



Update Newsletter

N 17: December 2017



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This edition covers the last 10 month of Marina's kids work. On a personal note, In March I have enrolled in college to pursue a degree in psychology. This will make my work with orphans more effective. Our organization's volunteers have been working nonstop, getting many projects done, and many needs filled. All of the stories here and more can be found on Marina's Kids Facebook page.



Visiting orphanages, face painting, etc..

During 2017 I travelled twice to Ukraine, in May and in September. As usual we spent time with many aged out orphans. Visited several orphanages and a baby house. Hugged many children and did face painting. Gifted many hygiene supplies and medicine that are always needed. Checked on the projects in progress and listened to requests for possible future projects, and needs of individuals. This fall we had a meeting in Odessa with most of our core Ukrainian volunteers to see how we can make what we do even better and more productive.





I lost touch with Dima when he was moved to a different orphanage 5 yrs. ago. He managed to keep safe the photo album I gave him many years ago!

Marina's Trips to Ukraine 2017



Prom dresses for the graduating girls



Marina's Kids Team meeting in Odessa



Olga's dog was a big hit with all of the kids.



Visit to the Baby Orphanage



Donations of needed hygiene items and cleaning supplies



Giving out gum!

Anya:



I have known Anya for six years, from the time she was 14 and living in an orphanage. Now she is a single mother to a beautiful two year old girl, Alina. The two of them live in a village where Anya's family is from. The government gave Anya a house, it is officially hers! It is big and sturdy...but it came with a 60 year old electrical system that was sparking where the connections were. Radiators were ripped out. There is no hot water, no indoor bathroom, rotted window frames, crooked doors, no kitchen...many possibilities with additional building for farm animals and land for growing vegetables. Over the last year we raised money and helped Anya with repairs. New windows and doors are installed, electricity has been rewired, new radiators and a coal/ wood burner to heat the water for radiators is installed as well.

Anya is proud of the canning she did 😊



In the spring and summer months we provided Anna seeds for her garden and farm animals. Anya has raised three pigs and about 100 birds: ducks, geese and chickens. She now has meat to last all winter, as well as some money from the sale of livestock for other needs. With the vegetable garden and lessons from our volunteers, she harvested and canned food.

This is what Anya told me to pass on to you:

"I want to say thank you to everyone who has been helping Marina's Kids for your help and support. I have no idea how I would be able to survive without your help. Marina put in electricity, new doors and windows. Now we have heat! It is warm and cozy. Now we just need to fix the walls a bit and get a kitchen. This help means so much for Alina and me. We love you all very much, thank you for your help and a chance to keep my daughter safe."

Anya worked hard alongside of Marina's Kids volunteers to make a better life for herself and for her daughter. I am very happy with the results. After all, Marina's Kids mission is to help disadvantaged children all over the world to have better future. Thank you all for helping us to help Anya and other young, aged out orphans, who have no other support.

Thank you. -Marina James, President, Marina's Kids.



Anya and Alina



New windows, radiators, doors, and heating unit.



Alyona:



Alyona and her kids in front on the newly built pechka

Alyona grew up in an orphanage. Now, in her mid 20s, she is a mother to two beautiful kids. She married a man who also grew up without parental support. Together they are doing their best with their own family. Life is hard for them. This young family is doing their best to make ends meet, but it is still not enough. The government gave them a house in the village where their families are from, but it is in desperate need of repairs. Someone on their behalf asked Marina's Kids to help. The biggest need was heating the house in the winter and the bathroom. Marina's Kids sponsored construction of an old fashioned "pechka"- a unique type of oven wall that has an opening for the coals or wood to be placed inside. When the fire is lit, it heats up the wall and the heat spreads in to the adjoining rooms. We also bought them coal.

The next project that we would like to help with is an indoor bathroom. Right now, they have only cold running water, an old tub, and laundry machine that we gave them about six months ago. The walls are drafty, the ceiling is in danger of collapse. With two small children around, this could end in a tragedy. The toilet is an outhouse. We are hoping in the spring raise enough money to fix the bathroom: fix the walls and ceiling, run proper plumbing, put in an indoor toilet.



