

# Chornobyl Chronicle

CHILDREN OF CHORNOBYL RELIEF FUND NATIONAL NEWSLETTER Winter 2002 VOL. XXVI

## ***"FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN. UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN." Isaiah 9:6***

These words from the Prophet Isaiah have inspired devout Jews and Christians for thousands of years. They constitute one of the most beloved and jubilant passages in George Frederick Handel's masterwork "The Messiah," sung by choirs throughout the Christmas season.

At the pivotal moment in history, when the Messiah came to Earth to save humanity, He assumed the form of a newborn infant, helpless and vulnerable. Isaiah reminds us that every child is a gift from God. Every child bestows upon us a sacred trust to protect and nurture those whose lives are threatened or dehumanized in any way. For according to scripture, the Redeemer told us in no uncertain terms that whatsoever we do unto these, "the least of my brethren", we do unto God Himself.

Christmas has always been a time of hope and renewal. It is an opportunity to rekindle our awareness of the sacredness of human life and to place children at the center of our universe. Unfortunately, in Ukraine, as in many other nations around the world, the health and well being of children is not regarded as a priority.

Ukraine has inherited a post-Soviet medical system that is woefully under-funded and ill-equipped to address the health crisis sweeping the country. Without a massive infusion of funds, technology and training, a country that has so much potential to thrive and prosper will instead fall into anguish and despair. The Soviet government that brought us the

nuclear disaster is no more, but the post-Chornobyl effects are becoming more evident in the form of birth defects, pregnancy complications and immune deficiencies that have been claiming thousands of lives.

In remote villages like Zaluchya, we have seen how orphans maimed at birth by congenital defects have been left neglected and malnourished as government officials continue to hide the effects of radiation exposure and reduce the budget allocations for the hospitals and institutions desperately trying to heal those suffering from the effects of Chornobyl.

At CCRF, we regard situations where children perish for lack of basic medical supplies or equipment, or improper medical care, as unacceptable. We try to change conditions at orphanages where the needs of severely disabled children are ignored, or worse, children are abused and left to wallow in dehumanizing conditions. We encourage government officials and corporate and community leaders to help us save and protect the frailest and most vulnerable members of society.

For unto us a child is born...Isaiah reminds us of our collective responsibility to care for those who cannot help themselves. He speaks of the most innocent beings that dwell among us - our children. In this holiday season, we rededicate ourselves to this mission and ask your support in rekindling the spirit of hope.



*A young mother cradles her most precious possession. The child was treated at the Odessa Regional Children's Hospital.  
photo by Joseph Sywenkyj*

## ***Merry Christmas and Season's Greetings***



*His Eminence Archbishop Antony of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (USA) hands a magic marker to an orphan at Zaluchya while the rest of the children exhibit their enthusiasm for drawing and coloring.*

### ***A HISTORIC VISIT TO THE ZALUCHYA ORPHANAGE***

On October 23rd, a delegation of some 40 Orthodox faithful from across the United States and Europe traveled to the remote village of Zaluchya (Sniatynsky District, Ivano-Frankivsk Province) to visit a notorious orphanage housing 118 children with severe birth defects. Under the leadership of His Eminence Archbishop Antony, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (USA) has become the leading sponsor of an intensive campaign launched by CCRF to overhaul the conditions at the orphanage and to ensure that the orphans receive more humane treatment.

Archbishop Antony and the 40 pilgrims joined representatives of CCRF in an emotionally wrenching and at times, heart-warming encounter with the orphans. As the large Lviv Intourist bus wound its way along the narrow muddy roads leading to the orphanage, a huge rainbow appeared in the sky and hovered over the orphanage. Several visitors expressed the hope that this was a clear omen portending a brighter future for the children.

The US delegation was greeted by the staff and new director of the children's home, Vasyl Oleksienko. *(cont'd pg. 2)*

### ***NEW PARTNERSHIP IN IVANO-FRANKIVSK LAUNCHED TO COMBAT INFANT MORTALITY***

The picturesque and historic region of Ivano-Frankivsk in the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains has long been a favorite of tourists, hikers and collectors of folk art. Unfortunately, for many years, the pastoral scenery of the region has concealed a silent public health tragedy. *(cont'd pg. 2)*



*Born with complications, this young patient was brought into the intensive care unit right after his delivery. While the Ivano-Frankivsk visitors looked on, doctors and nurses worked feverishly to save the infant's life. Thanks to the efforts of the dedicated staff and the equipment provided by CCRF, the young boy survived.*



Ulana Beley (left) and Nazar Ponahayda (right) express their delight in meeting American visitors. The sweaters that they are wearing are samples of a large donation of warm clothing that was provided by CCRF donors.

