

CHORNOBYL CHRONICLE

CHILDREN OF CHORNOBYL RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT FUND NEWSLETTER Winter 2005 Vol. XXXIV

Underlying the joy and pageantry of Christmas, there is a sober reminder of mankind's capacity for good and evil. We are touched by the heartwarming stories of poor shepherds and kings from distant lands paying homage and bringing precious gifts to a helpless child. We are called to feel compassion for Mary and Joseph as they despair for lack of a decent place to bring their baby into the world.

Across Ukraine and much of Eastern Europe, in hospitals and orphanages, society's lack of concern for the needs of mothers and children can be painfully evident. While Kyiv's real estate market, hotels, and restaurants are booming, in delivery rooms and neonatal wards, basic medical supplies are lacking. Many babies are abandoned. Others have no chance of recovery from birth defects or treatable illnesses because for seventy



A newborn infant is treated in the NICU at Dr. Korniychuk's Kyiv Children's Hospital No. 2.



A traditional Ukrainian icon of the Nativity.

years, the Soviet government and its successors in the Ukrainian Parliament placed a very low priority on children's wellbeing.

With last year's peaceful Orange Revolution, new hope emerged for a humane attitude toward children. President Yushchenko allocated up to 8,000 hryvnia (about \$1,400) for each expectant mother to help cover the cost of prenatal care and nutrition. The First Lady Mrs. Kateryna Yushchenko and her Foundation Ukraine 3000 are focusing on the needs of children in the field of neonatology and hematology. Last April, when Ukraine's President Viktor Yushchenko met with over 1,200 Ukrainian-American at a gala banquet in Washington, D.C., he called on all those present to set aside the next two years to help Ukraine.

The time for toasting the initial success of the Orange Revolution and to bask in the aura of its triumph

is over. Now we must roll up our sleeves and open our hearts to show a passionate commitment to Ukraine's future.

With the advent of the holiday season, we are asking that our readers take this call for action seriously. Help us to improve the medical health care system. With the spirit of Christmas and the good will of giving, we ask for your generous gift to **help save a life, help improve a life**. It is our responsibility as Christians and all the world's great religions to give back to our fellow man and share our good fortune with the unfortunate.

We wish you and all your loved ones a blessed holiday season. As the Star of Bethlehem shines on all of us, let the shining star bring hope and a brighter future for the innocent children in Ukraine.



Little four year old Masha Muravlyova does not want to look up for the camera as she undergoes a difficult round of chemotherapy.

U.S. AMBASSADOR HOSTS RECEPTION FOR CHILDREN OF CHORNOBYL

RKO President Paul Speaker and Ukrainian Rock Star Oleh Skrypka Serve as Masters of Ceremonies at Gala Event

(KYIV) On Saturday, October 15th the U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine John E. Herbst and Mrs. Nadia Herbst hosted a special fundraising reception for the Children of Chernobyl Relief and Development Fund at their residence in the Podil District of Kyiv. Some 120 guests attended the intimate gala event that raised funds for the purchase of new equipment for the neonatal intensive care unit at the Kyiv City Children's Hospital #2 located on the city's left bank.



Left to right: Master of Ceremonies and RKO President Paul Speaker, Ambassador John E. Herbst, CCRDF President Dr. Zenon Matkivsky, CCRDF Executive Director Alexander Kuzma.

CCRDF's Executive Director Alexander Kuzma opened the program by thanking guests for their support of the Fund's medical mission. "Most of all, we want to thank you for your power of imagination, for envisioning a new Ukraine where children receive the kind of health care and protection they deserve." He thanked the corporate sponsors of the evening, including American Medical Center, the Andriivsky Plaza, Arcada Bank, Bank Forum, Coca-Cola, Credit Rating, Delta Airlines, International (continued on page 2)

The Master of Ceremonies for the evening was the President of RKO Films Paul Speaker who flew in from Los Angeles to show his support for the Fund. Among other special guests attending the fundraiser were Ukraine's leading actor of stage and screen, Bohdan Stupka, and the members of Ukraine's pioneering rock band "VV," or "Vopli Vidopliassova," whose popular lead singer Oleh Skrypka co-hosted the event with Mr. Speaker. Mr. Skrypka thrilled the crowd with an impromptu acoustic performance in the latter half of the evening's program.



Master of Ceremony and VV Rock Star Oleh Skrypka entertains guests at the Embassy reception (left to right): Privatization Partners' Geof Berlin, Embassy of Switzerland's Lyudmila Harbus, VV Lead Singer Oleh Skrypka, Leading Actor Bohdan Stupka with wife Larysa, and Philip Morris' Olena Khomenko, Oleh Volichek, and Olesya Olenytska.

KHARKIV DOCTORS COMBAT SURGE IN LEUKEMIA CASES ONE PATIENT AT A TIME

Nurse Irina Slobodnyuk will never forget her first day on the job in the hematology ward of the Kharkiv City Children's Hospital No. 16 (CCH#16): "I just began my shift when a child died on my floor. There was more commotion in an adjoining room and a second child passed away. On the floor below, we lost a third: Three children in the span of one hour." It was a horrific start for an aspiring young nurse who wanted to save the lives of children suffering from leukemia.