One of the walls in the bathroom

A Fund Raiser:

In April, right before my spring trip, Lifeway Baptist Church of Philadelphia held a fundraiser. Many women of the church gave their time to prepare Russian foods that were sold at the church, after the service. Over \$5,000 was raised to support Marina's Kids work. Thank you to everyone who cooked and sponsored this event.



We expect the cost of building a proper bathroom to be around \$1,500-\$2,000 and hope to raise the money by early spring. Repairs on the house will help this a young family greatly for many years to come.



Denis:

Denis is an aged out orphan from the war zone. At the age of 18 he decided that he wants to be close to his birth place. Denis was working construction, when a heavy concrete block fell on him, severing his spine. He was taken to a hospital, where for over a month, no one did anything for him. He finally called Julia Zadvorna, one of our volunteers, who has known him for many years. Julia called me, and we set out to help Denis. Together with Olga and Inna we organized his transport from the war zone across borders in a proper ambulance. Denis came to Odessa in March.

Denis back started to heal by itself during several weeks that have passed from the time of the accident. It had to be rebroken in order to be set right. In addition to that, Denis has developed several bed sores, and a blood infection. He was thin, withdrawn with depression, and in danger of dying. Now, about six months later, he had several surgeries on his spine and bed sores. He has been admitted to a military hospital where he is getting physical therapy and has a psychologist to talk to. Julia visits him every month. We make sure he has clothing, medicine, diapers, a wheel chair, fruits and vitamins. Denis will never walk again and he has no family to help him.

Marina's Kids will figure out how to help him live in the country that is not very handicap friendly. This is the most challenging and the expensive case we have taken on to date. Many, in both the US and Ukraine, are praying and supporting Denis in his trials. This young man is having a hard time emotionally, but is healing. We, Denis and Marina's Kids volunteers, want to thank everyone for cards, letters, packages, finances and prayers. We believe God is not done with Denis yet, we pray for miracles and many good things for and from him in the future.



Bed sore on Denis hip



Denis back x-ray



Work in Izmail continues:

Our transition home in Izmail has five boys and one girl. The boys live upstairs, in the apartment we built last year, in the attic space. Katya lives in the house with Angela and Oleg. The latest boy, Denis, showed up last week at the gate. He just stood there with a bag in hand. When Angela saw him, and asked whom he is there to see, his answer was: “Is this a place where orphans are taken in to live? Can I live here?”



Tolik, Katya, Vova, Angela, Sergey, and Zenia



Oleg and the boys are building the roof for the yard where the brick making business is set up

In the spring, we invested in a home business for the boys, making concrete sponge bricks. The goal is to teach them a trade, hard work, and have earning potential. The development of the business has been going slow, mostly due to the fact that in the summer, when it was building season, they were still learning, and now in the winter, no one is building. However, all of the bricks made this past season have been sold! In the spring we expect things to move a lot better. Meanwhile the boys hired themselves out in the neighboring villages. It is an amazing transformation in their behavior from when they first came in to live in the transition home one- two years ago.



Making bricks for sale



Baby Orphanage And Baby Anna:



Angela with Anna and her new family☺

It all started with a baby in need of a heart surgery. A baby from in an orphanage was so loved by the staff that they collected their own money to take her to a heart surgeon in Odessa. This was not a short trip, six hours driving by car each way. This is where Roman Yosievich reached out to Marina's Kids to provide a surgery. Several donors stepped up. The Surgery was successful. Our involvement opened the door for Marina's Kids to enter a new (for us) orphanage, a baby house in the area we already work. We were able to visit Anna and other kids. Marina's Kids is now a regular presence in the lives of these children. We have sponsored several repairs, and provided supplies. Anna's pictures attracted a lot of attention, which resulted in a forever family for her!!! She has since been adapted and is living in the US, and Marina's Kids volunteers continue to visit the baby house with love and donations.