*(Zaluchya, cont'd from page 1)* The Archbishop told Oleksienko that he had come to meet each and every child and to personally review the repairs and improvements that were underway. Mr. Oleksienko assured the Archbishop that their visit was a momentous day ("sviatio") for the children and that his staff was grateful for the attention that such a distinguished delegation had brought to his facility.

CCRF Co-founder Nadia Matkiwsky, Executive Director Alexander Kuzma, and Kyiv Director Olena Maslyukivska separated the delegation into smaller groups and escorted each through the dormitories and playrooms. Over the past year, CCRF has installed a new roof, new floors and new walls in several common areas. During recent airlifts, the Fund also delivered padded wheelchairs, clothing, new mattresses and linens, quilts, specially designed cloth diapers, disinfectants and wall decorations. CCRF also bought livestock for meat and installed new laundry equipment to help the staff handle the enormous load of clothing that must be washed and disinfected each day. Despite this infusion of aid, the orphanage still requires a great deal of work to

improve the standard of living and hygiene.

After meeting the children, members of the delegation began to brainstorm a wide range of ideas for making the premises more livable. Improved lighting, wheelchair ramps and cleaning agents were among the ideas discussed, and several parishioners pledged to start fundraising campaigns in their churches to support the Archbishop's and CCRF's initiative. Members of the Ukrainian Orthodox League are planning extensive stays at Zaluchya in the summer of 2003 to bolster CCRF's campaign and to provide the children with physical therapy and individualized attention. The Sniatyn District is one of the poorest enclaves in what may be the poorest province of Ukraine. The local government has imposed many budget cuts that have strained the orphanage's resources and further weakened children's social services. Even so, CCRF and Orthodox activists are determined to pressure government authorities and business leaders to take greater responsibility for the plight of the orphans. A group of German benefactors have begun to install new pipes and wash basins in the bedrooms for the incontinent and paraplegic orphans. CCRF is seeking additional sponsors to radically upgrade the facility.

"The significance of the Archbishop's personal visit was not lost on the powers that be," said CCRF's Alex Kuzma. "We've seen in other communities how Ukrainian institutions and generous individuals have begun to overcome their complacency and to have a real impact on medical programs for children. We are here to remind local authorities and people of good conscience everywhere that these children must not and will not be forgotten."

As he visited the orphans, many of them bed-ridden and genetically disfigured, Archbishop Antony blessed every child. Other pilgrims distributed toys and candles and left

behind boxes of gifts donated from their churches.

From Zaluchya, the pilgrimage continued to the monastery/shrine of Pochaiv and other Christian holy sites. But for the visitors from Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey and other states, the memories of Zaluchya have sparked a new commitment to bring hope and meaningful assistance to the deprived children that the world had once forsaken.

*For more information on how you can help improve conditions at Zaluchya, Znamianka and other desperately needy orphanages, please call (973)376-5140 or write us at 272 Old Short Hills Road, Short Hills, NJ 07078.*



Against the backdrop of their newly renovated playroom, Ihor Chovpylo (left) and Mychaylo Svidzinsky (right) pose for the camera. Thanks to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (USA), this area was transformed from a dreary, dilapidated space into a bright room with new doors, new wall, and new wooden floors.



In Ivano-Frankivsk, a group of nurses and doctors welcome a state-of-the-art neonatal station installed by CCRF with the help of a generous grant from the Ukrainian National Home of New Haven, CT.

*(Ivano-Frankivsk ICU cont'd from pg. 1)* For a variety of reasons, Ivano-Frankivsk continues to suffer from the highest rate of infant mortality in all of Ukraine. The abject poverty of the region may be the most likely cause, but many environmental factors are also suspected. An unlikely shift of wind currents in 1986 deposited a significant amount of radiation from the Chernobyl disaster in the towns of Sniatyn and Bohorodchany. Soviet troops withdrawing from Ukraine in 1991 also left behind large quantities of petrochemicals and radioactive waste that have contaminated ground water in several communities. A lack of access to medical services in many rural villages and the absence of appropriate technology have also hindered local doctors' ability to save the lives of many newborns.

This fall, thanks to a generous grant from the Ukrainian National Home of New Haven, Connecticut, CCRF has launched a new partnership with the Ivano-Frankivsk

Regional Children's Hospital to radically improve the chances of survival for newborns in the region. In September, CCRF delivered the first installment of state-of-the-art neonatal equipment to help doctors at the IFRCH to provide effective treatment for life-threatening complications and to prevent brain damage resulting from respiratory distress. The Fund delivered a neonatal care station complete with respirator, infant warmer, pulse oxymeter and other essential components. The Fund also provided photo-therapy lamps to help treat the many cases of jaundice in newborns.

