



# Update Newsletter

N 11: April 2015

## **A note from Marina James President, Marina's Kids**

Being President of Marina's Kids requires a lot of my time and energy. As a mother with 7 kids still at home, it becomes difficult to juggle everything. Sometimes it can all feel overwhelming and I wonder if all the time and energy spent on the Marina's Kids work is having a long term impact. When I am reminded of stories like Sasha's, (p. 2), it keeps me going.



**Marina James and Sasha M.**



**Marina's Kids provides about 1,000 pairs of shoes to orphans every year**

I want to thank everyone who comes along side of our organization to give time, money, clothing and other needed items, and prayer. Without your help, this boy would be dead. Many others would be without needed love, attention and understanding. You've provided simple things we take for granted like shoes and socks, and birthday presents that bring joy to children who lack them. You've made it possible for us to put a roof over the heads of aged out orphans, and to give teenage mothers a chance to raise their children, breaking the cycle of neglect.

Together we've accomplished far more than we could ever dream of doing as individuals. Donors and volunteers in the USA provide funding and coordination needed to take on big projects. The volunteers and partners that we raise and train in Ukraine, are our hands and feet, physically doing the work we can't from across the ocean. Thank you all for being part of Marina's Kids family, because we couldn't make it without you!

***Marina James,  
President, Marina's Kids***



## **Sasha, a boy who lives!**

I met Sasha few years ago just after he lost his mother at age 3. He was moved to Zatoka Rehabilitation Hospital for Children a few months before we met. He was diagnosed a spinal deformity caused by TB which they believed was inactive. To straighten his back they tied him to a plaster mold for 20 hours a day which required him to lay down. Marina's Kids was asked to help with a more effective treatment for Sasha.



**Kirill visits Sasha in the hospital in Kiev, while Sasha is recovering from first surgery (Dec 2014)**

We found a hospital in Kiev that specialized in surgery for this type of problem and an appointment was setup for several months in the future. While waiting, his health grew worse. He stopped eating, and was fading away. We asked the specialists in Kiev to see him sooner, and they agreed to take him the next week. After several tests at the hospital they discovered his TB was active and that without aggressive course of treatment, he had 2 month to live. Fortunately, he was moved before anyone else at Zatoka, contracted TB from him (everyone in contact with him was tested after his new diagnosis)!

Marina's Kids volunteers, Olga and Inna, than found a hospital in Odessa that would treat his TB. Thank you to all of our donors who made it possible for us to provide for his travel, treatment and care.

Six month later Sasha was well again and in Fall of 2015 he was finally admitted to the Kiev hospital for the surgery to correct his spine. He had 2 major surgeries and a customized device to keep his spine straight while it was healing. Sasha is now a happy, active, five year old boy and is almost finished his recovery!



**Recovering form the second surgery**

**On the way back to Odessa 😊**



## **A Letter from Julia Zadvorna,**

*Marina's Kids, Hosting Program Facilitator in Ukraine.*



**Julia and Taya**

During our every day life we are trying to live a happy, to enjoy every day, be successful and satisfied. We do not want life to go by with regrets of anything, or missing anything. We live, work and do not see that life goes by with all of the materialistic things we accumulate. We get so busy and concentrate on our own comfort we do not stop to consider others. Marina's Kids volunteers are living life everyday alongside of many orphans. We work with little babies, kids and teenagers, trying to help in any way we can.

Marina's Kids Hosing Program give a chance to many orphans to experience life in a family. We have many kids and we want to find families for all of them. Families that will be ready to accept challenges and face different problems. For some families hosting goes perfect and we see one happy family, but we all have to be ready hosting makes life "different" perhaps not easier, but more self-giving in God's eyes.

