



## Update Newsletter

May 2013: #7

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## Our Hosting program

### **Making a Difference!**

This summer we are working with several orphanages and are able to bring close to 70 kids to the USA for the summer, provided we find families and sponsors. So far about 45 orphans are definitely coming. We still need families for about 20 more. Will you consider helping us by spreading the word, hosting, or helping to raise the funds needed? To learn more:

Call our Hosting Program Director:

Michelle Phillips @ 859.496.0419

Or go to

<http://marinaskids.org/hosting>



See our updates as they happen.



## Spring mission trip to Ukraine: March 2013

I had 6 Marina's Kids locations to visit during the trip that lasted 2 weeks. The report of this trip is broken down into different stops in this newsletter, as well as more detailed photo albums with descriptions on our Facebook page. I was accompanied most of the time by Kirill, an orphan that I befriended 4 years ago. Now he is becoming my helper, playing larger role in our organization.

## *Our volunteers: Julia*

This are excerpts from a letter that Julia, wrote. Julia is a young woman of 28 who has given her life to the children:



...“ I wish you all could see what I see every day. I wish you all could feel what I feel with kids. Then it will be so easy to change the world. But since not everybody knows how the life is at the orphanage, how kids live, what they eat and how they grow up, I will tell you what I see:

Every day I see that thousands of people including me, wake up, go to their offices, go shopping, dance, visit different places, cook, sing, travel... I see that we LIVE. And almost nobody sees the wall in the air, the wall that hides from us life of orphans' kids. And I know why many people do not see it because we do not want to make our life harder. How many times in our life we think how lucky we are? Having mom and dad? Loving family? Great friends?

We are blessed to be healthy and happy, loved and self confident.

### *But orphan life is not our life:*

When I started to volunteer at the orphanage and met kids, they all were so afraid to become close to me, they all were afraid that on the next week I would not come. It took me a few months to show them that I would not disappear like many people did in their life.

Their parents were drinking, smoking, using drugs....

These kids came to the orphanages not because they wanted, but because they had not place to live and had nobody to take care of them.

And now after many years of volunteering the kids DO know that I would come!

They call me now and say: “Hey, Julia, where are you? You must be here today. I have English”. And that makes me feel so good. They do know that I will not leave them.

I see, teach and help kids who were raped, who had been punished cruelly, who lost both parents, whose parents were drinking so much that the kids were burnt in the houses or were dying without food, whose parents locked them at the house and kids didn't know what to eat and drink, whose parents cut them with knife, whose parents burnt them with hot boiling water, whose parents thrown them to the trash, whose parents left them on the street and they had to walk and find food and find the place to live ( and now I was talking about kids from the age of 0 till 18 years old) .....

I see little boys and girls who being only 5 and 6 years old have to take care of their little siblings because their parents neglected and abandoned them all.

Also I see that even with all of that these kids have huge hearts, huge love and wonderful personalities. Yes, they can be bad, they can be hard, yes they can be trouble makers. Who is not hard or bad??? I was the worst child on the planet and my mom was thinking I would never become a lady. And my sister was telling me that I looked like little pirate. We all did bad and crazy things in our life. We all have supports and love from our families and can learn and become better.

These kids have nothing! Yes, we do have great orphanages; we have great caregivers and nice places in Ukraine, where kids are happy and loved. But...

# Our volunteers: Julia, Part 2:

... we also have very poor orphanages. At these places kids have very plain food, their clothes and toys and books are locked. In their rooms they have only beds, nothing else, only beds. Some kids do not have books, clothes, toys ....

I want to buy them a world, I want them to be 100000 times happiest then we are! Because they deserve it. I want to buy fruit, buy toys and put them in their rooms...

Every evening when I go to bed I am thinking about kids that I know. I am thinking that right now there are many kids who sleep in their beds being alone, with nothing else in the room but only their beds. When I come to the orphanage for a performance, it is always so sad for me to see that nobody comes to look at these kids.

