



# Update Newsletter

N 12: September 2015



## Mission Trip to Ukraine, May 2015 & some other follow up.

By Marina James  
*President, Marina's Kids*



*At the conference: Kirill, Olga, Marina, Katherine, and Julia*



*A bridge near war zone ,  
was bombed last year.*

April 27-May 17 2015 was my semi-annual trip to Ukraine. I traveled from Philadelphia to Kiev with my daughter Katherine, age 15. In Kiev we met up with some of our Ukrainian team. During three weeks of travel we made stops at 17 different locations to check on the projects and people. We have traveled from the eastern most point, almost in the war zone, to the south west part of the county, Izmail. We visited many kids and and gifted many needed items. We bonded as a team: nine of Marina's Kids volunteers and partners came together at a conference for organizations working with orphans of Ukraine.



*Kids from Izmail made us a poster 😊*



**Giving out donations**

Our trip to Severo-Donetsk was scheduled at the last minute. It took us, Katherine, Julia Z, Yuri S., and myself 17 hours to get there by train. Because it was so close to the war zone, it was wiser not to linger in that area, so after a short time in the orphanage, we made our way back to the train station for another 17 hour train ride back.

The reason for this stop was to bring donations shipped from Canada, to have a meeting with a director of that orphanage, to assess needs, and of course to meet the children, some of whom have been to US with the Marina's Kids hosting program. One of the needs was a graduation: we sponsored a graduation ceremony and a meal afterwards. All went well, but it was a bit rushed. We had to split into teams to get it all done. At the end it was a very good start to our travels.

## Izmail:

We have a wonderful team in Izmail: Angela, with her Husband Oleg; and their daughter Yana, with her husband, Sasha. In that one small town we have a transition home for aged out orphans (16 years old and up), a ministry to the orphanage, and to a transition orphanage. We started life Education Classes and are now entering a baby orphanage.



**On the last day, we went on a picnic.**

During our few days in that location we visited the orphanage and spoke with the director about needs. We picked up a few kids to spend the weekend with us. We then visited a temporary orphanage and did face painting for the kids.

We stayed in the transition home, continually surrounded by 10-15 kids/young adults, some of whom now are parents themselves. We had many late night talks both in groups and one on one, and enjoyed making and eating meals together.





**From Yana:** When Marina came, we went to an orphanage in Izmail where kids were waiting for us and it was worth waiting because Marina prepared something special for them - face painting. Children and orphanage workers who participated were thrilled! These children are deprived of simple human contact that they need so much. Orphanage staff takes care of feeding and clothing them, but there is just not enough staff to fulfill children's need for touch. Thank you to Marina and her organization for making it possible to give a little bit of love to these children.

*The director asked if we could get some food for the kids. The prices are up due to the war, but the allowance stayed the same.*



Marina's kids has an opportunity to start a farm in that area and build a transition home: land is being gifted to us for this purpose, with this project we want to help kids learn about agriculture, teach them the value of hard work, and raise their self esteem by teaching them a skill, how to grow food with their own hands. It is very important in general, but especially in a poor Ukrainian economy where it is so hard to get a job.

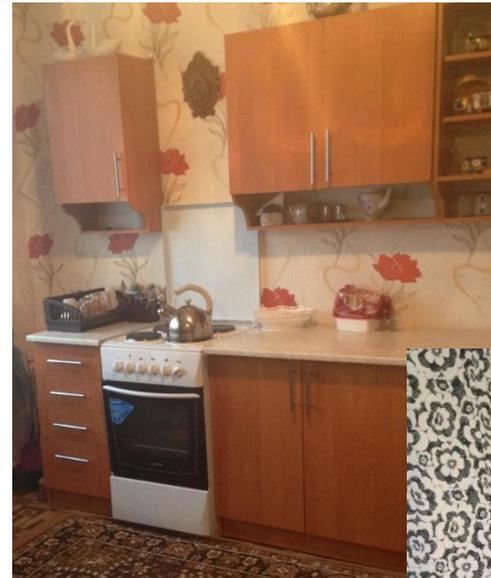
Work in Izmail continues, and is growing bigger and bigger. As of this summer we have two transition homes, housing 8-12 boys and girls at any time. Life lessons designed to get kids set up with independent living in a few years continue. Work with local officials and orphanages is in a full swing. But as with any program, funds are needed to pay for rent, utilities, transportation, etc. Please consider sponsoring Marina's Kids work.



