

Chornobyl Chronicle

CHILDREN OF CHORNOBYL RELIEF FUND NATIONAL NEWSLETTER Summer 2003 VOL. XXVIII



VIKTORY FOR KIDS SKATING EVENT TO BENEFIT CHILDREN OF UKRAINE

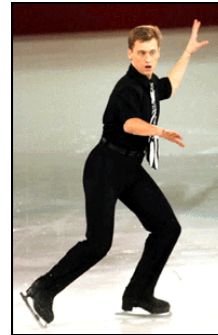
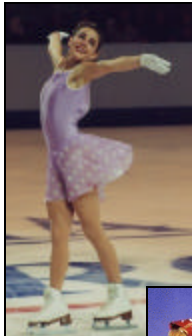
Viktor Petrenko was only ten years old when he was discovered as a figure-skating prodigy in Odessa. Within a year's time, he had mastered his first triple jump and was well on his way to becoming an Olympic Champion.

Since that time, Viktor Petrenko has become an international celebrity, winning two Olympic medals (Bronze in 1988, Gold in 1992), participating in the renowned Champions on Ice Skating Tour and taking part in countless fundraisers for charitable causes. Through it all, the skating star never forgot his native Ukrainian homeland and frequently gives back to the country that he refers to as his "other" hometown.

Recently, Viktor Petrenko pledged to dedicate his time and talents to host an all-star cast of Olympic and World Figure Skaters. The charity event will be held at the Danbury Ice Arena in Danbury, CT, on Saturday, October 4, 2003, at 7:00 pm and will feature skating's brightest stars, including: Olympic Champion Brian Boitano, Olympic Pairs Champions Oksana Kazakova and Artur Dmitriev, two-time Olympic Pairs Champion Ekaterina Gordeeva, Olympic Champion Illia Kulik, Olympic Silver Medalist Evgeni Plushenko, Olympic Bronze Medalist Timothy Goeble, World Silver Medalist Elena Sokolova, Japanese National Champion Fumie Suguri, Ukrainian National Ice Dance Champions Elena Grushina and Ruslan Goncharov, and the Acrobatic team of Vladimir Besedin & Oleksiy Polischuk.

VIKTORY FOR KIDS will also feature a VIP fundraising reception with a celebrity auction at the Colorado Brewery and Steakhouse in Danbury. All proceeds from the event will benefit the Children of Chornobyl Relief Fund (CCRF), that has been working for the past thirteen years to provide Ukrainian physicians with medical supplies and equipment needed to provide the best possible care for the ailing children of Ukraine. "We have many talented doctors in Ukraine, but they lack the technology and resources that we take for granted here in the United States," says Mr. Petrenko. "This is the job that CCRF has done so well for the past (thirteen) years: providing hardware and the know-how that can work miracles in the lives of thousands of young nuclear survivors." The proceeds from the first VIKTORY FOR KIDS ice-skating event in March of 2001 led to the creation of a state-of-the-art neonatal intensive care unit in Odessa. Viktor Petrenko visited the new NICU and was deeply moved to see the infants who have been saved through his efforts. Tickets for VIKTORY FOR KIDS are available at the Danbury Ice Arena: 203-794-1704. For more information, contact Alex Kuzma or Irene Oleksiak at (860) 652-0458.

This is the job that CCRF has done so well for the past (thirteen) years: providing hardware and the know-how that can work miracles in the lives of thousands of young nuclear survivors.
- Viktor Petrenko

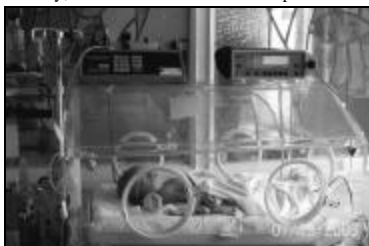


Clockwise from the top, Ekaterina Gordeeva, Evgeni Plushenko and Timothy Goeble are among the stars performing at this year's Viktor for Kids. Viktor Petrenko (opposite) will also grace the ice with his talents.