"We used to have absolutely nothing to work with," says Dr. Lyudmyla Rakovska, the assistant to the Medical Director in Kharkiv. "Now we have a Cobe Spectra hematology analyzer and blood cell separator that has enabled us to reduce by half the number of hemorrhages, infections, thrombocytes, myeloid depression, and other complications during chemotherapy."

Earlier this year, the Philip Morris Company awarded the Children of Chernobyl Relief and Development Fund with a \$150,000 grant to further strengthen the diagnostic capacity of this hospital and especially its hematology ward. This was the fourth grant Philip Morris awarded for the Kharkiv hospital. CCRDF used these funds to modernize the hematology laboratory with six new microscopes, diagnostic kits, reagents, a spectrophotometer, testing kits, a Roche biochemistry analyzer, and many additional supplies that no (continued on page 5)

(AMBASSADOR, continued from page 1) Commerce Bank, Khreschatyk Bank, Kodak, the Kyiv Post Charity Fund, McDonald's, Perry Construction, Philip Morris, and Prestige Auto Ukraine, a division of Chevrolet.

Mr. Kuzma introduced Mr. Speaker as one of the great marketing minds in Hollywood who is now exploring Eastern Europe as fertile ground for the production of a new generation of major motion pictures. In his opening remarks, Mr. Speaker shared his experiences touring the historic Dovzhenko Film Studio in Kyiv with Bohdan Stupka earlier that day. "Ukraine has an incredibly rich culture that needs to be shared and exposed to the rest of the world," said Mr. Speaker. "I work for a company that has produced historic movies like *Citizen Kane* and *It's a Wonderful Life* – movies that left an indelible legacy and became an integral part of American culture. They say a lot about who we are as a people."

Mr. Speaker explained why the Children of Chornobyl has become his charity of choice: "When I think of the children who benefit from the medical programs of CCRDF, I think of writers who have not yet written their first script; photographers and filmmakers who have not yet lifted a camera; designers and artists and musicians who will someday leave their mark on the culture of Ukraine and the culture of the world."

Mr. Speaker thanked Ambassador and Mrs. Herbst for opening up their home to the fund for a second time to promote its medical programs. Ambassador Herbst echoed and expanded on Mr. Speaker's comments: "As an American, I am often stunned that so many Ukrainians are still unaware of so many important things about their own history. Just a few miles outside Kyiv lies the burial site of Bykovina where tens of thousands were put to death by the Soviet secret police. We travel through vast fields that hold the remains of millions of people who starved to death during the Terror Famine of the early 1930's."

Ambassador Herbst stated that he and his wife were pleased to host a fundraiser for CCRDF which is performing a very important role not only in saving the lives of many children, but in helping to build a culture of philanthropy in Ukraine. "There are many wealthy individuals in this country, and they need to learn to give back to their society from the riches they have gained."



Responding to Ambassador Herbst's evening address are CCRDF Board Members and Staff (left to right): Vika Pavlotska, Alexandra Perry, Jed Sunden, Nadia Matkiwsky, Lyudmila Rabij, Eugenia Medvedenko, Michael Perry, and Alexander Kuzma.

The evening program included a silent auction that featured the works of renowned Kyiv artist Eugenia Gapchinska who donated more than a dozen of her works to CCRDF for fundraising purposes. Several of Ms. Gapchinska's paintings have been purchased by world-renowned celebrities, including tenor Luciano Pavarotti. Her donation to CCRDF included her "Angels" series that captures the innocence and creativity of childhood: a little girl playing with a bluebird, another watching a tabby cat drinking milk from a bowl, another folding a paper airplane, another painting. Several of the works sold for substantial sums. Other auction items included a pair of boxing gloves signed by the Klitchko brothers, and a "bayan" (an antique accordion) donated by Oleh Skrypka. To help stimulate the bidding process, Mr. Skrypka picked up the bayan and played for the audience. He officially presented the instrument to the winning bidder, Ms. Olena Kosznarsky, on bended knee.

Another heart-warming moment came when CCRDF co-founder Nadia Matkiwsky introduced three-year-old Mariyka Tkachyk who presented a gift to Mrs. Herbst as a token of the Fund's appreciation. Little Mariyka narrowly survived a life-threatening illness with the aid of doctors at Kyiv Children's Hospital #2, and she became a cause celebre when she came to the United States for follow-up surgery at the New York Eye & Ear Infirmary last year. Paul Speaker had hoped to introduce Mariyka's treating physician Dr. Oleh Korniychuk who has become legendary for his pioneering work in developing a model neonatal program at Kyiv City Children's Hospital #2. But true to form, Dr. Korniychuk was unable to attend the function as he was working late into Saturday night tending to another infant in the intensive care unit. Speaking on Dr. Korniychuk's behalf, his colleague Dr. Olha Dziuba thanked all the sponsors and patrons for supporting CCRDF which has provided life-saving technology and invaluable material support to her hospital.

During the fundraiser, Prestige Auto-Chevrolet announced its donation of a blue emergency light for Dr. Korniychuk's ambulance that would enable doctors to transport children more quickly through the streets of the capital. The value of this donation is estimated at \$2,500.