Nobody celebrates their birthday, nobody cares if they are hurt. Do you know that at the baby house the kids do not cry? Do you know why? Because there is nobody who will come and hug you or pick you up.

Do you know that when they are sick and taken to the hospital, their will be probably nobody with them who will stay and take care. They will be by themselves.

Please do not take me wrong, I am telling now not about all the orphanages in Ukraine, we DO HAVE great places for kids. But also there are some places that need our help, need visitors, need volunteers, need friends.

Many kids do not have soccer ball to play soccer. Many kids do not have boots. Many of them are very hungry for fruit. They all want candies, they all want games and toys and books. Many kids do not have toys and they go out and play with cats and dogs. They all want just to be loved!!!

If they are left behind, they grow up, leave the orphanages and become lonely adults (bad boys, homeless, prostitutions, use drugs or just become poor, useless part of our "society" that didn't want to open the door for them.

## ***But if you LOVE THEM:***

IF you can love these kids  
and take them to your heart,  
they will pay you back with their huge love;  
if you trust them, they will trust you;  
if you respect them, they will respect you;  
if you want them to be better they will be better;  
How much they want to be loved, how much they dream about attention!

I love these kids like my own kids and I think that they are the best in the world.

Having nothing they give me their candies, posters, sunflower seeds. And they so much want me to have their gift.

They walk me to the bus stop;

They carry my purse;

They do not need money or gifts all the time, they just want to know that you love them and care for them.

We play games, we read, we dance, we walk together;

All these, very easy things can change their lives. We all can do that for kids. We all can love them and care for them. It is so easy for many people to live and not to think about them. But it is so EASY AND GREAT TO LOVE THEM.

If you can open you heart to these kids, you will be the happiest people.

They give me much more than I give them.

My job is very hard. It is very hard to see children that you love being hurt. But my job is the best!!! I am blessed by God having these kids. I am blessed by God having their love. I treasure each kiss and hug from kids, I treasure all their pictures each moment and their attention.

I love them most of all in my life and can die for all of them.

They are my best gift from God.

*P.S. Please pray together with me for all the orphans to find mom and dad, for all of them to become good people and to have good life. "*





## Spring mission trip to Ukraine: March 2013      Location # 2

My first stop was location #2: a technical school. There we work with teens who aged out of the orphanage at ages 15-19. I rented an apartment walking distance from the dorms where the kids live. I arrived Friday night and stayed till Tuesday morning. The whole time there was an unending string of kids coming and going. We cooked meals together and ate. We talked a lot covering many different topics both one on one and in different sized groups, from early morning till 1am. My apartment had one of those hot water heaters that heats the water on demand, and a laundry machine. Well there was a lot of demand...after seeing the 3<sup>rd</sup> boy with wet hair, it dawned on me that they have been taking turns enjoying a hot water shower. The girls ran the laundry machine many times, washing everyone's clothing. You see, hot water in the dorms is limited and the laundry machines are broken. Kids have to do laundry by hand! As always we had a night at the movies, this time 15 of us went.



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**Cooking together...**

I also took many shopping for clothing and food, including getting them 400 lbs of potatoes to be shared between many. One of the girls had a large cavity, she trusted me to take her to the dentist, there we found out she had several ,and will need at least one root canal....

On Sunday we were invited to a local Presbyterian church where they view sermons recorded the Sunday before in a Church in Kiev. That day the topic was: As Christians we are adopted by our father but still live as orphans, forgetting that we now are a part of the family. There was a lot of comparisons between believers and orphans. I knew that the kids went out of respect for me, and I thought they were all going to be bored, but with the topic of orphans, they were very attentive. And I know that kids that did not make it to church that morning, talked to me about the service as well. I just wish I had more time to talk to them all about what they heard.

At the end of the day or 3 in this case, the work that has been done, the topics discussed, the hugs and kisses given can not be summarized onto one page that easily. I would love to be invited to small discussion groups to tell you more about what happens when I visit Ukraine.