At a press conference on September 26th, Dr. Radyslav Koturbash, the Chief Doctor at the IFRCH, thanked CCRF co-founders Dr. Zenon Matkiwsky and Nadia Matkiwsky for their support. Dr. Koturbash also prepared a personal "certificate of thanks" to Paul Paluha, the President of the Ukrainian National Home of New Haven and Paul Czerepacha, the association's Treasurer. Koturbash offered his gratitude on behalf of his staff and patients to all the members of the New Haven community who have supported CCRF. The UNH grant was made possible by the sale of two buildings that once housed the Ukrainian Community Center on Day Street. The New Haven Chapter remains one of the most active in the CCRF network. In recent years, the chapter has hosted a variety of creative events, concerts and banquets to benefit CCRF, including an awards dinner featuring US Senator Joseph Lieberman.

Speaking at the press conference, Dr.

Matkiwsky stressed that this was just the first phase in a series of aid projects that CCRF plans to implement at the Ivano-Frankivsk Hospital. As quoted in the "Western Courier", Dr. Matkiwsky expressed the Fund's deep concern about the steep drop in population. According to the UN Office of Population, Ukraine has already experienced a net drop of 2.5 million people, and could lose up to 40% of its population by the year 2040 unless current trends are reversed.

"Ivano-Frankivsk is a crucial front in the battle against infant mortality in Ukraine," said Dr. Matkiwsky. This will be the eighth neonatal center that CCRF has equipped in Ukraine. Previously, the Fund has enabled local doctors to improve infant survival rates by as much as 85% in Poltava, by 50% in Lutsk and by 46% in Dnipropetrovsk. CCRF's chapter in Rochester, New York has also contributed \$15,000 to support a second hospital in Ivano-Frankivsk region.



Archbishop Antony blesses an infant lying in an infant warmer in the intensive care unit at the Ivano-Frankivsk Regional Children's Hospital.

## GENERAL HEALTH UPDATE ON THE ZHYTOMYR REGION

The Zhytomyr region is the most contaminated zone in Ukraine following the Chernobyl Nuclear accident in April of 1986. This region encompasses most of the towns and villages around the Chernobyl area - towns such as Ovruch and Narodychi.

In the initial stages of the Chernobyl catastrophe, humanitarian aid came to this region from the western world in large amounts, but recently, the quantity of aid delivered has dramatically decreased. In addition, due to the poor economic status of Zhytomyr, the smaller hospitals have been experiencing an exodus of trained physicians with the ability to care for the region's patients. Therefore, the Zhytomyr Regional Hospital and the Zhytomyr Regional Pediatric Hospital have been forced to assume the role of patient care for the entire region.

According to recent health reports on the Zhytomyr region, numerous illnesses related to post Chernobyl radiation effects have been increasing in both the adult and pediatric population. For instance, the Zhytomyr Regional Hospital reports that in 1985, there were 421 cases of Cataracts in adults, and none in children. By 2001, that statistic had risen to 1420 adult cases of Cataracts and 18 pediatric cases. The same hospital reports that in 1985, the number of reported cases of Glaucoma was 62. By 2001, that number had more than quadrupled to 484. It is estimated that the Zhytomyr oblast accounts for 4000 Cataract cases per year, as well as 700 Glaucoma cases per year. Since cases of pediatric Cataracts and Glaucoma in other areas are extremely rare, this number illustrates the Zhytomyr region's increased level of health risk due to post-radiation effects. Statistics in other areas are just as disheartening: in 1985, the number of births reported was 24,000, but that number has been steadily declining every year until, in 2001, the reported birth rate had fallen to 11,795.

In direct contrast to the dropping birth rate, the number of birth defects continues to rise. The most frequent cases include malformations of the head (scalp and face), gastrointestinal and urologic malformations and cardiac and neurological birth defects. There is approximately an 80% increase in birth pathology (defects) since 1985 in the Zhytomyr region. The region's health department also reports that there is an increase in bronchial asthma and allergies - mostly, atypical dermatitis, in both adults and children.

Eight years ago, a Japanese humanitarian group established a neonatology unit in Zhytomyr Regional Pediatric Hospital. The group delivered several respirators, incubators and other accessories, but last year, the Japanese philanthropists stopped their support of this neonatology unit. Since their departure, the Zhytomyr hospital has been struggling to support itself.

The Zhytomyr Regional Hospital and Zhytomyr Regional Pediatric Hospital have neonatologists who are hard-working and well-trained. They attended the last two CCRF sponsored neonatology conferences/seminars, and despite unfavorable conditions, have shown enthusiasm for increasing their knowledge of medicine. These two hospitals need our continued support in general medical aid, but more specifically, in the highly specialized areas of neonatology, perinatology and ophthalmology.