At the close of the program, Mr. Kuzma thanked all the volunteers and staff who had worked so hard to make the evening a success. He especially thanked the Event Chair Nadia Matkiwsky, and Event Coordinators Olha Datsenko, Zhenya Medvedenko, Olena Nyzhnykevych, Vika Pavlotska, Lyudmila Rabij, and Marta Stecyk. Mrs. Matkiwsky also thanked and presented a special gift to the Ambassador's assistant, Ms. Mary Cross, who helped to coordinate arrangements between CCRDF and the Embassy staff.

Dear Friends!

On behalf of the rock-group "Vopli Vidopliassova," I would like to welcome everyone present at this wonderful event, and also express my deep respect to the noble mission of the Children of Chornobyl Relief and Development Fund.

We are approaching the end of the second decade since the tragedy at the Chornobyl Nuclear Power Station. Its most terrible legacy is the realization that the consequences of this disaster will affect many generations of Ukrainians. Unfortunately, the efforts undertaken by the government to overcome the consequences of Chornobyl have never been sufficient. It's a pity that the effects of our political, economic, and social instability inflict the greatest harm on those who are least protected and in need of constant attention. First and foremost, those children born under the "Black star" whose misfortunes are greater than we can imagine.

I'm glad to express my support and gratitude for the charitable initiatives which have come from your souls. In our country, this is very important because in the past, we have often witnessed much speculation surrounding charity as lofty words that unfortunately masked political and business machinations and occasional criminal actions. In contrast, every honest exertion of the heart which carries no subtext except compassion should remind us about genuine, timeless values, namely: when we help others, we first of all, help ourselves to earn the title "human beings."

For more than a decade and a half the Children of Chornobyl Relief and Development Fund has proven that its activity is needed not only for Ukraine and for the future generations of our citizens, but also needed for our common - actually very small home - which we call "Earth."

Sincerely yours,
Oleh Skrypka



Little Mariyka held by her father Serhij Tkachuk is pictured with VV Rock Star Oleh Skrypka at the Embassy event fundraiser.

Dr. Katya Borisivna Savinova and Dr. Tetyana Filonenko (left) at the Boyarka Regional Children's Hospital meet with a delegation from the "Kinder von Tschernobyl," CCRDF's counterpart organization from Hannover, Germany, that helped to provide new ultrasound equipment from Siemens to 90 hospitals in Ukraine. CCRDF is very grateful to our German colleagues for selecting two of our partner hospitals in the Kyiv region for this donation. Professor Hayo Eckel, Siemens engineer Klaus Hettwer, and Jochem Balz, examine the Sonoline ultrasound their organization donated for the 10th Anniversary of Chornobyl which has now been replaced.



Tuberculosis Epidemic in Ukraine

There is a growing concern over the pandemic spread of tuberculosis (TB) in Ukraine. Forty thousand new cases of TB are registered every year and twelve thousand deaths are reported per year. According to expert evaluations, the real number of sick people with TB in Ukraine is over 1.5 million, and many more are infected and not registered.

On May 17th 2005, a public forum for overcoming the tuberculosis epidemic was held upon the initiative of then Vice-Premier of Ukraine on humanitarian issues Mykola Tomenko. Ukrainian and international health groups participated in this forum. At this forum, a so-called "country coordinating mechanism for tuberculosis" (CCM for TB) was created consistent with all the recommendations of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.

By creating the CCM for TB the Ukrainian government and non-governmental organizations took an important step toward combating this crisis. The CCM for TB is authorized to review pressing problems and make urgent decisions for the Ukrainian people concerning the coordination of various actions on treatment, social assistance, and adaptation of an estimated one thousand Ukrainian citizens who have been stricken with multi-resistant strains of tuberculosis, and who are released from institutions of confinement. The CCM will also participate in the development of the concept of a special state program on control of TB in Ukraine for 2006 – 2010, which will replace the current structure that will expire at the end of this year.

In order to control TB in Ukraine, the nation's health authorities must devote more resources to treat tuberculosis by trained physicians who are specialists in this field and who must be part of this newly created special country coordination mechanism for tuberculosis. In the past, international efforts have come under heavy criticism for hiring unqualified individuals to administer such programs. The failure to monitor patients' compliance with treatment protocols actually resulted in a worsening of the epidemic as many patients developed drug-resistant strains.

A new citizens' movement entitled "Ukrainians Against Tuberculosis" (UAT) aims to unite efforts of Ukrainian organizations to fight the tuberculosis epidemic. CCRDF has been invited to take part in this effort and UAT continues to look for partners to finance anti-tuberculosis programs in Ukraine. For further information, please contact our office at (973) 376-5140.

Once Again, IAEA Downplays Chernobyl Effects: "CCRDF Responds"

In September of 2005, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) issued a report through the United Nations claiming that only 4,000 excess cancer deaths could be expected from the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. The IAEA tried to assure the public that the impact of Chernobyl will be far lesser than originally expected. Although the report conceded that Chernobyl had caused a large increase in thyroid cancer, especially in children, the UN report sidestepped a number of important issues: It excluded from its calculations the impact on 400,000 (two-thirds) of the nuclear cleanup workers who were exposed to some of the highest levels of radiation in 1986. Nor did it address other forms of cancer, infertility, birth defects, or immune deficiencies that are known to be caused by exposure to radiation.