**Sunday Morning At Church**





## Spring mission trip to Ukraine: March 2013

Location # 10

### Everything is possible with God!

This stop comes with a great story: a woman, Kathy W., has adopted a girl from Odessa region. She has contacted our organization just days before my trip. Her adopted daughter, Olesia, has a brother, whom she misses dearly, back in Ukraine.

When I talked with Kathy she told me a long story of what happened, and that he should be somewhere in the area we work in. She wanted to know if there is anyway I might be going to the orphanage where his last known location was. I was not planning to stop there, and had never met the director of that orphanage. You need permission to enter an orphanage. It can come from a director or a regional office. For several days I was thinking do I know anyone who can introduce me to the director and get me an invite??? And then it hit me: yes I do!!! I didn't find out until the morning I left and did not know if it would work out, but things fell in place. The introductory calls were made and director opened doors for Kirill and I to visit. The orphanage was about an hour drive from location #3, so we got a taxi for a ½ day and went. After spending time with the director talking of how Marina's Kids can be of help at this location, I asked THE question: "Do you have a boy named Mykola S. here??? We have a gift for him from his sister." the answer was: "Yes, let me sent someone to get him"!!!! As we toured the orphanage, a tall boy, taller then me, very politely came to us and asked the director what was needed of him. The director looked at me and said: "Here he is!".

I gave Mykola a picture of his sister and some other gifts. You should have seen his shock. They have not seen each other in 4 years, yet when he saw the picture he immediately recognized Olesia. I took a picture of him , and sent it to the family in US. This is the email I got back:

*"Marina, Thank you a thousand times over. I looked at his picture on FB and thought he looked familiar. Then I looked more closely and saw he was holding Olesia's picture. I started to cry because YES, all things are possible with God. We've been waiting to see how God would work throughout your trip. I showed the picture to Olesia and before I could say anything she exclaimed "My brother!" Then she saw he was holding her picture and her jaw dropped. She feels relieved to know that he is ok and wants to hug him. Thank you for your efforts. God is amazing. We're continuing to pray for your trip and for each child in your pictures. Please tell them that people they don't know 500 miles away love them and are praying for them. God bless you, Kathy"*



**Update on the story:** Mykola and Olesya occasionally skype with each other. Mykola will be coming to US on a summer hosting program to spent time with his sister and her family. ☺

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# Spring mission trip to Ukraine: March 2013 Location # 1



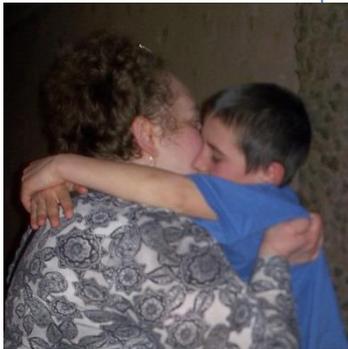
***Shopping with the graduating kids...***



***Prom dress Sasha always dreamed of***



***At the market***



***Saying goodbye***

This is the saddest news I have to tell you: our original location, the orphanage it all started with, is closing. This is their final year. Kids are being moved to other schools, of course we are not abandoning them. Wherever kids are going we will follow them. That means more locations and more kids to get to know. On the other hand some sibling groups are being split up, and as I hear tears in children's voices it bring tears to my eyes as well. For most this was home for many years. Many workers will lose jobs, six villages clustered together near the orphanage will be seriously effected.



***Bible study at bedtime***

***Pictures from the last trip are a treasure of a lifetime***

This trip was all about the kids. Face painting, getting them things for travel. There are several 11<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade graduates, we took them shopping for clothes, bags, and other things that they will need as they leave the orphanage. We have done many things to improve living conditions in this orphanage. I know God has plans for all of this, but we can only guess what they are: some say the orphanage will not stay closed for long: government will recognize that it is a key location for many suffering children; others that it will become a home for elderly; still others- that it will stay empty till someone buys the land.