Hospital Director Dr. Hryhory Vashchylin and Chief Nurse Nina Hvozdi explain the new features of the Olympus Endoscopy System that CCRF delivered to the Volynian Regional Children's Medical Center to American visitors.

## NEW ENDOSCOPY MACHINE "A GODSEND" FOR KIDS IN LUTSK

In a small staff lounge on the fourth floor of the Volynian Regional Children's Medical Center, the hospital staff has posted a display panel that contains a strange assortment of Soviet era coins, nails, screws, pins and hooks. They are a humorous, if stomach-turning, reminder of the amazing array of items doctors have extracted from children's digestive tracts in recent years. To paraphrase the child psychologist Art Linkletter, kids will eat the darndest things.

For years, the doctors at the Volynian RC Medical Center have been trying to obtain a more advanced endoscopy machine, or "fibro-gastroscope," to help them locate and remove foreign objects that might damage internal organs. Increasingly, surgeons are also finding more cancerous tumors in children's digestive organs as long-lived radioactive isotopes from Chernobyl find their way into the food chain.

Last spring, CCRF was able to leverage a generous \$21,000 gift from an anonymous donor, to purchase a state-of-the-art Olympus endoscopy system valued at over \$120,000. After a protracted struggle with customs agents, the hospital administration was able to retrieve and assemble the endoscopy unit and prepare it for service in Lutsk. Local craftsmen volunteered their time to create a special carriage to house the unit and masons are now completing renovations in the new ward where endoscopic examinations and surgeries will take place.

"This machine is a godsend to us," said surgeon Valery Martyniuk who performs many gastro-intestinal operations. "For many years, we had hoped to improve our capabilities, but this Olympus system far exceeded our expectations. It's simply super." Martyniuk thanked the anonymous donors who provided the seed funding for the system. He also extended his thanks to CCRF's former Procurement Director Olenka Welhasch who negotiated with the Olympus Corporation to include many special features in the system at no extra cost.



CCRF Executive Director Alexander Kuzma meets with Dr. Tatiana Vyhovska and Dr. Valery Martyniuk from the Volynian Regional Children's Medical Center.

## ULTRASOUND BOLSTERS CHILDREN'S HEALTH IN CHERNIVTSI

In the early part of the 20th century, when the Austro-Hungarian Empire dominated much of Eastern Europe, a visionary German philanthropist named Dr. Hermann von Fischer funded the creation of a model children's hospital in the city of Chernivtsi. The project was completed in 1910 at the considerable cost of 500,000 Austrian crowns ("Krohne") and the ornate structure became the first children's hospital in the region of "Bukovyna" that borders Ukraine, Romania and Moldova. Today, Chernivetska City Children's Hospital No. 1 remains one of the historical landmarks of Bukovyna, and continues to honor the name of Dr. Fischer's parents, Moses and Hannah Sarah Fischer.

With seed funding from our Central Maine Chapter in Bangor, CCRF has launched a new partnership with the Chernivetska CCH. Last spring, the Fund delivered an Acuson V4C Ultrasound to provide more accurate diagnostic tests for the more than 6000 patients who undergo treatment at the hospital each year. Last year alone, the hospital provided 4754 ultrasound screenings using an old Aloca ultrasound that is on the verge of expiration. The Central Maine Chapter also provided a computer and patient tracking software that enables the doctors to better monitor their patients' progress.

Under the direction of a dynamic new Chief of Medicine, Dr. Serhiy Storozhuk, the Chernivetska Hospital has made dramatic progress in reducing mortality by more than half, reducing the average length of the hospital stay and expanding its services to indigent patients from rural villages. The percentage of patients from outlying villages has more than doubled from 20% to 48.4% and the hospital has steadily increased the number of surgeries performed from 1420 in 1999 to 1785 in 2001.

A local charitable foundation is seeking to procure a respirator and other critical care equipment for the hospital and CCRF hopes to match these procurements with financial support from American donors. For further information, please contact Mr. Kuzma at (860) 652-0458 or Dr. Bohdan Slabyj at (207) 989-6118.



OUR ULTRASOUND AT WORK IN CHERNIVTSI- At the Chernivetska City Children's Hospital, Dr. Serhiy Mitin examines a young patient suffering from a kidney ailment using the Acuson V4C Ultrasound recently installed by CCRF. CCRF is making arrangements with the Kyiv office of the Siemens Corporation to provide supplemental training for the radiology staff at the Chernivetska CCH to ensure that they are fully versed in all applications of the new ultrasound unit.