Organizations that provide medical aid to the Chernobyl survivors have good reason to challenge the IAEA's latest pronouncements. This is not the first time the IAEA has tried to present itself as the ultimate authority on Chernobyl's impact and to downplay the disaster's health effects with a study that purported to be "comprehensive."

The lead author of the IAEA report, Dr. Fred Mettler, testified in July of 1993 before a U.S.

Senate Subcommittee chaired by Joseph Lieberman and Alan Simpson. At that time, Mettler claimed that his agency had concluded the most extensive studies available, and found no discernible increase in thyroid cancer in children. Senator Lieberman pressed Mettler on this issue because other witnesses at the hearing, including CCRDF's President Dr. Zenon Matkivsky, provided first-hand information from hospitals in Chernihiv, and other cities downwind from the disaster site showing alarming increases in thyroid cancer. Mettler insisted that his comprehensive study had found no such evidence.

Five weeks after that hearing, the World Health Organization (WHO) and a prestigious British science journal "Nature" shattered Mettler's credibility with a study that showed an eighty-fold increase in thyroid cancer, especially in children living in or near contaminated villages in Belarus.

The WHO report was crucial because it mobilized the international community and local activists in Ukraine and Belarus to conduct effective thyroid screenings and physician training programs to improve the treatment of this otherwise very rare form of cancer in children. Thanks to this effective international response, very few of these children died, but nearly all will have to take thyroid replacement hormone for the rest of their lives, and many of their thyroid operations damaged their vocal chords and created unsightly scars (the so-called "nuclear necklaces") that are now part of the Chernobyl legacy.

One would think that the IAEA and Dr. Mettler would have been humbled by the WHO findings. A reasonable scientist genuinely interested in public health and the advancement of knowledge concerning radiation effects would have considered the possibility, if not the likelihood, that other types of cancer might also have been caused by exposure to other radioactive elements, and that these cancers deserved a closer look.

Instead, the IAEA has deliberately limited the scope of Chernobyl studies to thyroid cancer and little else. Mettler and his cohorts have insisted that there has been no increase in leukemia in Chernobyl survivors, but this is contradicted by a Harvard Medical School study and a more recent Swedish study that have linked Chernobyl fallout to increases in leukemia even in communities in Greece and Scandinavia, that are more than 1,000 miles from the epicenter of the disaster. So it is

hard to believe that Chernobyl has not triggered more leukemia cases among Ukrainians and Belarusians who were exposed to even higher doses in the near vicinity.

But as other observers and Chernobyl specialists have noted, there have been no serious studies of other forms of cancer, and the IAEA has consistently refused to look into other rare forms of cancers among atomic workers and other survivors who were among the highest risk groups when arriving at their upbeat estimate that "only" 4,000 excess cancer deaths would ever be traced to the disaster.

When they could no longer refute the many follow-up studies that corroborated an explosion in thyroid cancer, the IAEA pursued a policy of damage control and limited the scope of further research by claiming that any other health effects were purely anecdotal and unrelated to the Chernobyl disaster. It was a neatly circular but distinctly unscientific approach: If not thyroid, then not Chernobyl. In a perversion of Christ's adage "seek and ye shall find," the IAEA has pursued a policy of "seek not or ye may regret your findings." What's worse, the IAEA has consistently carried out a virtual smear campaign against Chernobyl victims and their health workers accusing those who presented evidence of health effects of suffering from hysteria and "radiophobia."

Today, the scope of Chernobyl research needs to expand to the next generation, or the so-called "grandchildren of Chernobyl." A joint Israeli-Ukrainian study published in the journal of the Royal Society of Medicine in Great Britain found that the children born to Chernobyl liquidators had suffered a seven-fold increase in chromosome damage as compared to their siblings born prior to the Chernobyl disaster.

When a baby is in utero, even tiny doses of radiation can cause genetic damage, and the amount of radiation released by Chernobyl was hardly tiny: 185 million curies, or the equivalent of 90 Hiroshima bombs. Studies by Japanese and American scientists have examined over 30,000 newborns and stillborn fetuses in Belarus and Ukraine to review Chernobyl's impact. They have found ample evidence of rare birth defects that normally occur in only one in 100,000 or one in 1 million newborns. One study led by Dr. Yukio Sato and a team from the University of Hiroshima (1994) found that certain types of birth defects had doubled in Belarus since 1986. In particular, they noted missing or malformed critical organs, missing or extra digits, deformed limbs, severe cleft palates and other facial deformities, an increase in Downs Syndrome and other developmental disabilities. Many of these birth

defects have been documented in the 2004 Oscar-winning documentary "Chernobyl Heart."

We are very proud of the research that some of our medical colleagues have been conducting in the provinces of Rivne and Volyn with the help of a chromosome analyzer provided by CCRDF. Using protocols developed by the March of Dimes, the Ukrainian-American Center for the Prevention of Birth Defects has been tracking thousands of newborn babies, comparing the incidence of birth defects in areas that were contaminated by Chernobyl fallout with areas that were relatively unscathed. They have found disturbing increases in certain forms of birth defects, and extremely rare birth defects like otocephaly (the absence of ears and lower mandible) that normally would not occur in the absence of a very serious environmental insult.