When you consider Hosting, you need to realize:

- An orphan cannot be expect to be perfect
- Books/programs/friends' experience about hosting help a lot, but each child is unique. Only time + experience + patience + work+ LOVE = Real Host Family.
- We cannot be selfish: hosting is not about us, but about about a child and a family. It is about all of us together.
- Challenges make life more interesting. God did not come to the Earth to help healthy and sinless people, but to help the sick and those who needed Him.
- We must have faith that everything is happening for the reason. Have confidence and trust in God, that everything will be work out.
- We need to sacrifice, need to learn how to share.
- Each child who participates in a hosting program will want to look good in your eyes, as humans we all want to look good. They want to be loved, to please us, to show only their best sides to us. Can we blame them? No, they all are fighting for a better life, for a chance to be children. They have had enough hardship in their life. Most of us cannot even imagine what some of these kids have seen and went through.



**Kathleen and Magnus,  
hosting Viktor**

## **A Letter from Julia Zadvorna, (continued)**

When I do not have hot water, our coffee or food is not tasty enough, or bad weather annoys me, I always think it is just this little thing. There are hundreds of children who feel hunger all day long. Children that sleep in a cold room with no toys and books. Children that do not have hot water at all. But a lot of this children they stay strong, generous, loving, giving and thankful, and do not complain.

When a child does not meet our criteria or the picture in our mind or profile description, please do not get upset. When I set up profiles of the kids for Marina's Kids Hosting program, I describe kids in the way I see them. Each of you will see a child in a different way.

**It is not easy to break kids' walls that they build around them.**

During hosting, not every day can be, or should be filled with fun stuff and gifts. It is more important to be filled with LOVE. Just a few small things will make these kids happy. What then need and desire most in this world is love and attention, hugs and kisses. This is what will help them thrive to as they grow up.

It is a blessing to know how to enjoy little things, Like a family meal or just an apple shared with a child. **Little things are more valuable, more wonderful, and more meaningful than big things and excess stuff.** The more we give, the more we will get...in different ways, whether it will be a smile from a stranger, candy from a child, flower in the field or just a sunny day, we just need to learn how to see these beauties and gifts.

**Life is beautiful and we are so blessed to have family, friends, and things around us, to be healthy. Let us share our life with those who really need us!**



When God bring children into your life and put them on your heart, remember: there is a reason for it, and only God knows His master plan. Having your family host a child is a great way to help, but it is not the only one. You can help others to host. All of us together can make a difference. Support of \$20, \$50, \$100 or more will help another family to take in an orphan, or a sibling group.

I, myself, am so thankful to my parents: they show me real values, give me love and all their support. I am so thankful that my Grandfather, director of an orphanage, who brought orphans into my life.

*-Julia*

### **Andri, 1999**

From war region of Lugansk and has little to go home to Very nice, a little shy very handsome; laughs and loves. Never been to the U.S; He has. been at the orphanage 7 years. He likes the outdoors soccer, and any activities. Likes animals and will like to experience the U.S.

**Needs a family more than ever. If you want to help an orphan this is the time.**





### NC meet and greet and donations:

In November, 2014, a “Meet and Greet” was organized for Marina’s Kids in Raleigh, NC. 50 people including adopted children and their families attended our presentation. Many were part of Marina’s Kids hosting programs! Lera and Vitalik shared how their lives have changed because of our work. Through everyone’s generosity, we collected and shipped 450 lbs. of clothing to Ukraine!



### Easter 2015:

Marina’s Kids in partnership with a local church in Crimea organized an Easter celebration at an orphanage. A group of from the church gave lessons, and Kirill, our volunteer, brought gifts for the children. Everyone had a good time and the children were very thankful for the gifts, the attention, and the love shared during the holiday.





## Location# 12: Showerhouse

It has been two years since I first visited an orphanage in Odessa region with the need for shower houses. We have finally completed the work. In the old shower houses, a group of children would rotate between showers, changing rooms, and outside (half the children always waited outside). Rain, or shine; hot weather or cold; wet hair or dry there was not room for everyone indoors. Now there is NO MORE WAITING OUTSIDE!!!

The shower changing room is big enough for half of the group, while the shower room is big for the other half of the kids. This also reduces chances of getting sick on the shower days!!! We have raised the ceiling so the kids can no longer poke holes in it while they are showering! We improved ventilation and installed safe electrical wiring and heated floors. Everyone is very happy and the director of the orphanage gave us a letter of gratitude on behalf of the staff and the children.