In the past 12 years, the Children of Chernobyl Relief Fund has traveled from the East Coast to the West, from large industrial centers to the most remote, impoverished areas. We have saved the lives of countless children affected by Chernobyl and the Chernobyl Winter Season, we ask you to please be as generous as possible. Your contributions support our hospitals to provide cancer treatment, neonatal intensive care, and to correct congenital heart defects. The impact of your support has been profound. We are facing a historic opportunity to bring new hope and peace to the children of Chernobyl. "For unto us a child is born." Unto us a great



... Relief Fund has touched many lives across Ukraine. From East to West, in the most remote, impoverished villages, your contributions have helped us cope with the aftermath of Chernobyl and other public health tragedies. This Holiday season is possible. Your contributions will enable CCRF and our partner organizations to provide intensive care, physician training and life-saving operations to thousands of children. The amount of your support has been enormous, but our mission continues... bringing new hope and precious resources to the children of Ukraine. "Unto us a great responsibility is given."





Dr. Olena Lychkowska and a group of young patients embrace the toys donated by their American friends from Berlin High School. From left to right: Maria Bass, Tania Peckovych, Orysia Zhovnr and Roman Strilchuk.

### TOYS FROM CONNECTICUT SCHOOLCHILDREN COMFORT YOUNG PATIENTS IN LVIV

Last summer, schoolchildren from Berlin High School and other schools in Connecticut collected stuffed animals, toys and teddy bears for children's hospitals in Ukraine. CCRF delivered these gifts to several children's medical centers, including the Lviv Regional Children's Clinical Hospital ("Okhmadyt") where they are used to comfort children undergoing medical treatment. Trained psychologists at the Lviv Okhmadyt have used the stuffed animals for a creative new program to help children cope with the stresses associated with their treatment and to identify children who may be in need of protective services or special education programs. Western doctors have long recognized the value of such mental health screening to help children who may be at risk for child abuse or who may be in need of individual or family counseling. They have also used role-plays with stuffed toys to help reduce anxiety prior to surgery and to help children understand the procedures they must undergo. The playroom at the hospital has become a favorite recreation area for many patients.



### NEW JERSEY LOBSTER NIGHT:

On October 8th, the Ramada Hotel and Conference Center in East Hanover, New Jersey hosted a charity "Lobster Night" to benefit the Children of Chernobyl Relief Fund. Thanks to the hospitality of Mr. Orest Fedash, General Manager of the Route 10 Ramada and a member of the CCRF Board of Directors, more than 60 members of various PLAST fraternities feasted on lobster and steak and helped to raise over \$1300 for CCRF's hospital programs in Ukraine. The monthly charity dinners have become a popular night out for young men from the New York-New Jersey area looking for an opportunity to catch up with old friends and to reminisce about camping trips, winter ski adventures and to network with business contacts in a more casual setting. CCRF would like to thank Mr. Fedash and all his fraternity brothers who helped to make this evening such a success. On a similar note, a comparable "Women's Night Out" is now being organized to counter-balance the men's charitable efforts. (Above, CCRF Board member Joseph A. Vena (center) trades favorite stories with Alex Yaworsky (left) and Ihor Mandicz (right))



Over 50 friends of Daria and Steve DeLalio gathered at their home in Glastonbury, Connecticut for a fundraising picnic to benefit the Children of Chernobyl Relief Fund. Along with great food and outdoor games, the event raised over \$1300 for CCRF. The DeLalio's also raised \$5000 to cover the pre-production costs of a half-hour documentary on CCRF that is scheduled to air as part of the "Voices of Vision" series on PBS next fall. CCRF is deeply grateful to Steve and Daria as well as all those who responded so generously to their appeal for help.



The youth of Clifton Parish lends a helping hand during the fundraiser by selling raffle tickets and toys: Craig Wyszomirsky, Colby Drost, Brandon Rand, David Welinsky, and Alexander Kuchta.

### HOLY ASCENSION PARISH HOSTS "OSCAR NIGHT"

On Saturday, November 16th, the Ukrainian Orthodox League at the Holy Ascension parish in Clifton-Garfield, New Jersey hosted a gala fundraiser at the Grand Chalet on Route 23 in Wayne, New Jersey to benefit Ukrainian orphanages adopted by CCRF and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (USA). Entitled "A Night at the Oscars", the theme party featured a live jazz band, raffles and auctions of Hollywood memorabilia. Despite a windy and rainy night, over 200 guests came out to support CCRF's initiative to improve conditions at the orphanages in Zaluchya and Znamianka that house abandoned and multiply handicapped children. Among the guests of honor was Archbishop Antony who praised the work of CCRF in his



Nadine Drost (center), one of the co-organizers of "A Night at the Oscars" fundraiser, surrounded by her family, Archbishop Antony and Father Daniel from the Clifton Parish.

keynote address and shared his impressions from his visit to the Zaluchya orphanage in October. Daria Piszko, the national president of the UOL also greeted the guests and congratulated them on a very successful evening.