If the IAEA were truly interested in studying rather than whitewashing Chernobyl's consequences, we would urge them to visit some of the orphanages in the villages of Tsiuropinsk, Vorzel, Zaluchya and Znamyanka where children with severe birth defects are packed into crowded dormitories and kept out of public view.

At CCRDF, we understand that even under the best of circumstances, it is very difficult to conduct reli-

able health studies without good baseline data. Ukraine and other former Soviet republics lack the financial resources and the public health infrastructure to challenge the IAEA's claims. There are also political obstacles impeding good studies.



We're proud of our little friend Ulana (right) at the Zaluchya Orphanage. Despite her inability to walk or to hold objects with her hands, she has learned how to paint by gripping a paintbrush in her teeth. She has also been blessed with a beautiful voice and she loves to sing for visitors such as last summer's Orthodox missionaries [see accompanying story page 4].

For many years, the Soviet government and its holdovers in the Ukrainian government tried to falsify and minimize the effects of Chernobyl. Physicians were prohibited from listing radiation-related illnesses as a cause of death, and public health researchers were also intimidated and urged to eliminate references to Chernobyl fallout as a factor in the rapid decline of the health of adults and children between 1991 and 2001. In Belarus, several researchers were imprisoned for reporting Chernobyl studies not favored by the Lukashenka regime.

With the advent of a more progressive leadership and greater freedom of the press in Ukraine, some public health researchers have begun to come forward with their findings, and we will be gathering some of these peer-reviewed studies in the coming months.

It is important for our readers to know that Dr. Mettler and the IAEA will not have the final word on this issue any more than they had the final word on thyroid cancer incidence in 1993. There are many eminent scientists who are already beginning to challenge the IAEA's conclusions, and the IAEA cannot speak with ultimate authority until it has made diligent, good faith efforts to examine the nuclear cleanup workers, evacuees and the next generation of children born to Chernobyl survivors.

In the meantime, CCRDF will make every effort to combat the wide range of cancers and birth defects we encounter every day in our partner hospitals. We will do everything in our power to reduce the death toll of children suffering from leukemia and cardiac defects by providing our partners with the technology and training they need to give these children a fighting chance. We are pleased and proud to report on the successes of our partners such as the Kharkiv City Children's Hospital No. 16 who have improved leukemia survival rates from 5% to 70% in the past 15 years.



In the Home for Disabled Children in Tsiuropinsk (Kherson Oblast) Nadia Kravchenko and Natalia Skrylnyk (18 years old) have produced beautiful paintings and exquisite works of art using simple natural materials such as straw, seashells and feathers from birds. Both girls suffer from a genetic condition commonly found in the children of Chernobyl survivors (reported by TIME Magazine in 1994) that left them with stunted bones in their legs and very short stature. Despite these handicaps, both girls maintain a cheerful disposition. They enjoy developing their talents and collaborating on various art projects.

At the same time, we will insist that the IAEA treat Chernobyl victims and their doctors with respect. Contrary to the offensive stereotype of self-pity and hysteria promoted by the IAEA, the patients we encounter in our orphanages and hospitals inspire us every day with their courage, their resiliency, their dignity in the face of death, their determination to live, to overcome their disabilities and to bring beauty into the world. We will not let them be dishonored.



The 2005 Mission Team spends time interacting with the children in the orphanages.

Region. This year's mission team consisted of nine students: Laryssa and Tanya Tchaikowsky of St. Vladimir Cathedral in Chicago, IL, Jared Burgan of the Holy Ascension parish in Clifton, NJ, Hans Harasimchuk and Michael Nakonachny of St. Vladimir's Cathedral in Parma, OH, Katherine Kosiv of Holy Trinity Parish in New York, NY, Jason and Eric Senedak of Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, Youngstown, OH, Katherine Holowchak, Ukrainian Catholic Diocese of Parma, OH, and Iryna Mahlay of St. Vladimir's Cathedral in Parma, and Fr. Zelinsky.



A small child in need of our collective efforts.

serious physical and mental disabilities, including Downs Syndrome, autism, a host of physical deformities and developmental problems. The Mission Team provided the children with basic physical therapy, playing and cuddling with as many children as possible, since many of them are often starved for attention from an overworked orphanage staff. The team also painted a new arts & crafts room, based on the theme "Under the Sea" from Disney's animated classic "The Little Mermaid."



Jared Burgan plays his guitar for the children.

physical therapists to help improve the quality of life for the children at each orphanage.

One of the most touching moments especially meaningful for one of the missionaries, Tanya Tchaikowsky, was an exchange with a small group of children who received gifts of icon cards with an image of the Virgin Mary. Among the children was a brilliant girl named Ulyana who was born with deformed legs and arms, but who has learned how to paint by grasping instruments and brushes in her teeth and Alina, a very young girl with Downs Syndrome who sat in Tanya's lap. Ulyana turned to Tanya and asked her to read what was written on the back of the icon card. There, written in Ukrainian, were the Beatitudes. Tanya Tchaikowsky started to read the card and could not hold back her tears. Truly, the children at Zaluchya were the poor, the meek, those who mourn their conditions. They face great hardships in their everyday lives on earth, but the Gospels have promised them that they will rejoice and great will be their reward in heaven.