IVANO-FRANKIVSK HOSPITALS RECEIVE AID ABOARD CCRF'S LATEST SEA SHIPMENT

In June of 2003, medical equipment and supplies aboard CCRF's latest sea shipment were delivered to eight CCRF partner hospitals, including the Ivano-Frankivsk Regional Children's Hospital (IFRCH) and the Ivano-Frankivsk Regional Perinatology Center (IFRPC). A number of corporate donors, among them Wyeth Research, Nova Biomedical, and Ambassador Medical, contributed supplies and equipment, including a Stat Profile Blood Gas Analyzer and a refurbished Accuson 128 Ultrasound. Mrs. Renell Leichty, a nurse from Parkview Hospital in

Indiana who was a guest speaker at CCRF's National Neonatology Conference in the Spring of 2002, gathered baby blankets with her co-workers and donated the fleece wraps to the IFRCH along with pediatric medical supplies. Funds from the Rochester Chapter were used to purchase state-of-the-art neonatal equipment for the IFRPC: an infant warmer, incubator, and ventilator; while the IFRCH received a much-needed portable ultrasound that was funded by the Ukrainian National Home of New Haven. In September 2002, CCRF delivered a neonatal care station complete with respirator, infant warmer, pulse oximeter, and other essential components. Since that time, many infants have benefited from these life-saving machines.



Baby Balanda was born with a heart defect. On August 15, he was transported to Amosov Cardiac Surgery Institute for an open-heart operation. Meanwhile, his vital signs were monitored by CCRF equipment.



Prior to the July delivery of the Logic Q Portable Ultrasound (pictured left), purchased by funds from the Ukrainian National Home of New Haven, parents of ailing children had to rent an ultrasound from a company in order to examine their child (above). Because the cost for such a service was extravagant, the Ivano-Frankivsk Regional Children's Hospital is extremely grateful to have their very own portable ultrasound.

**HARTFORD BANQUET HONORS
VIKTOR PETRENKO
AND COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS**

On May 18, the Hartford Chapter of CCRF hosted an awards dinner honoring several Connecticut residents and institutions for their outstanding support of CCRF's medical programs. The honorees included Olympic and World Champion Viktor Petrenko, who attended the dinner with his wife Nina; award-winning photographer and former CCRF intern Joseph Sywenkyj; Rev. Luke Mihaly, the pastor of the Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in Danbury; and the Ukrainian National Home of New Haven. Other special guests included the Ukrainian Consul General Serhiy Pohoreltsev, State Senator John Fonfara, and the Ukrainian Ice Dance Champions Elena Grushina and Ruslan Goncharov, who came to support Mr. Petrenko's Viktor for Kids campaign.

Speaking on behalf of the CCRF Board of Directors, Dr. Zenon Matkiwsky praised the Connecticut chapters and their coalition partners as a "stronghold" and "an engine of ingenuity" for CCRF. "From Danbury to Willimantic, from Bridgeport to New London, you have reached out to local corporations, medical centers, universities, and civic associations to find new sources of support..." In accepting his award, Viktor Petrenko thanked all the people who contributed to the success of the 2001 Viktor for Kids fundraiser that raised \$120,000, enabling CCRF to establish a state-of-the-art neonatal intensive care unit at the Odessa Regional Children's Hospital. Rev. Mihaly, whose parish is hosting its sixth annual Holy Trinity 5K Road Race to benefit CCRF this month, told the audience that his community is honored to play a part in CCRF's overseas mission. "You are involved in holy work," said the Yale-educated clergyman.

Joseph Sywenkyj, a native of Windham, CT, was honored for his riveting portraits of Ukrainian orphans and children undergoing treatment for cancer and AIDS. His photo exhibits have been shown at the U.N. and at the Russell Senate Office Building in Washington, and they have helped inspire generous donations for the Fund's programs.

CCRF activist and Hartford attorney Irene Romanelli presented a special award to Mr. Paul Paluha, President of the Ukrainian National Home of New Haven, for his organization's gift of more than \$70,000 to CCRF to help combat infant mortality at the Ivano-Frankivsk Regional Children's Hospital.