One of the days we traveled to 2 orphanages in the north of Odessa. There we visited with kids. Between the 2 locations there were about 300 kids. We brought items purchased in bulk: 300 soup bowls; 150 tea cups; few cases of TP; soap: 150 bars; liquid soap; laundry detergents; and some other needed items.

At the first stop About 30 kids there were moved last summer from another location we work with. It was great to see all of those kids and to deliver packages from host families to the kids that previously came to US on a hosting program. We also brought prom dresses for the girls, and each one found a perfect fit! There were enough for everyone, and a few dresses were left for the next orphanage!





At the second stop on that same day we followed up on some past Marina's Kids projects. In December 2014 we purchased dishes for an orphanage in the Odessa region. The dishes were for a special project: 2 home economic rooms for older girls. The rooms are now regularly used to cook special meals and bake b-day cakes. They are set up with a kitchen and a dining area. They also have laundry machines for the girls. All of the kids and teachers are very happy, and grateful:)



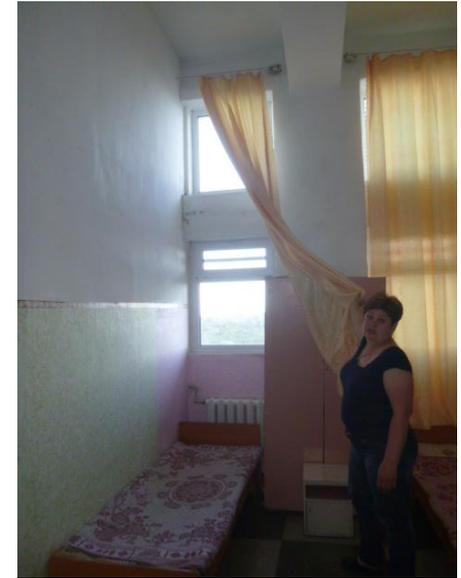
To get to our next location was a challenge; the roads have been getting worse and worse. A road that took 20 minutes to travel from Izmail to Killia 5-7 yrs ago, close to two hours. The biggest problem not the time to get there, but to find a driver willing to take on possible damage to their car to get there. The request from the orphanage in Killia was for 120 pairs of shoes. We here able to get them in the market in Odessa for \$900, and as always in my travels someone who knew someone was able to help us by getting them into Killia several days before us, on a delivery truck. This new friend met us in Killia orphanage on Sunday night. We met with the director, and some kids, and passed a package from America to Mykola. We then visited Marina, who was about to have her second baby, and delivered diapers and baby food.



The evening was spent in a good company, having a wonderful homemade meal, and hot showers. We got a chance to get to know local church volunteers. The next day we traveled to our next location in a delivery truck, helping with sunflower seeds deliveries. As always our plans changed since the director of the next location was away in Odessa for the day. So while already on route, I arranged one extra overnight stop in a village with an orphanage that was closed down, the first location I started working in. Some people told me that Marina's Kids wasted resources in that location to put in indoors bathrooms, but I always know that God had plan. That day I found out that because there are indoor bathrooms, this place is now becoming a resettlement location for mothers with children from war zone, one of the women lost her leg, and has 4 kids to care for. This place is a blessing for her, her family, and others, like her. We got to spend a day with the local kids, and I learned how to milk goats, and make goat cheese. It was a very nice, pleasant stop in the middle of our travels.



Zatoka Children's Hospital: Over the last two years, we replaced over 20 windows/ window units in the orphan wing of the building. This summer the hospital received a medicine grant for the orphans, but with a condition: a room had to be set up with locked cabinets, a refrigerator for medicine that need to be cold, and an AC, to control the temperature in the summer, and a new window, to keep the room warm in the winter. If conditions were met, the hospital would receive \$10,000 of medicine for the orphans every 6 month! It had to be done on a short notice, so the funds were moved from other projects to get this done. The total cost of the repairs we made was \$2,000. Because of this, many orphans will have access to medicine and vitamins (\$20,000 worth a year). Thank you everyone who supports Marina's Kids.



