

Heart for Orphans (H4O) ministers to the spiritual, physical and emotional needs of teen orphans in Ukraine by providing a refuge and permanent hope in small, Christ-centered, family-style homes.

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An Amazing Outcome...



Sergey is a social orphan, meaning he is one of 90% of orphan children in Ukraine who has been abandoned by a living parent. Although Sergey is 19 years old and well adjusted today, he still suffers from the pain of being castaway by his parents when he was just a year old.

Much of what Sergey remembers from his childhood was told to him. At the age of one, he was left at a baby shelter and then placed in an orphanage in Zaporizhzhya. Sergey was moved once more before ending up in trade school at the age of 16. Those years in the orphanage were incredibly lonely, as Sergey remembers, "You were by yourself and for yourself." He further adds, "You had to humiliate others to gain respect."

It was in trade school at the age of 17 that he met Leonid, a classmate, who changed his life forever. Leonid invited him to his home, Mel's House, a Heart for Orphans boys home. With nothing to lose, Sergey visited. That visit has lasted two years.

Sergey said he likes the rules and boundaries at Mel's House: "Housefather Vova knows how to relate to us as he, too, was an orphan. He tells us what we can and should do." Because

Vova understands feelings of loneliness and abandonment, he is able to help the boys overcome their past. He teaches them to forgive their families, and forge new and healthy relationships with God at the center of their lives.


He recently graduated from trade school and plans to go to community college to pursue studies in the food service industry. He then wants to attend university. While he awaits the college entrance exam, Sergey is studying chemistry, math, English, and Ukrainian.

Sergey is a talented artist and has a portfolio full of beautiful drawings. He

also plays the piano and guitar beautifully by ear! He has never had a lesson! "Melodies play in my head, and then I play them on the piano." Sergey said Christian and Classical music are his favorites. He sings in the church choir and also takes part in puppet theater ministry.



One day, he would like to find his mother and sisters: "I would not be angry, I would be glad and joyful to find them."

Sergey's heart was broken as a child, but he finally found a home at Mel's House, and a father in Vova. Sergey's dream is that one day he will have a real family, and a home of his own. But Mel's House will always be special. It's the place he found his family! 

So Little Can Do So Much

Gerry McGorman

I was delighted and honored to join Nancy on the 2015 Vision Trip to Ukraine. I have been involved as a donor and helped fund-raise for some large charities before, but this was my first time seeing how one small organization can make a huge impact on the lives of people and communities in another part of the world.

The foundation stone of the good work being done is the local people on the ground in Ukraine spreading hope and love in a place that needs it more today than ever. The housemothers and fathers have vividly portrayed to me the true meaning of doing good work for others. They have successfully created loving, caring and hopeful family homes for children who need it most.

Heart for Orphans staff and volunteers who work with the Orphan Outreach Program in state orphanages, bring the light of hope and joy and a sense of self worth to hundreds and thousands of children who have little hope otherwise.

These people are doing the heavy lifting for Heart for Orphans work in successfully transforming the lives of these children one at a time. They cannot do it alone. With Ukraine under the yoke of soviet pressure, which is fermenting a war in the east of their country and creating economic turmoil and mass migration, they need our support now more than ever.

I have two grown children of my own who are finishing college and starting out on their own or at least I hope they are!! Like all parents I love my kids, love seeing them happy and have tried to give them what they need. When I compare what I have spent on my kids and their sense of appreciation of how lucky they are to have been born in this great country, with all the opportunities it offers and then compare that with what I witnessed last month with the children Heart for Orphans is saving in Ukraine, the contrast is stark but in one way very satisfying.

- Witnessing first hand the excitement of a teenager receiving a gift of new underwear, socks or toiletries and being so appreciative of everything.
- Handing a small football to a group of young boys and girls and seeing them invent endless games with it.
- Watching staff members take a length of rope to an orphanage and use it to create about 10 different jumping, pulling, running games that included all the children and had them all laughing and playing and cheering together.
- Bringing kids out of the house into town for their first pizza and meal in a restaurant and watching the bigger kids take care of the little ones and making sure everyone had fun.

None of these activities cost a lot of money per child, but they made these children laugh and smile and interact with each other and with adults and created a sense of self worth and wellbeing. They need all our support to make sure this is not a one-time event in their lives, but a regular occurrence.

So, I have returned from the Vision Trip absolutely convinced of the need to support Heart for Orphans and these people who carry out God's work in transforming the lives of these children every day. They need our help to provide roofs over their heads, food on the table, basic clothing, and a place of love and hope. I am privileged to have seen this good work carried out first-hand and am dedicated to ensuring the work can be continued and expanded to save more children.