The Office of Orthodox Missions reports that there are already two teams of Missionaries who have volunteered for next summer's mission trip to Ukraine. Anyone interested in joining this project is urged to contact the Consistory at (732) 356-0090 or to call CCRDF at (973) 376-5140.

Ukrainian Orthodox League's Mission Team Brings Spirituality and Healing to the Needy

Father Daniel Zelinsky does not know why he became the object of so much affection from three of the children at the Znamyanka Orphanage. As the Director of the Office for Public Relations for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in South Bound Brook, New Jersey, Fr. Zelinsky served as the spiritual director for a group of eleven young missionaries who worked in this remote orphanage in Kirovohrad Region last summer. Every day during the group's visit, Svitlana, Alyosha, and Tanya showered him with expressions of love. As he was departing, Tanya gave him a necklace with a little gold crystal and told Father Daniel that he was her friend. Moved to tears, the young priest could not believe it would be so difficult to leave this home for severely disabled children.

For two weeks, the Orthodox missionaries worked and played with the orphans, assisted the staff in their daily responsibilities, and assessed the needs of the Znamyanka facility and a second orphanage in the village of Zaluchya in the Ivano Frankivsk



2005 College Age Student Mission Team of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA.

Prior to the Mission's departure for Ukraine, His Eminence Archbishop Antony celebrated a prayer service in the Consistory Chapel and offered special prayers for the missionaries and for the success of their efforts. In his sermon, the Archbishop told the students that love has the power to transform an individual, and he predicted that their experiences in the orphanages would change their lives forever.

CCRDF's co-founder Nadia Matkiwsky thanked the missionaries for their commitment. She explained that even though these orphanages were located far from Chernobyl, the effects of radiation exposure had spread to many corners of Ukraine, as over 600,000 people assisted in the nuclear cleanup effort and many of their children suffered chromosome damage and birth defects.

In Znamyanka, nearly all 120 residents suffer from Downs Syndrome, autism, a host of physical deformities and developmental problems. The Mission Team provided the children with basic physical therapy, playing and cuddling with as many children as possible, since many of them are often starved for attention from an overworked orphanage staff. The team also painted a new arts & crafts room, based on the theme "Under the Sea" from Disney's animated classic "The Little Mermaid."

All this was made possible by generous donations from the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and from various CCRDF donors. This summer, another group of missionaries from an evangelical mission in Virginia installed a state-of-the-art playground at the Znamyanka Orphanage [see accompanying story page 6]. CCRDF has also hired special education teachers and physical therapists to help improve the quality of life for the children at each orphanage.



The loving touch of the missionaries brings much needed attention to the sick children.



Laryssa Tchaikowsky has a new friend.

Ukrainian Orthodox League Holds Another Successful Fundraiser for their Orphanages

On Saturday, October 29, 2005, the Ukrainian Orthodox League (UOL-USA) held its fifth annual fundraiser benefiting two orphanages in Ukraine, Znamyanka and Zaluchya. The evening was sponsored by the UOL Holy Ascension Clifton NJ Chapter which is celebrating 80 years of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Holy Ascension of Passaic (1925-2005) this year. Over 100 parishioners and supporters of the Fund attended the evening festivities and enjoyed dinner and dancing at the Grand Chalet in Wayne, NJ.

The merry mood of the evening was suspended for a few moments when one of the eleven youth missionaries from this year's UOL mission trip reported on his inspirational travels to UOL's two orphanages in Znamyanka and Zaluchya. Holy Ascension parishioner Jared Burgan talked about his life-defining trip to Ukraine and invited the evening's audience to visit his photo display. He urged listeners to continue supporting this vital program, whether it's through prayers, in-kind contributions, or financial donations. Mr. Burgan added, "Do not abandon these children. They are in need of our help and deserve all the aid we have to offer."

The children of the Znamyanka and Zaluchya orphanages extend their heartfelt thanks to all who support the orphanage programs. Thank you for remembering them.

(KHARKIV, continued from page 1)

leukemia treatment center should be without. The Fund also procured a centrifuge, an adjustable micro-dose calculator with eight channels, aqua-distiller, and other critical components. Our Kyiv project administrator



Thanks to a recent grant from Philip Morris, CCRDF has been able to procure binocular microscopes for Kharkiv City Children's Hospital No. 16.

Evhenia Medvedenko worked closely with our U.S. procurement director Alexa Milantych to secure the best prices possible and to maximize the impact of this program.

On September 15th, CCRDF's President Dr. Zenon Matkivsky was invited to attend a press conference in Kharkiv at which time representatives of Philip Morris and the directors of the Kharkiv CCH#16 thanked the Fund for its diligent execution of this grant. On

November 9th, CCRDF Executive Director Alex Kuzma and Ms. Medvedenko met with hospital staff in Kharkiv to plan the next steps in this exciting new partnership. Besides visiting the hematology laboratory, CCRDF monitors met with some of the children who are benefiting directly from this new technology.

Among the most poignant encounters was a little girl named Karina Izotova who at two years old has endured two major operations and is on her second round of chemotherapy. "This kid is a fighter," said her treating physician, Dr. Lydia Bilousova. "We've never seen a child this small fight this hard for her life. She wants to live."