Master of ceremonies Richard Jendras thanked all the members of the organizing committee, especially Event Co-Chairs Nadine Drost and Madeline Kuzbyt. He also thanked parishioner Rose Key-Boykas who recruited over 70 of her friends to attend the fundraiser as part of her birthday celebration. Other friends who could not attend made generous donations in Rose's honor in lieu of birthday presents. Speaking on behalf of CCRF, Executive Director Alex Kuzma thanked the organizers and the UOL activists who devoted so much creative energy to make the event a success. He also acknowledged the many children and teenagers who played an active role in the raffle sales. "You should all feel very proud of what you've accomplished tonight," said Kuzma. "Your efforts will have a direct impact on the lives of the orphans who still desperately need your help."



Master of Ceremonies Richard Jendras addresses the crowd of over 200 guests who participated in this year's UOL fundraiser for orphanages in Ukraine. Members of the band Ariel play behind Richard.

The turnout at this year's gala more than doubled the attendance at last year's Holy Ascension CCRF fundraiser and organizers are already planning to reserve a hall for 400 people for 2003. Anyone interested in sponsoring a similar event in their community or parish is urged to contact Mr. Jendras at (201) 437-0624.



Julian Kytasty and Michael Alpert performing "Night Songs from a Neighboring Village."

### "NIGHT SONGS" CONCERT EXPLORES COMMON HERITAGE

On November 10th, the Hartford Chapter of CCRF hosted acclaimed recording artists Julian Kytasty and Michael Alpert in a unique concert entitled "Night Songs from a Neighboring Village." The concert, at the historic Charter Oak Cultural Center in downtown Hartford, highlighted the rich crosscurrents between Ukrainian folk music and the Jewish klezmer tradition. Mr. Kytasty, whose "Black Sea Winds" CD was released last year under the World Music label, is widely regarded as the pre-eminent bandura virtuoso of his generation. Mr. Alpert is well known for his performances with the New York City-based klezmer ensemble "Brave Old World." The two performers wove an intricate tapestry of kozak ballads, light-hearted dances, satirical songs and soulful laments, and accompanied each other on the bandura, violin, accordion, guitar and sopilka (Ukrainian shepherd's flute). After the concert, the artists mingled freely with the audience and many music lovers commented on the amazing compatibility of the repertoire and the natural interplay between the diverse musical traditions of Ukraine. A reception in the gallery area of the Charter Oak Center gave concert-goers an opportunity to admire the work of photographers Penny Millar and Joseph Sywenkyj, who gathered a very moving set of portraits of children undergoing treatment in Ukrainian hospitals and orphanages. After the concert, CCRF representatives took part in a candlelight vigil and community prayer service commemorating the anniversary of "Kristallnacht," and honoring the victims of genocide. CCRF Executive Director Alex Kuzma was invited to address the gathering and to speak on behalf of the Ukrainian community. Michael Alpert and Julian Kytasty have traveled extensively in Ukraine, and both feel a passionate commitment to aid the Chernobyl victims. They have offered their services to other CCRF chapters or private individuals who may be interested in hosting a concert or fundraising reception. To schedule a performance in your area, please call the Connecticut office of CCRF at (860) 652-0458, or call Mr. Kytasty directly at (212) 995-2640.



Bandurist Julian Kytasty (left) and klezmer virtuoso Michael Alpert meet with event organizers Irene Oleksiak and Natalie Pollock. The gallery photos of Chernobyl children in the background feature the works of Penny Millar and Joseph Sywenkyj.

### ROCHESTER CREDIT UNION HOSTS "FAMILY NIGHT"

On Saturday, November 2nd, the Rochester Ukrainian Federal Credit Union hosted a gala fundraising event called "Family Night" to celebrate the charitable activities that have been launched by the Ukrainian-American community and its allies in western New York State. Proceeds from the dinner-dance were designated for the Children of Chernobyl Relief Fund and the US-Ukraine Foundation to help sponsor their ongoing programs under the "Poltava-Irondequoit Sister Cities Project." CCRF Co-founders Dr. Zenon and Mrs. Nadia Matkiwsky, US-Ukraine Co-founder Nadia McConnell, and the Consul General - Embassy to Ukraine to USA Valentyn Nalyvaichenko were among the guests of honor. The gala event drew more than 400 supporters to the Four Seasons-Sheraton Hotel in downtown Rochester.