Coming Home

In January when the snow starts to pile up and there is a chill in the air, young twenty-somethings from all over Ukraine make the journey back to a village outside of Berdyansk. Often they travel with their spouse and a child or two in tow. They are headed to the only home they've ever known: Mel's & Ruth's Houses. For most of these young adults, these Transition Homes represent a special time

in their life... the first time they experienced a family! Vova and Tonia became their parents, and now years later, the bond is still there and stronger than ever!

The first week in January is a big holiday in Ukraine. From New Years Day until Ukrainian Christmas on January 7th, the celebrations are on going! It is a time of feasting and exchanging gifts... a time of singing and praying together. It is also a special time of catching up with "brothers" and "sisters" who have moved away, and a time of meeting new "siblings", orphans who currently live in the houses.

Housemother Tonia and the kids will work for weeks, sometimes around the clock, as they prepare Christmas specialties. Tonia will be feeding a house full, as more than 50 extended family members will gather together.

Christmas gifts are modest by American standards: some candy, a notebook, maybe a shirt or a new pair of jeans... and the kids are so appreciative! But their greatest joy is being together as a family and celebrating the birth of our Savior!

From our Heart for Orphans family to your family, we wish you a very blessed and Merry Christmas!

Maxim's Surgery

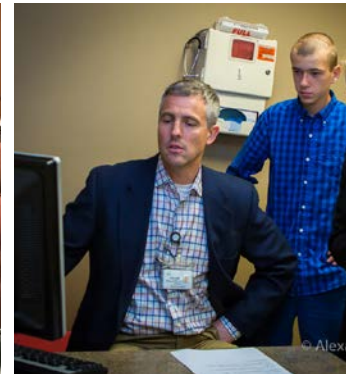
In the Fall 2014 Issue of The Parachute, we told you about a young orphan named Maxim.

Maxim was three years old when his own father took his anger out on him and fractured his skull in two places. He was immediately taken to the hospital where doctors fought for his life. To repair the damage, doctors placed metal plates on Maxim's skull to keep it together. While Maxim has grown into a 16-year-old, his metal plates have not... causing his skull to grow apart with portions of his brain covered by skin only.

Heart for Orphans knew that it would be best to have such a difficult operation done in the United States. Working with Riverside Regional Medical Center in Newport News, VA, and neurosurgeon Dr. William McAllister, the surgery was performed Wednesday, October 21st. Maxim is doing well post surgery. He is happy and healthy! He is also thankful for all of the new friends he has made in the United States. Maxim returned to Ukraine on November 9th with a new lease on life. His dream of playing soccer and just being a boy may finally come true.

Through the benevolence of Riverside and Dr. McAllister, Maxim received state of the art surgical care. The Riverside Regional Medical Center Make A Difference Fund, which is used for critical unmet patient needs, was made available to assist with Maxim's post-surgery medical care.

Heart for Orphans is indebted to President and CEO Bill Downey, Sandy Snapp, Dr. Eric Stone and Dr. William McAllister for making this surgery happen! God is good!



did you know...

- 211 kids have lived in our Transition Homes since 2008.
- 41 kids currently live in our homes.
- 71 non-residential orphans were ministered to this year.
- 42 visiting orphans stay in our homes over school holidays.
- And, 400+ kids participate in our Orphan Outreach Program each week.

Together, our families consume in one week:

- 50 gallons of soup
- 98 loaves of bread
- 950 pounds of potatoes
- And do 63 loads of laundry.

Our expenses are ongoing and change daily! Will you please consider becoming a monthly supporter?

Each house costs \$3,500 per month to operate. What does that include? Daily food, medical and toiletries, clothing, transportation, school and work supplies, household expenses, house parent salaries, administrative costs, utilities, and water.

WANT TO HELP?

Contact our office for more information:
757.220.3457



A big thank you to all who attended the October 10th Hands Touching Hearts Across the Water fundraising event. An incredible \$62,000+ was raised!! This would not have been possible without so many generous hearts! Words alone cannot express our sincerest gratitude. Thank you guests, table hosts, HTH committee members, sponsors and vendors. You have blessed this ministry!!!



For years, Heart for Orphans has prepared all of its mailings. Hours were spent folding, stuffing, labeling and sorting each letter for bulk mailing. That is until we connected with EEE Resource Center (E3)! EEE (Education, Empowerment, and Engagement) Resource Center is a nonprofit program that serves adults with special needs here in the Williamsburg area. E3 provides continuing education and life skills to young adults with disabilities, as well as operates a commercial laundry and a bulk mail assembly business! E3 folks not only have the dignity of a job, but they are helping Heart For Orphans spread the word about our mission! Way to go E3! Heart for Orphans is proud to be a partner.

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