Under the capable leadership of the Hartford Chapter President Irene Oleksiak, the banquet raised over \$12,000 as well as a \$5,000 gift from Mr. Ivan Zakoworotny for a hospital in Kharkiv.



Attendees and Honorees of the Hartford Banquet: standing-- Alexander Kuzma, Joseph Sywenkyj, Svitlana Pohareltsev, State Senator John Fonfara, Elena Grushina, Consul General Serhiy Pohoreltsev, Nina and Viktor Petrenko, Orest Fedash, Ruslan Goncharov; seated-- Dr. Zenon Matkiwsky, Irene Oleksiak, Natalie Pollock, and Nadia Matkiwsky. (photo by Ulana Slabickij)



During Lent, the third graders of St. Josephat's School in Parma, Ohio, under the guidance of their teacher, Myroslawa Holubec, collected \$72.70 for the purpose of donating the funds to help the sick children of Ukraine. We would like to thank the children and Mrs. Holubec for their efforts and applaud them for their dedication to help those less fortunate.



Organizers and guest speakers assemble at the fundraiser in Fort Lauderdale. Seated left to right: Oksana Piaseckyj, Donna Maksymowich-Waskiewicz, and Kaye Hodiwsky. Standing left to right: Dr. Irina Dziubinsky, Dr. Robert Liebler, Dr. Zenon Matkiwsky, Roman Balaban, Rev. Ivan Chirovsky, author Irene Zabytko, and Rev. V. Poliarny.

**UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY IN
FLORIDA HOSTS A FUNDRAISER
LUNCHEON TO BENEFIT CCRF**

On June 8, South Florida's Ukrainian community gathered at the Sheraton Fort Lauderdale Airport Hotel in Dania Beach for a luncheon to benefit the Children of Chernobyl Relief Fund. Over one hundred people attended the event, which raised about \$3,000.

Oksana Piaseckyj, a member of the coordinating committee for the event, opened the evening by stating that the purpose for the fundraiser was to unite together for the cause. She stressed the importance of CCRF as an organization that has helped Ukraine a great deal in the past thirteen years.

Dr. Zenon Matkiwsky, President and Co-Founder of CCRF and keynote speaker of the evening, gave a short introduction about CCRF, its beginnings, and its mission and philosophy. Dr. Matkiwsky highlighted CCRF's commitment in the particular fields of neonatology and correcting cardiac birth defects in Ukraine. "CCRF is working to establish additional cardiac surgery centers throughout Ukraine in order to save children born with cardiac birth defects." In 2002, the Ukrainian Ministry of Health reported that 6000 children are born with cardiac defects every year, and Ukrainian hospitals have the capability of operating on only 800 of these infants. The remaining children are left to an uncertain fate: 2000 die within the first year and the rest become cardiac invalids. "With proper training and technology, these infants could be saved."

In addition to Dr. Matkiwsky, speakers included Dr. Robert Liebler of Miami, who volunteers his services as a dentist in Ukraine every year; Karl Beck, the director of the Peace Corps in Ukraine; and Irene Zabytko, who wrote about a family struggling to overcome the immediate threat of the nuclear explosion in her novel *The Sky Unwashed*.

Alexander Kuzma, Executive Director of CCRF, hopes that the event galvanizes new interest in the Chernobyl cause in Florida and marks the beginning of a long-term relationship between the National Office of CCRF and the South Florida Ukrainian community. Dr. Matkiwsky expressed his enthusiasm for the community as he applauded the members' dedication to meet and promote the noble cause of aiding the children of Ukraine. "The people were very cordial and sincere about helping the children. Hopefully, we will be seeing and hearing more from them in the future."

To get involved in South Florida's CCRF Campaign, contact Oksana Piaseckyj at 305-935-7151.

IN SWEET REMEMBRANCE...