In recent years, the Rochester Credit Union has been a generous supporter of CCRF programs. The Rochester Chapter of CCRF has provided over \$100,000 to help modernize neonatal intensive care units in Kyiv, Poltava, Rivne and Ivano-Frankivsk. The Poltava City Maternity Hospital has achieved an 80% reduction in infant mortality in large part due to the new neonatal technology funded in part by the Rochester community.

Credit Union President Bill (Wasy)l Kornylo and Rochester Chapter President Myron Babiuk welcomed all the guests who came out to support the fundraising event. Mr. Babiuk sincerely thanked the numerous volunteers and participants "for all (their) hard work," and the Consul General and Mrs. Nadia McConnell also welcomed and thanked all for participating. Speaking on behalf of the National Office of CCRF, Nadia Matkiwsky acknowledged all those who have built such an effective campaign in the Greater Rochester area to help CCRF save children's lives in Ukraine by saying, "Hope is a beacon of life. It is because of nights like tonight that children in Ukraine can close their eyes at night with a feeling of hope." Lesia Telega, who is one of the co-organizers of the annual CCRF charity golf tournament in Rochester, served as the



The Knights of Columbus present Dr. and Mrs. Matkiwsky with a check for \$500 to add to the generous donations from the weekend. Top row, left to right: Mark Ewanow, Mike Jackiw, Mark Shaw, Ron Dinger, Mike Anuskiewicz, Steve Wisnowski, Myron Babiuk. Bottom row, left to right: Gene Sydor, Dr. and Mrs. Matkiwsky, Dick Samson

master of ceremonies for the silent auction that helped to raise additional funds for CCRF with the help of the Zonta Women's Service Organization. A special thanks again to the program committee: Eugene Sydor- Chair, Wasy Kornylo, Myron Babiuk, Lesia Telega, Tamara Denysenko, Slavko Petryk, Bohdan Cholach, Andrew Kompaniec, Eugene Loj and Walter Wirlo.

The evening was filled with lively entertainment and great company. Guests danced late into the night to the music of the *Nova Khvylya* ("New Wave") band from Toronto. On Sunday morning, the Holy Name Society at St. Josaphat's Ukrainian Catholic Church in Rochester held another in a series of spaghetti dinners to benefit CCRF. Retired Army Colonel Gene Sydor and his associates in the Knights of Columbus presented Dr. and Mrs. Matkiwsky with a check for \$500 to add to the generous donations from the weekend. CCRF and all its members are very grateful to the organizers and the performers who took part in this fundraiser to help the children in Ukraine and bring hope to their lives. Anyone interested in replicating the success of the November 2-3 weekend in their own community is urged to contact Mr. Babiuk at (585) 872-4263 or Mr. Gene Sydor at (585) 527-5775.



Rochester event organizers socialize with the honored guests at the "Family Night" gala fundraiser. Left to right: Wolodymyr Pylyshenko, Myron Babiuk (President of Rochester Branch of CCRF), Dr. Zenon Matkiwsky, Wasy Kornylo (President of RUFUCU), Tamara Denysenko (Manager of RUFUCU), Valentyn Nalyvaichenko (Consul General of Ukraine, Washington, DC), Olena Nalyvaichenko, Nadia Matkiwsky, Nadia McConnell, Lesia Telega, Ihor Sebiha (representative of Consulate General of Ukraine, New York).

## AN URGENT APPEAL: HEART-LUNG MACHINE

Each year in Ukraine, over 6000 children are born suffering from congenital heart defects. Due to a lack of training and technology, doctors are able to operate on only one in every six of these infants. Many more of these children could be saved if their treating physicians had access to a heart-lung machine and proper training to perform open-heart surgeries.

CCRF has provided extensive training for Dr. Roman Kovalsky, an exceptional cardiac and thoracic surgeon from Lviv, Ukraine, who has studied at the Deborah Heart & Lung Center and Boston Children's Hospital. Dr. Kovalsky has already performed many miraculous operations on young children using minimally invasive procedures. In 2003, our goal is to provide Dr. Kovalsky and his team with the full array of supplies and the bypass machine he needs to expand his capabilities.

Through the efforts of our Procurement Director, Lisa Milanytch, CCRF has found a major medical manufacturer who is willing to partially donate two heart-lung machines for a remarkably good price. We have already begun an intensive campaign to purchase at least one of these machines, along with surgical kits, tubing and supplemental parts. Through this Christmas Appeal, we hope to raise enough leadership gifts and seed grants to put us well on the road to meeting our goal of \$65000. Donations of any size will be greatly appreciated, but we are making a special appeal to those who might consider a leadership gift of \$1000 or more to help expedite this project. An anonymous donor has already contributed \$5000 toward this goal. If only 60 more donors can respond at the \$1000 level, we will be able to meet our combined target and save well over a thousand children in the coming years.