Katya:

Our transition home now has a girl! Katya is from northern Ukraine. She visited the US a few times as a part of a hosting program. Katya is not adoptable, she has a living mother who cannot take care of her, and that is how she ended up in the orphanage. The orphanage she was in, is for mentally handicapped children, but Katya is not mentally challenged in any way. Despite this, when she graduated in May (age 16) with a diploma, it indicated that she is "slow". This meant no higher education schools would take her. With Dina's sponsorship, Katya's host mom from the US, Kirill picked up Katya and delivered her to Angela (with permission from her biological mother). For many weeks Angela and Oleg did everything they could to remove the diagnoses of "mentally handicapped" off



Katya's record. They made calls, knocked on doors, talked to specialists, and prayed. Finally, a committee in Odessa met with them, and gave Katya a clear bill of health. Katya still has a long way to go to catch up in

knowledge, but she is trying, and working hard. This is not without challenges, but there is a progress in the right direction. As hard as it is for aged out orphans to succeed in Ukraine, the chances are much improved with the love and sponsorship of people like Dina, Angela, and Oleg. Thank you, friends, for not giving up on Katya.



Crimea:

For many years we worked in Crimea, helping in one of the orphanages, working with young aged out orphans, and single mothers, as well as with a family that has foster children and adopted many kids. Crimea in now a part of Russian Federation, it is getting more difficult and dangerous to help. At present due our projects in Crimea have put on hold.



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Social Center

One of the big projects Marina's Kids wants to take on in 2018 is the social center in Izmail. A building has been made available for us to use (it used to be a church). It is in need of repairs, which we have started. We have one room fixed up for families to come with small children, and one bathroom.

There are many more rooms: a gym, room for a psychologist, a kitchen to teach young girls how to cook; a room for a food and clothes bank for families in need, just to name a few. We want to tackle the gym next. This will allow a safe and healthy place for many local teens who have no other place to be in the cold winter months. These are the kids who can easily become delinquents, if they do not have a place and a direction. Our first volunteers, Angela's boys are eager to help with the next generation. They are planning to paint and clean up the room this winter break, and are hoping for funds to put down some sort of flooring.

The center will be open for any family in crisis. We will run programs for local orphans during the holidays, as well after school programs for kids in need. We plan to give Bible lessons, cooking lessons, and family consultations, doctors will hold hours for poor families on certain days, as well as a psychologist and a lawyer. This will also be a place for families with autistic kids to learn and to take breaks. Autism is still something Ukraine is having a hard time accepting, and there is almost no support or information for the families that encounter it.

There will be monthly expenses that include utilities and cleaning supplies. The possibilities for good from this building are vast. Now we just need to find the funds to implement the ideas. If anyone is interested in helping with this project, please contact me directly. –Marina.



**One room is done...
...many more to go...**



This will be gym!

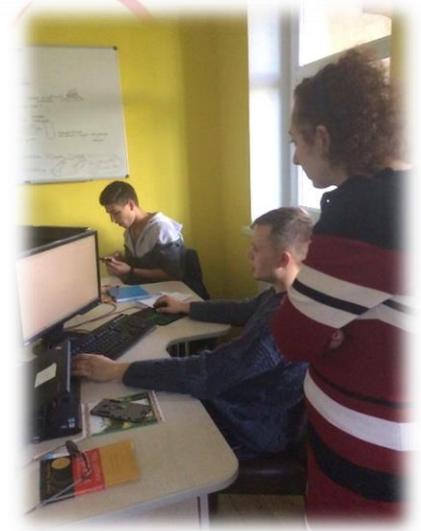


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IT Hebron Academy is situated in the growing city of Lviv. It is a school for aged out orphans and children from poor families. The goal is to teach kids basics in web design in order for them to get a well paid job in a modern industry. Of course, well paid is a relative term, for the US those are small wages, but for Ukraine, these young adults would be able to support a family. Not everyone makes it in this school. Studying is hard work that most of the kids, coming from orphanages, never learned. Everyone thought gets a chance to try. Based on their performance and desires, some kids enroll, and others leave. School tuition is sponsored completely by individuals from several different countries. Marina's Kids sent some kids there to see if it is a good fit. The school is for boys and girls ages 18 and over. If you know an aged out orphan who might be interested in these opportunity, you may contact Lili or Igor, the founders, directly. They both speak English, and will happy to take on more kids.