I believe that all we have done in that location will reside in children as well as in adults. The love that they felt from us, the true love of Jesus, will live in them forever no matter what happens. Many that have graduated that orphanage seek me out on Russian Facebook. They younger kids know how to find me there as well. As sad as it was to say bye to them this time, they and I know: this will not be the last that we see each other.

## Spring mission trip to Ukraine: March 2013

After shopping with the graduate kids from the first location in Odessa's biggest market, we said our goodbyes.

As the bus drove away 4 of us were left standing to travel to the next location. Kirill, and I as well as 2 kids from Technical school, (our Location #2): Pasha and Vlad. We were to take a bus to an Odessa suburb town where one of our volunteers lives. The plan was to spend the night with his family and get to know each other better. Igor has known these 2 boys longer than I have. He has been working in summer camps for many years. I got to know him through the children. He actively volunteers in 3 orphanages. He teaches the word of God to the children. Last winter with Marina's Kids help, he was able to purchase shoes for many kids.

The evening went well, we had a bible study, and shared a meal together. We went for a long walk during which Kirill decided to quit smoking after talking with Igor!



The next day we headed back to Odessa, Vlad and Pasha had to go back to school, so we left them at the bus stop. Igor, Kirill and I headed to our next stop: Location #12. This is a school for kids with delayed development. While they do not have parents to care for them they do not have official status as orphans. During the vacation time some relatives will take the kids in. There were only 2 kids on the grounds when we arrived. They were a day late being picked up. We met with director who told us more about the school, what he has been able to do for the kids in the last 8 years as the director here. He thanked us for the winter shoes, gave us a tour, and we discussed what Marina's Kids can do to make the kids lives better. We looked at the shower houses. It will be our biggest summer project for this year.

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## Visiting our volunteer, Igor and Location # 12

### Showers for 100 kids!

It is common in the orphanages that the kids get only a weekly full bath. There is a good reason for that: showers and hot water boilers need to keep up with a hundred of kids! This specific orphanage last school year had 93 kids. About 8 years ago the director has built a small shower house on the side of the orphanage. This is the best he could do at the time. They adjusted a very old radiator water boiler to heat the water. The ceilings are low, so low that the taller kids have poked holes in the ceiling. The electric is high voltage and is a safety hazard. The shower house only has 3 shower heads and they grew rusty with time, as well as the heating radiators for the shower room. The painted window that is meant to let in some light is drafty.



Marina's Kids would like to do some major renovations to make it better and safer for the children. We plan to make the house 2x wider, and 2 feet taller. Get a new massive hot water boiler that will keep up with the demand. We will run new electricity safe for this building. Put in heated floor, so the kids do not stand on a cold floor in the winter. We plan to install new windows and a vent. The work will be done by local professionals, supervised by Igor.



# Spring mission trip to Ukraine: March 2013

## Location #3

After visiting location #12, Igor dropped us off at the bus stop that will take us to the train station. After ½ day of travel we arrived at location #3 at about 9pm. The director, Oleg M., met us at the train station and set us up in the infirmary, and made sure we had something to eat. I asked permission for Tanya, the girl that I have befriended over the phone, to come down and spend time with us. This is my first time here, but I have known the director for several years. It was he who contacted me in the fall, asking why I came to Ukraine, but haven't visited his orphanage?



So here we are, Kirill and I, ready to meet a new group of kids. The next few days I did my best to memorize the names of all of the kids and get to know as many as I could. My task was not an easy one, but because this was vacation time not all of the kids were in the orphanage. We also went shopping after looking at what is needed. The project we settled on are wallpapering/ painting/ redoing the floors on the second floor of the orphanage. We got all of the supplies for that, as well as what is needed to prepare the green house structure for our Canadian green house team that will be coming in June. We also have purchased about 90 pairs of spring shoes, one for every child and socks.

By the end of 3 days in that location we made many friends. Some of those kids will be coming to the US this summer for our hosting program, they were anxious to know if we have families who want them yet. I am now getting regular email from some of them with the same question: "Do you have a family for me yet for the summer?"