This summer, our CCRF family mourns the loss of our dear friend, Leonard Bonacorsa. Known to all his friends as "Lenny," Mr. Bonacorsa was a true humanitarian, an avid Ukrainophile and avid supporter of CCRF, attending many of our fundraisers and special events over the years. Lenny and friendship



were synonymous. Everyone who knew him, from CEOs of Fortune 500 Companies to the humblest cleaning crew at his company, was deeply touched by his wit, his charm, his optimism, and humanity. Mr. Bonacorsa is survived by his wife, Christine, and daughters Melanie Platosh, Natalie Bonacorsa, and Inya Chehade, who served as CCRF's first In-Country Director in Ukraine from 1995-1998, sons-in-law Ghassan Chehade and Paul Platosh, and grandson Hassan Chehade. We extend our heartfelt condolences to the entire Bonacorsa family, his mother Alice and sister Carmen, and to Lenny's many friends and relatives throughout the United States and Europe.

News from Ukraine

PROCUREMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT FROM UKRAINE

by Lisa Milanytch

In May of 2003, as CCRF's Director of Procurement, I had the privilege of traveling to nine CCRF partner hospitals and the Znamyanka Orphanage to gather information about the impact of our previous shipments and to assess the most pressing needs at each institution.

My journey began in the village of Znamyanka in the Kirovohrad Region of Ukraine. From there, I continued in a loop from Kyiv, northwest to Rivne and Lutsk and ending in Ivano-Frankivsk in the southwest. At every location, I met the doctors and hospital directors who have become CCRF's closest partners in Ukraine, and I had the opportunity to witness their daily struggles and routines. Most notably, I was able to see with my own eyes the impact of the aid that CCRF has delivered and to understand how important CCRF has been in changing the lives of ordinary people. The support we have received from our Chernobyl Chronicle readers has been a key factor in CCRF's ability to bring hope to a country that is struggling to provide its people with even the most basic healthcare needs. I would like to share the following stories with you about some of the remarkable people and places that I encountered on my journey.



(Znamyanka) In recent years, Ukrainian orphanages have received a considerable amount of notoriety for their deplorable conditions and severe neglect of children. In contrast to the usually bleak picture, the Ukrainian Ministry of Social Work acknowledged the dedication of Ms. Tatiana Val'ko (pictured above), a motivated orphanage director who was awarded a certificate of achievement for the dramatic improvements she implemented at the Znamyanka Orphanage for Disabled Children. Ms. Val'ko leveraged the support that she received from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (USA) and CCRF to create an effective rehabilitation center for the children in her care.



Alosyka is one of the children who benefited from the physical rehabilitation center. His hands had been severely crippled since birth, preventing him from grabbing any objects, but thanks to the physical therapy that he received, he can now hold anything. Near him lies the bag of cookies that never left his side during my visit. The nurses informed me that since Alosyka has been able to grasp things, they seldom see him without something in his hands.



(Lviv) Since 1990, the Lviv Regional Specialized Children's Clinical Hospital has been one of CCRF's most successful partnerships, saving the lives of scores of children suffering from leukemia and various forms of children's cancer. At the Bacteriological Laboratory of the LRSCCH, Dr. Lesia Khimiak, the laboratory director, has worked tirelessly to upgrade the diagnostic capabilities of her facility to combat opportunistic infections among children undergoing chemotherapy. Above, Dr. Khimiak pauses from her work, examining cultures from patients being treated in the oncology ward and in other units of the hospital. The laboratory analyzes thousands of samples to determine which medicines would be most effective in combating children's illnesses. Through the generous donation of the Chicago Chapter, CCRF has provided the laboratory with a large supply of petri dishes, flasks, graduated cylinders, beakers and other critical tools. In the coming months, CCRF will be providing additional laboratory equipment with the help of Quest Diagnostics and Ms. Zenia Luciw of Branford, CT.

If there were more people like those who support the Children of Chernobyl Relief Fund and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, our children would not be forgotten.