<https://itacademyfororphans.com/>



Visiting the academy



Marina's Kids helped with an exercise area for the students

Plans for 2018:

2-3 mission trips to Ukraine

Some of the projects we hope to work on:

- **Repairs and opening of social center in Izmail**
- **Help aged out orphans mothers, who were able to get government housing in improving their living conditions: Anna needs a kitchen; Alyona: bathroom; We have other young mothers and young families waiting for help also.**
- **Continue to support several young moms with monthly packages of food and baby supplies.**
- **Sponsor several heart surgeries.**

Please invite Marina's Kids volunteers to speak at your church and social groups. We would love to tell you personally about our work and the way you can help.

Medicine and other needs

Marina's Kids regularly provides medicine to sick kids in families, as well as sponsor orphanages with flu medicine for the winter season.



Heart Surgeries

One of the things Marina's Kids does is sponsor heart surgeries. We work with a children's hospital. The head surgeon, Roman Yosivovich, contacts us when there is need that he cannot fill and we do our best to raise money. He donates his time, and often the staff of the hospital donates their time as well, so that we only need to cover the cost of equipment, supplies, and follow up care. This comes out to be \$600 to \$1500, depending on how complicated the surgery is and how much physical therapy the child might need. Roman also helps us obtain pediatric care for children of poor families or orphanages without charge. It is a wonderful partnership.

This is Dasha. She is waiting for a heart surgery. Marina's Kids raised the funds, but Dasha's health has not been good enough to operate on. We are all waiting for her to get better and to have her lifesaving surgery.



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Families with many kids...

One of Marina's Kids project is help to poor families with many kids, and poor families that are trying, but are in danger of losing their kids due to the bad economy in the country, and loss of jobs.

When you donate money to an organization, send out a care package to someone you have never met, or send prayers from across the ocean, you almost never grasp the full impact it has on the lives of others. You can certainly imagine their reactions, see pictures of them, or read about how

your donations have benefited others, but being there in person is a completely different experience. And let me tell you why...Just a few weeks ago, I went with Marina's Kids to drop off donations and spend time with six beautiful children and their mother Natasha. We were greeted by the kids and their little toes peeking out of the holes in their socks. We were invited in with the our two boxes of donations, as well as fruit, grains, and other foods. Upon entering, it was easy to see why they needed some help. Their home was broken, in fact, the wooden floor was so bad in some areas that you needed shoes if you wanted to avoid splinters. It was chilly and the children had dirt all over their clothes but we moved quickly to get everything into one room. All the children gathered around and started pulling things out of the boxes with big smiles. They found many toys, clothes, glowing shoes, and a few books! Their faces lit up so quickly and I couldn't help but feel as ecstatic as they did. I also gave out gum and they managed to chew all of it by the time we left! Each kid tried on different things and couldn't wait to wear them to school the next day. Well except for Bogdonna (meaning, God given) that is, because she is the youngest child and does not attend school yet. I also got to play with the kids and their new toys, talk to them about their favorite subjects, and show them magic tricks. Being there felt so real, so personal, and so impactful...Not everyone gets the chance to have personal interactions with the people they help, but just know that's okay. Even if you cannot experience the impact your kindness is having on someone, that's okay because others will. Thank you to everyone who has made donations or prayed for our cause, it makes a real difference.-**Katherine James**

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>

FREE, easy way to support Marina's Kids

Amazon.com will donate 0.5% of your purchases to Marina's Kids. All you have to do is to log in on <http://smile.amazon.com>. Then find us by our name or EIN # [30-0687266](https://npo.justgive.org/nonprofits/donate.jsp?ein=30-0687266)

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



Thanks You

**For your support,
Marina James,
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