### Calendar of Events

**November 29 - December 14** - Chornobyl  
Photo Exhibit by Joseph Sywenkyj  
*Grand Opening: December 3rd*  
137 Wooster Street, New York, NY  
hours: Mon-Fri, 11am - 6pm  
for more information, call: (212) 592-2010

**December 14** - CCRF jointly with the  
Ukrainian American Professionals &  
Businesspersons Association is hosting a  
*Christmas Party*  
at the Matkiwsky home in Short Hills, NJ  
\$100 contribution per person to CCRF



We are pleased to inform our readers that the Teaching-Learning Network, an award-winning studio based in Florida, has approached the Children of Chornobyl Relief Fund with an exciting offer to feature CCRF in a new public television series entitled "Voices of Vision". Narrated by Scott Simon, the venerable host of National Public Radio's "Weekend Edition", the series is composed of half-hour episodes on charitable or humanitarian organizations that have developed groundbreaking programs, both here in the US and around the world.

"Voices of Vision" offers a unique opportunity that could provide nationwide exposure, not only for the Children of Chornobyl Relief Fund, but for the Ukrainian-American community and for the entire campaign to save children's lives in Ukraine.

The CCRF episode is expected to air in the fall of 2003, reaching up to 90 million viewers across North America and the Pacific Rim. TLN has already secured over \$425,000 for each episode to cover the cost of airtime and broadcasting rights. However, since PBS is itself a non-profit organization, the corporate sponsors (AOL-Time Warner and Yahoo) have stipulated that each organization to be featured must raise \$63,000 in matching funds to cover production and non-broadcasting expenses. As this newsletter goes to print, CCRF has raised nearly half this amount. TLN hopes to begin script development in January and to dispatch a crew to Ukraine by April to interview doctors, Chornobyl survivors and former patients, and to gather footage at our partner hospitals. With your support, we can finally share the inspiring stories of Ukrainian doctors who have saved the lives of infants and youngsters using state-of-the-art technology, supplies and training made possible by your contributions.

This informative series will also be made available to over 150,000 schools across the US through the National School Board Association Conference, and TLN will also provide extensive coverage on its website and through advance publicity. We ask you to consider a special year-end gift to finance this historic documentary that could be the most significant film event for our community since "The Harvest of Despair" in the 1980s.

\* CCRF is very grateful for the two \$5,000 seed grants it has received from the New England Self Reliance Federal Credit Union and the New York Self Reliance Federal Credit Union. We are also deeply grateful for the generous gifts we have received from the Kokoris, Chaikovsky, DeLalio, Chodnowsky, Leshko, Korsheniuk-Johnson and Petrauskas families.

## BE A VISIONARY!

### Remember the Children In Your "Zapovit"



One of the first poems that every Ukrainian schoolchild is required to memorize is Taras Shevchenko's "Zapovit" - the final "Will and Testament" in which this great human rights champion described the legacy he hoped to leave for future generations in his beloved homeland.

Unfortunately, many Americans who care deeply about Ukraine and the children of Chornobyl forget to follow Shevchenko's example. They forget to write their own "Zapovit"! Your will and your estate can be a powerful instrument in promoting your vision for a new Ukraine, where children can live in a healthier, more democratic environment with decent medical care and dignity and hope.....

By designating a portion of your estate to the Children of Chornobyl Relief Fund, you can reap important tax benefits and you can plan your future with the comfort of knowing that you are leaving a cherished legacy for some of the world's neediest and most deserving children.

CCRF is very grateful to the many individuals and families who have remembered to include the children of Chornobyl in their estate planning. Their gifts have restored the strength and life of some of Ukraine's most promising and idealistic young citizens. They have helped to build the "strategic partnership" with a new Ukraine which is so vital to the long-term security of the United States and the entire world.

If you have not yet drawn up your will, please contact an attorney today or call the Ukrainian-American Bar Association at (973) 701-0544 for a referral. You may also contact our Connecticut office at (860) 652-0458 or write to CCRF, attn: "Zapovit Legacy Circle," 272 Old Short Hills Road, Short Hills, New Jersey 07078.

### Donate Your Used Car Save a Life

#### Tri-State Area CCRF Auto Donation Program



- Tax Deductible
- Free Pickup
- Car-Truck-Van
- Any Condition

Call Greg Intille: (973) 650-1408  
or  
CCRF: (973) 376-5140

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