggs
80 grams nuts
170 grams flour
1 package of the baking powder (approx. 16 grams)
Fruits and berries as you wish
1 package Vanilla sugar (approx. 8 grams)
Powdered Sugar

The process:
Room temperature butter and sugar whisk with the mixer, adding eggs one by one continue mixing. Adding flour with baking powder and vanilla sugar, plus crushed nuts (I added pistachio but you can use any kind you have). But you have to remember the total weight of the flour + nuts should be 250 grams.

Spread the butter and put baking paper in the baking dish. Pour the dough in the dish, add fruits and berries, put in the oven for 1 hour.
Take it out, let it cool down and cover with powdered sugar.

Enjoy your tea and the cake!

-Marina Belokonnaya,
PHA Ukrainian Ministry Partner: Zaporizhia

GROWTH TO THE PHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PHA is excided to share that Jerry Fox is our newest member of the Board of Directors! Jerry and his wife Susan have been active members of the PHA Family for many years and we are blessed to add them in this “official” capacity.

Jerry lives in College Station, Texas and is one of the shepherds at the A&M Church of Christ. He and his wife, Susan, met while students at Texas A&M University and were married in 1980. They lived in Houston, Texas and Birmingham, Alabama for nearly 15 years before returning to College Station in 1995. They have four grown children and four grandchildren. Jerry graduated from Texas A&M in 1981 with a BA in Finance, and immediately entered the banking profession. He has served as chairman of numerous non-profit organizations including the Bryan/College Station Chamber of Commerce, the Brazos Valley Community Foundation, and Camp of the Hills (an inner-city youth camp for at-risk children.) While Jerry is a bank executive, his heart is for family, church and those seeking hope. He joined the PHA board in 2020 because of his passion for at-risk Ukrainian children in need of hope. He and Susan have made numerous trips to Ukraine.

Program for Humanitarian Aid (PHA)

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Donations can also be made through the PHA website: www.programforhumanitarianaid.org

PHA is “Being Family”

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