### Exert from Newsletter Number 7; March 2013:

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.





## Work in Izmail:

My last Newsletter update on Izmail was from May of 2014. Since then we have a new group of young adults regularly attending the club house. These kids are aged out orphans from war zones, who have been resettled in Izmail.



The kids come everyday for hot showers, use of laundry machine and kitchen. They get their own groceries with their stipends. Regular contact and life lessons from our volunteers help the kids stretch their money for what they need. Two girls stayed at the club house over the holidays and have since moved in because they understand how much better it is to live away from the bad influences of the dorms.



Our key volunteers in Izmail, Yana and Angela, are swamped with work. They are now visiting and running a program in two local orphanages and are training new volunteers on top of running the club house and helping new moms.



Angela and Yana continue to mentor new mothers and during June and July took in Marina D. She lived in one of our clubhouses after the baby's birth and learned important skills of to take care of her baby. In December and January Julia moved in due to lack of money. Her daughter, Nastya, turned one yr old during that time. Before giving birth in November, Kristina had no place of her own and was worried the social workers would not let her leave the hospital with the baby. We helped her get an apartment and helped her partner to get a job.





## December 2014, Trip to Ukraine:

I was able to make a short trip to Ukraine in December. It was on short notice, to help someone with documents for a student. During 10 days in Ukraine, we were able to travel to Izmail for a weekend, and on the way back to Kiev, stopped at a relatively new location for us.



**Visiting one of our new locations and meeting with director**

This fall, our volunteers in Odessa were asked to provide coal and medicine. These were provided by the government until now, but funds were cut due to the war with the Russian Federation. This orphanage has only one way to heat buildings, and it is with coal. We were able to purchase 10 tons of the 80 needed to heat the orphanage during a winter season. During the stop we were able to meet the director and discuss many of their other needs.



**10 tons of coal**

**Visiting with orphans**



# Plans and Projects for 2015

## **Gym and sewage repairs:**

One of our locations is in desperate need of repairs to their sewage system. Aside from the horrible smells, right next to the kitchen and dining halls, it occasionally spills over! In the same location, the gym's roof collapsed and the building is in need of repair. Some work has been started but due to the war, money is no longer available to finish the work. building still needs repairs to it heating and electrical systems. The floors need repair, and the building needs painting. The surrounding community also uses the gym. Villagers interact with the children by playing sports indoors during the winter.



## **Children's play area and walkways:**

In another location, walkways between the buildings and the play areas are full of broken asphalt and potholes. Workers routinely carry large pots of hot food between the buildings over the uneven ground. We will be repairing the walkways and play area.

## **Medicine**

We regularly fill requests from orphanage directors for various consumable supplies. With the cuts caused by the ongoing war in Ukraine, we are now seeing a large number of requests for common medicines. We continue to help where we can, but there are many more requests than we can cover.



# How you can support Marina's Kids



In 2014 we shipped about 2,000 lb of donated items.  
Our goal for 2015: 2,500lb



Looking for Host Families for many kids like Lidia, Dasha and Vanya



Please help us get grants

## Needed:

- **Donations of items:** see our site, or contact Marina
- **Invitations** for Marina's Kids volunteers to come and share what we do at churches or community groups, and organizers to set up opportunities like this.
- **Host families** for hosting program
- **Secretary/ Personal Assistant** (volunteer position) who must live close to Glenside, PA
- **Someone to organize, store, ship, and receive donated items** who must live in the Philadelphia area.
- **Media person:** we need someone to send out regular emails about Marina's Kids, as well working with volunteers and the President to creating the Newsletter (can live anywhere in US!).
- **Funds to run our programs,** direction/ invitations to apply for grants are most needed.
- **Prayer:** daily prayers for wisdom, direction, energy for leaders and volunteers; Prayers for children we work with and their future.

## **An 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](http://www.marinaskids.org)

**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,  
Marina James,  
President, Marina's Kids**

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