*Medicine cabinets: before and after*





My usual stop near Kiev, is to visit Stas, who lives with a foster family. This time we arranged a trip to the museum in Kiev and a lunch after. Stas came with his foster parent, and everyone had a great time getting to know history of WWII in Ukraine, and getting to know each other. Stas and his family are doing well together. It is amazing the differences between orphans in an institution compared to those in a loving home. If only there were more willing families, so many lives could be changed.



## Projects on our hearts, still looking for funds:

**There are many projects that Marina's Kids takes on regularly: clothing donations and distribution; shoes for the orphans; other needed supplies; help with medicine and medical care. We are always in need of funds to run our programs. Here are a few bigger projects we would like to do in the near future:**



Gym in Mixailovka: This building in a small village, Odessa region. In an orphanage for about 150 kids has been sitting like this for few years. The government, was sponsoring this project, but due to the war and government cut backs this project has been cut back. The things that are still needed are heating and some cosmetics work. We have a good plumber on stand by, and the rest of the work will be done by the orphanage staff. We still need about \$2,500 to complete this project. Completion of this building will mean outlet for constructive, team physical activities for years to come in any weather for many orphans.



# Projects on our hearts, still looking for funds:



This is an intake orphanage, where there are several buildings where the kids sleep, play, do school and eat. In the center of all of the building is a play yard. (see pictures above) The asphalt is so deteriorated that kids are taken to play on the street, or they keep falling on uneven ground, twisting ankles and scratching knees. We want to replace the main walk/ play area and the walkways around it. Funds needed to complete this project: \$3,000-\$3,500.

This is Artem, he is 6 years old. He is in a hospital we work with. Artem is from a sixth child of a single mother. His mother can not help him, so she has dropped him off in a hospital, where he has been for several months now. He has Perthes Disease and a closed form of Tuberculosis of a bone. He needs TB treatment and reconstruction of a deteriorating bone. His leg and hip are set in a cast to limit his movements and bone deterioration till treatment can be done. When will the treatment be done? When Marina's Kids finds the funds to help this boy! There is no government programs that will help and there are many kids like him applying to other, private, programs. So Artem is patiently waiting. Eventually, with no help he will lose his leg. If the TB becomes active, his life will be in jeopardy as well. Cost to save life of this child is \$5,000-\$8,000 over the next 2-3 years of surgeries, treatments and rehabilitation. There are so many kids in need, will you partner with Marina's Kids to help them? We need financial support to continue our work. See the next page for details on how to support our work.





## *In loving memory...*

A few days ago, half way around the world, a young man of 24 died from a stab wound and loss of blood. A hand full of his friends, grew up in an orphanage with him together. He had no relatives, except for long lost younger brother, adopted by a US family, who he lost touch with a long time ago. He had no other support, but his peers. Kirill asked me to tell you about Sasha, he was his friend for many years. Kirill himself, who does so much, and posts so much is speechless today, morning the passing of his friend. In orphan circles money is being collected to cover the funeral cost, so that Sasha can be buried with some love.

Sasha is not the only orphan that will have a tragic life and end. There are so many of them, orphans, young adults, who have aged out of the orphanages, that will have a tragic fate. Many make bad choices because of lack of support from elders or others lack of people that care. Many young man and women, like Sasha are in bad situations, resulting in imprisonment, pregnancies, sickness, death, and suicide. We want to change these outcomes.

If you would like to support Marina's Kids with a donation of any size, please visit our Just Give Page:

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

### *Here are some examples of the work your donations make possible:*

**\$5** supplies one orphan with shampoo, TP, soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant

**\$10** ships 10 pounds of donated clothing to children in Ukraine

**\$25** provides a new pair of winter boots

**\$50** pays for transportation and doctor's fees for a sick kid needing a specialist consultation

**\$100** will provide 3 months of healthy snacks brought to an orphanage during weekly visits from local volunteers.

**\$300** will help provide housing and supplies for a young mother in the months surrounding her child's birth.

**\$600** will sponsor a transition home in Izmail for one month: rent, utilities, and programs

**\$1,000 to \$2,000** funds one of our smaller projects like building a new roof in an orphanage

**\$5,000** funds a large project, like building an indoor bathroom, or paying for life changing surgery and follow up care for a child.

***Thank you for your support,  
Marina James,  
President, Marina's Kids***

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*Marina's Kids is a not for profit organization and is recognized as a public charity under section 501c3 of the internal revenue code. EIN: 30-0687266*