Ruslan Lomaka, a 16-year-old leukemia survivor, returns to the Kharkiv City Children's Hospital #16 for follow-up screenings to make sure that he does not suffer a relapse. His doctors Lydia Bilousova and Larissa Semenko rejoice in his strong recovery. Ruslan is one of a growing number of children who overcame his life-threatening illness and has traveled to Vienna for a special vacation sponsored by Austrian benefactors. Since 1990, the Kharkiv CCH #16 has increased survival rates from 5% to 70%, a staggering achievement, but doctors are determined to improve survival rates even more. "These children deserve our best efforts," said Dr. Bilousova.

CCRDF representatives were impressed with the strong rapport between doctors and children and the patients' remarkably cheerful demeanor, even as they underwent what had to be very difficult and sometimes painful treatment.

Despite the progress they've made, the doctors at Kharkiv CCH#16 face enormous challenges in the months ahead. They noted a sharp increase in the number of new leukemia cases which rose by one-third just in the past year. The hospital is in dire need of a new roentgen machine as their 30-year-old Romanian-built model is on its last legs, and each year, the demand for services is increasing. (The number of patients in need has risen steadily from 1307 in 2003 to 1406 in 2004 to 1753 in just the first ten months of this year.) CCRDF hopes to negotiate a large discount on a new unit in the coming year.

As expensive and challenging as it can be to combat leukemia, the effort is well worth it. As CCRDF representatives toured the hospital late into the evening shift, they met a strapping teenager named Ruslan Lomaka who has been in long-term remission, but returns to the hospital for periodic check-ups to avoid any relapse in his disease. Earlier this year, Ruslan traveled with several other young leukemia survivors to Austria for a special vacation to celebrate his recovery. "These are the success stories that all the younger children can aspire to," said Dr. Bilousova. "We hope that all of them can travel to Austria someday."

FOUR OF CCRDF'S PARTNER HOSPITALS APPROVED FOR GRANT

The Children of Chernobyl Relief and Development Fund would like to congratulate four of our partner hospitals that have been approved in the first round of grant applications for the Hospital to Hospital Partnership Program sponsored by the Foundation Ukraine 3000. The Volynian Regional Children's Medical Center in Lutsk, the Rivne Regional Children's Hospital, the Ivano Frankivsk Regional Children's Hospital, and the Kherson Regional Children's Hospital have all been approved to participate in this historic initiative launched by the First Lady of Ukraine Kateryna Yushchenko.



In September, two members of Mrs. Yushchenko's staff, Deputy Chief of Staff Dmytro Lyapin and Medical Director Vera Pawluk traveled to Lutsk where they were deeply impressed with the achievements of our Volynian partners. Thanks to the support of the Bakum-Matushevsky

Representatives of Ukraine 3000 Foundation visited the Volynian Regional Children's Medical Center in Lutsk to see first-hand the dramatic progress that doctors have made there with the help of CCRDF. Left to right: Dr. Tatiana Vyhovska, Statistical Director Sergei Liapchenko, and Hospital Administrator Hryhory Vashchyn explain their research on thousands of newborns to Ukraine 3000 Directors Dr. Vera Pawluk and Dmytro Lyapin.

family and the John Deere Foundation, CCRDF has been able to provide a large amount of equipment to this children's medical center: neonatal respirators and a transport incubator, pulse oximeters, an ambulance, endoscopy system, transport X-ray, microscopes, and laboratory supplies. This hospital has achieved a 50% reduction in infant mortality and has been able to treat children with much more difficult pathologies from across Volyn oblast. We wish our partners every success in the next phase of their development, and we look forward to working with them in the months to come.



Our congratulations to Dr. Oksana Chopko (right) who recently became the new Chair of the Vera Matushevsky Neonatal Intensive Care Ward at the Volynian Regional Children's Medical Center. Greatly respected for her devotion to her small patients and for her encyclopedic knowledge of her field of specialization, Dr. Chopko has been able to save more children using technology purchased by CCRDF and more recently, with technology provided through a grant from the Swiss government.

Chernobyl's 20th Anniversary: The Time to Prepare is Now

Once again, we want to remind our supporters and readers of the Chronicle that on April 26, 2006, the world community will be marking the 20th Anniversary of history's worst nuclear accident. Across Europe and the United States, humanitarian organizations and environmental groups are planning to mark the event with conferences and memorial services. In Washington, DC, the Kennan Institute is planning a retrospective conference. The Ukrainian government will be hosting an international symposium from April 24-26 featuring technical, medical, and environmental experts. As part of the national observances, the Children of Chernobyl Relief and Development Fund has been working in coalition with the First Lady of Ukraine Mrs. Kateryna Yushchenko and her Foundation Ukraine 3000 to prepare a 20th anniversary conference and a commemorative concert.

We are asking our chapters and local communities to organize observances of the Chernobyl anniversary on or near April 26. The Chernobyl accident was a watershed event in human history. It marked the beginning of the end of the Soviet Union, as citizens overcame their fears of government repression and began to demand justice and accountability. Outrage over the Soviet cover-up of the disaster's consequences and the regime's failure to safeguard public health led to massive protests that shook the very foundations of the totalitarian state.