**-Tatiana Ivanivna Val'ko
Director of Znamyanka Orphanage**



(Lviv) At the Lviv Regional Children's Clinical Hospital, Dr. Roman Kovalsky (above) examines Baby Senkiv, who was diagnosed as having a double outlet from the right ventricle and pulmonary stenosis. The infant was scheduled to be transferred the next morning to Dr. Ilya Yemets' clinic in Amosov Institute, Kyiv, where she was to undergo open heart surgery. In 2002, Dr. Kovalsky sent 15 infants like Baby Senkiv for the procedure to Yemets' hospital, 13 of whom survived the complicated operation. Currently, CCRF is working with Dr. Kovalsky to establish a cardiac center in Lviv that would eliminate the need to send infants with cardiac birth defects to Kyiv. To date, the heart-lung machine that was acquired by CCRF for this center has been delivered to the Lviv hospital and is in the process of being installed. Dr. Kovalsky is hopeful that within a year after the first procedure on the machine, he and his team will be able to operate on 60 infants. Within two years, that number could double, depending on the availability of trained staff. Eventually, the cardiac center in Lviv will be able to save at close to 800 infants a year from the debilitating effects of cardiac defects.

(Kyiv) At the City Children's Clinical Hospital #2, a nurse examines a newborn infant suffering from complications in the neonatal intensive care unit (below). CCRF recently provided aid to this hospital to help Mariyka T., a young infant suffering from a facial disfigurement caused by a



severe infection. Through the help of Dr. Oleh Slupchynskij of St. Vincent's Medical Center in NYC, Dr. Korniyuchuk and his staff have stabilized little Mariyka's condition, but she is still in need of extensive follow-up surgery. CCRF has established the Mariyka T. Account to help this unfortunate child on her road to recovery.



Through the efforts of Dr. Mona Mikalsen of Verona, NJ, CCRF recently delivered two Siemens ventilators to the Chernihiv City Children's Clinical Hospital, along with an ophthalmoscope and other medical supplies. In the photo above, Dr. Tatiana Baklan, head doctor of the NICU, explained that the unit, which has six beds, had only one ventilator from 1984 to service all of the infants. In addition, the unit is in urgent need of phototherapy lamps that could cure newborns from cases of jaundice, as well as pulse oximeters to measure the amount of oxygen in their blood. Dr. Baklan also pleaded for blood pressure monitors to measure pulse and ultrasounds to examine the inner organs of the frail infants. A comparable Western hospital would be equipped with more than six pieces of each type of equipment to ensure that even if one failed, the infants would not be deprived of essential diagnostic care. The lack of equipment in this hospital underscored the bleak reality faced by most Ukrainian medical institutions.



(Lutsk) Dr. Ihor Yevhenovych of the Volynian Regional Children's Medical Center prepares the endoscopy system for use. The machine was delivered to the VRCMC in April of 2002 and services 5 to 10 patients a day. Dr. Yevhenovych hopes to hook up the endoscopy machine to the hospital's computer system in order to share the pictures instantaneously with other units.

**CHORNOBYL MUSEUM IN KYIV
FEATURES EXHIBIT ON CCRF**

We are pleased to announce that the National Chernobyl Museum in Kyiv has created a permanent exhibit on the Children of Chernobyl Relief Fund as a tribute to the Fund's outstanding efforts to aid the children affected by the nuclear disaster. The Chernobyl Museum has become a "must see" attraction for tourists and visiting dignitaries from around the world.

Despite chronic shortages of government funding and private support, the curators have done a remarkable job in creating a powerful memorial to the legacy of the world's worst environmental catastrophe. The museum features a rich treasury of archival materials, photographs and artifacts from the Chernobyl exclusion zone and moving testimony from those most affected by the disaster: the liquidators, evacuees, scientists and families still living in areas contaminated by the radioactive fallout. An entire wall has been devoted to photographs of children stricken with thyroid cancer and other illnesses linked to radiation exposure. The central atrium is designed to be a replica of the nuclear reactor with informational material about the survivors artistically displayed around the site. In different rooms of the museum, original videos about the tragedy play intermittently.