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## Spring mission trip to Ukraine: March 2013

### Location # 11; meet our volunteer: Svieta

This location was also a last minute addition to my travel schedule. It was added because during my trip several people came across said: "Do you know of \_\_\_ orphanage? You really should go there" and "Someone in \_\_\_\_\_ orphanage asked us to ask you if you can come and help them too?"

Kirill had to travel to Odessa on Monday to pass documents for hosting to the right people and to travel back to his own school. I stayed for one more day here, and Monday morning I traveled ½ hour drive away to an orphanage we now call "Location 11". I was out of money to spend on one more location/ project but I wanted to still get to know the director, other staff, and what is needed, as well as to meet some kids.



Svieta...



**Badly needed repairs...for more details on this project go to our Facebook site.**



**Purchased needed appliances and construction materials**

I was taken around by a volunteer, Svieta, she has been working with and at this orphanage for 6 years. Originally born in USSR, she is of a German nationality and of a Christian. After the Soviet union fell, she went to Germany, and after a while came back to be a missionary. Somehow she ended up in this orphanage and was given permission to teach law. Human law to be exact, but she was also given permission to integrate the bible into some lessons as well. This is the only orphanage that I know of that actually teaches children about God as a part of school curriculum. Svieta, is doing wonderful things for the children here, she is a biblical counselor, and I believe she made this place bearable for children. This is also the only orphanage I know of where some children never run away.

This orphanage needs many things as well, starting from kids shoes and all the way to drafty rotten windows replacements. We have settled on few projects for this year: some clothing; fix auditorium; an indoor bathroom in the kitchen; a refrigerator; hair cutting machine; and hosting kids in the US starting with our winter program. After I arrived back home I transferred money to Svieta to get some needed things. She asked me to be a part of Marina's Kids as our volunteer in the region. We are happy to have her 😊



**Shoes and backpacks for the kids**



# Plans For 2013

**Mission Trips:** we plan several this year

- **Summer – Green houses-** our team from Canada will be fixing up a green house in one orphanages, and picking locations for more green house projects. We will also be providing gardening supplies, seeds, and plans for some orphanages.
- **Fall 2-3 groups-** We plan for a group to travel with me from Glenside area to visit several orphanages. We will also be organizing a community in Raleigh, NC to visit the orphanages they will be doing a summer camp hosting, as well as a group from Washington to visit the orphanage they will be hosing from.

**Clothing collection/ shipping:**

- Clothing and other items are needed. [take a look at the list](#) on our website.
- Orphanage assistance will be happening throughout the year as well as on the trips

**Upgrading and repairing orphanages:** There are several locations we will be working in, and lots of things that need fixing. Updates on that will be posted on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/MarinasKids>

**Transitional care:**

Continue to develop and implement programs for the older orphans.

**Prayer Requests:** There are many...You can pray for everything mentioned in this Update and as more things come up, you will see the needs for prayers and will see praise for prayers answered on the Facebook page.

***The most important one is that God would give wisdom and guidance to the leaders, volunteers, and children we work with.***

<sup>8</sup> "...Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. <sup>9</sup> So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?"... 1 Kings 3:8-9 (NIV)



**Hosting:**

**Summer: we have 60-70 kids listed**, 45 already

have families, still looking

for about 20 kids to be hosted, send us a request on

<http://marinaskids.org/hosting> if you would like more information. Or **call**

**our** Hosting Program Director, Michelle Phillips 859.496.0419

- Here is the link to our brochure: feel free to share it: [Marina's Kids Hosting Brochure](#)
- **Winter 2013-** we plan on winter hosting as well. Check our web site in September for the info.

**Medical:**

- Kolya K.'s joint replacement has been delayed because of problems with blood work. He should be able to get surgery this month. After that he will be in recovery, in a special hospital.
- Lazy/ corrective eyes surgeries are being researched. We hope to raise money and have contacts and volunteers for this project sometime this year.



# Thank You

**For your support,  
Marina James,  
President, Marina's Kids  
267.210.4909**

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