The 20th Anniversary provides a unique opportunity to remind the world that this disaster continues to have a major impact on the health and wellbeing of millions of people, especially in Belarus and Ukraine that suffered the brunt of radioactive fallout. Vast territories are still contaminated with radioactive cesium 137, a very long-lived iso-

tope that has a half-life of thirty years, so that the full impact of the disaster cannot be fully assessed until after 2016. Especially disturbing is the potential genetic damage stemming from this massive release of radioactive elements. Radiation exposure has long been established as a cause of chromosome damage and birth defects, and there is a critical need for more research and medical aid to help save the lives of children born with a wide range of anomalies.

Even small communities can have an enormous impact. Your church or community group can also bring great joy and comfort to children half a world away. During the 10th Anniversary of Chernobyl in 1996, many communities from San Diego to Boston mobilized effective actions that raised thousands of dollars for our relief mission. A simple dinner, a benefit concert, or silent auction can raise enough funds to purchase an intensive care respirator that can save dozens of babies' lives each year. By reaching out to local businesses, credit unions, and church committees, you can multiply your strength, and we can all move mountains in the years to come. We would like to also encourage Saturday Ukrainian Schools to organize a day of observance by showing CCRDF's film about Chernobyl and the aftermath. This would be a wonderful way to teach the youngest American-Ukrainian generation of the tragedy that has entered Ukraine's history.

This is a call for action, we call you to use your creative energy, to prepare events, conferences, newspaper articles, radio and television interviews, and community and church presentations. If you need tools or suggestions please do not hesitate to call our office at 973.376.5140 or e-mail us at info@childrenofchernobyl.org.



VIRGINIA CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY DONATES PLAYGROUND FOR ZNAMYANKA

Mr. David Daulton, the President of the Ukraine Adoption Group, and an outstanding group of good Samaritans from Chesapeake, Virginia, have traveled many times to Ukraine to work with physically disabled children. Mr. Daulton aims to find families for the disabled children in order to provide them with a quality of life equivalent to that of a normal child. Through his generosity and his group of good Samaritans, they have recently delivered and installed a state-of-the-art playground for the children at the Znamyanka Orphanage in the Kirovohrad Oblast. This playground was especially designed for children with limited mobility and physical disabilities. A portion of the playground's transportation fees were covered by the Ukrainian Orthodox League of the USA under the direction of His Eminence Archbishop Antony. In addition, CCRDF received a \$5,000 grant from the Cargill Corporation to cover the costs of a roof and padded ground cover for the playground. We thank the UOL, the Ukrainian Adoption Group, and the Cargill Corporation for their humanitarian support of the disabled orphans in Ukraine.



Present at the ribbon-cutting ceremony were (right to left) Ukraine Adoption Group President David Daulton, Director of Znamyanka Orphanage Tatiana Ivanivna Volko, and the Vice President of Children and Youth Services for the Kirovograd Region.



Znamyanka children playing and enjoying their brand-new, donated playground for disabled children. Thanks to David Daulton's efforts, the Znamyanka children are experiencing a bit of America in their own backyard.



Self-Reliance Ukrainian Federal Credit Union with the help of the local Rotary Club and the Kodak Corporation.

Diana Diadchenko, a 13-year-old girl from the village of Hrybinka in Poltava Province, has shown great talent as a painter and graphic artist. As she undergoes a difficult round of chemotherapy at the Poltava City Children's Hospital she turns to her artwork as a way to take her mind off her treatment and to bring some joy to the people around her. Diana is shown with her treating physician Dr. Olha Khokhlova (left) and her art therapist, Dr. Tetiana Sipko. Chief Doctor of the Poltava Hospital Dr. Lyudmila Ponomarenko prides herself on the improving survival rates in her hospital, both in the cancer ward and in the neonatal intensive care unit. Next spring, CCRDF hopes to provide more aid to this hospital with funds raised by community activists in Rochester, New York, and the Rochester

CCRDF Welcomes Additions to the Kyiv Office Staff

Marta Stecyk (right) is an aspiring attorney who will receive her law degree from the University of Warsaw in Poland before returning to her hometown of Lviv where she has been active in the democratic student movement. Marta played an important role in preparation for last spring's gala benefit concert featuring Eurovision star Ruslana at the Arena City in Kyiv. Fluent in Ukrainian, English, Polish and Russian, Marta brings great energy to her task. She will be helping CCRDF coordinate our Ukrainian Mobile Communications (UMC) grant in the provinces of Lviv, Chernivtsi, and Zakarpattia.



Viktoria (Vika) Pavlotska (left) was born in Mongolia where she lived for four years until her parents returned to their hometown in Brody, Western Ukraine. Vika received her Bachelor of Arts from Montclair State College in New Jersey. This fall, Vika moved to Kyiv with her husband Gregory, who is working for the Ukrainian office of DeLoitte & Touche. As a hard-working volunteer, Vika helped us to prepare the highly successful fundraising reception at the residence of U.S. Ambassador John Herbst. She has also been working with Dnipropetrovsk City Children's Hospital No. 3 to plan the next steps in our strategic partnership.



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