We hope that all of our supporters and donors can share in our collective sense of pride and gratitude in receiving this great honor. Without your ongoing contributions, CCRF could not have developed most of the programs that we have been able to implement in hospitals and orphanages across Ukraine. At the same time, the Chernobyl Museum is a sobering reminder of the immense amount of work that remains to be done to restore the health and well-being of Ukraine's citizens. We cannot forget the thousands of lives that can still be saved by applying our talents and resources towards the benefit of Chernobyl's future generations.



CCRF's permanent exhibit in the Chernobyl Museum in Kyiv highlights the Fund's most notable achievements throughout the years and features general information about the organization.



*My thoughts, my dreams,
My flowers, my wayward children...
I tended you and nurtured you...
Where am I to send you now?...
I will send you to Ukraine where you will find
kind-hearted souls and a tender word,
There you will find the truth, and perhaps, even glory.
Welcome these children, Ukraine,
as you would embrace your own child.*

Taras Shevchenko (1814-1866)

**PROCEEDS FROM SALE OF 2004
CALENDARS TO BENEFIT
CHILDREN IN UKRAINE**

Mark your calendars! The Rochester Chapter of CCRF, together with the British Aid for Deprived Children (BADC), will be selling a 2004 calendar featuring the portraits of some of the youngest survivors of the world's worst nuclear disaster. This calendar, created by British photographer Penny Millar, showcases the portraits of children who are undergoing treatment for various illnesses in Chernihiv, juxtaposing them with flowers that reflect the subtlety of the children's expressions.

According to artist Penny Millar, this calendar represents the natural beauty of floral blooms in the indomitable spirit of children who are fighting to overcome the legacy of Chernobyl, "These children, for the most part ignorant of their plight and bleak future, still smile, still offer the beholder such beauty. These faces could be those of any child - and there's the point. They are *not* of any child; they are part of a statistic that is: 'In Chernihiv, Ukraine, only one child in every 100 is free from sickness.' These are not sugarcoated images that mask the truth, but instead speak their own truth and hold their own as art. The message is clear-- *Art with Heart.*" Located some 60 miles east from the Chernobyl reactor, Chernihiv and its surrounding agricultural villages were heavily affected by the radioactive cloud from Chernobyl.

Beyond the intrinsic beauty of these photos, CCRF hopes that this calendar will grace your home or office as a celebration of Ukrainian children's lives and their hope for the future.

CCRF wishes to thank the Rochester Chapter President, Mr. Myron Babiuik and Printing Methods for their support and execution of this project. Proceeds from the sale of this calendar will be allotted for the purchase of state-of-the-art equipment that can have a direct impact on the health and lifespan of Chernobyl children.

**CCRF SEEKS YOUR SUPPORT
FOR INFANT CARDIAC SURGERY
PROGRAM IN UKRAINE**

As this newsletter goes to print, CCRF's first heart-lung machine is being installed at the Lviv Regional Children's Clinical Hospital, bringing the promise of new life for more of the 6,000 children who are born each year with cardiac defects. Until now, not even 800 of these infants can undergo cardiac surgery in Ukraine. In the coming months we hope to purchase another heart-lung machine for one of the small handful of Ukrainian surgical centers where the staff is already trained to perform open heart surgery. We are looking for 20 donors who can donate \$5,000 each to make this dream a reality. We are also seeking funds for our 2004 national training conference on infant cardiac surgery that can help prepare new cadres of surgeons, pediatric cardiologists and intensive care specialists to tackle this national health crisis. For more information, please call CCRF at 973-376-5140 or 860-652-0458.

Calendar of Events

September 13 - Rochester Golf Tournament to benefit CCRF at the Shadow Pines Golf Course in Penfield, NY
Registration begins at 11:30 AM

October 4, 7:00 pm - VIKTORY FOR KIDS Gala Ice-Skating Fundraiser at the Danbury Ice Arena in Danbury, CT
For ticket information, call: Danbury Ice Arena at 203-794-1704 or CCRF at 860-652-0458

Receive a free copy of the 2004 calendar with a donation of \$100 or more!

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or
CCRF: (973) 376-5140

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