

News From GHT



By Nita Hanson

TWENTY YEARS IN UKRAINE

“Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house to a land that I will show you.” (Genesis 12:1)

When the Lord sent me to Ukraine 20 years ago, I thought it was for one year. Who could have thought or imagined all that He had in mind – certainly not I! What began as a ministry with just me and an interpreter has grown to one with a staff of 16 Ukrainians and one American pastor. And we have spread to many different cities in Ukraine through the training of Ukrainian churches and Christian organizations who want to share in the work of God's Hidden Treasures. (GHT)

More than 5,000 mobility aids have been personally given to disabled people with the commitment to continue to minister to their physical and spiritual needs; children from three State-run orphanages in Bila Tserkva are being taught the Bible and receiving love and hope through GHT's wonderful staff; many stroke victims are walking again through our Stroke Rehabilitation Program; diabetics are receiving better care through our medical efforts; caregivers are finding much encouragement through our Caregiver's Support Groups; children and young adults with special needs are being ministered to through our summer camps and on-going programs; the hungry are being fed; home visits are made to hundreds of shut-in's, bringing a message of God's love; and more. It would take me many pages to describe all that God has done (and continues to do.)

One of my greatest joys during these 20 years has been watching the growth of GHT's staff. To see them being the ones to minister in Jesus' name, reaching out with love and caring, and taking ownership of the ministry is a gift beyond compare.



The day of my 20th anniversary in Ukraine began with a delivery of a beautiful bouquet of flowers and a card which said that I needed to be ready to be picked up at 4:00 to be taken to a special event!

At 4:00, I was picked up and taken to a beautiful restaurant on the river where my staff was waiting for me. They quickly encircled me and gave me lots of hugs. We spent a magical evening together as each one shared their memories of coming to GHT and all that God has done in their lives since then.

As for me – I have no words to describe the overwhelming sense of God's blessings as He has allowed me to be a part of all of this. I am truly humbled! None of this would have happened without your prayers, financial support and desire to see God's love spread throughout the world. I thank you with all my heart. Together may we continue to reach out with God's love to those hurting and hopeless of the world!



There Goes My Hero By Pastor Scott Yount

Our 2016 camp for children with special needs in Ukraine touched the hearts of the children and mothers who attended in many ways. Our American team from the Sending Place shined the love of Christ onto these families in a way that glorified the Lord and brought hope and joy to every person in camp. Every team member did an awesome job, and the love and sacrifice poured out by their team leader, will be remembered by these families forever.

Diana Oldfield led her fifth team to Ukraine this summer. But as many of you know, this year was very different from the rest. Diana was diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) last year. The disease has already made it difficult for Diana to speak and has slowed down her walking and stability on her feet. Yet, when the doctor broke the news that she has an incurable disease that is generally fatal within a few years, her first question was whether or not she'd be able to go to Ukraine on her mission trip.



Facing all this adversity, Diana and her team thrived at camp. The team was united, always helping one another and putting others first. Diana participated fully in the camp, joining in the songs, games of duck, duck, goose, our infamous water battle, and she even smashed some raw eggs on her head in a game of egg roulette!



Although she is losing her speech, she spoke about Christ's love for these kids, and even more, she was a living example of it. She showed her willingness to sacrifice, and to face great challenges so she could come and spend time with these children and their moms.

Even after camp, Diana was such a trooper as it seemed every person we went to deliver a wheelchair to, happened to live on the 5th floor in a building with no elevator. Yet, she made her way up those stairs and shared her love with every person we visited.

Diana was an encouragement and inspiration to so many on this trip. She is truly glorifying God with every day that she has here on earth. She is a hero to Nita and me, to the American team, and to the whole camp. Thank you so much for coming to Ukraine!

The Gift of Serving By Alesy Pech

Three years ago God called me to go on a mission trip to Ukraine, but little did I know that it wasn't going to happen until July 2016. For as long as I have walked with God I have known that God's timing is perfect, but my trip to Ukraine made that even more obvious. This was the perfect season for me to learn what God wanted to teach me. And oh, did the Lord want to teach me. One of the biggest things that God taught me was the importance of relationships within everyday life and within ministry. But one thing He made clear was how love had to be in the middle of it all.



Impact Team with Nita

God's Hidden Treasures is all about relationships. It is beautiful, really, to see how much time they put into knowing the people they are working with. The people they minister to are really God's "hidden treasures." Most of the people my team and I met were incredibly lonely, however, the love that GHT shows them has impacted them greatly. I have no doubt in my mind and heart that the reason they are so touched is because GHT shows them God's love through long-term relationships.



Making a Home Visit



Serving at the Picnic

Before this trip I struggled with emotional and spiritual loneliness for quite some time. So it was refreshing to meet Anya, one of the volunteers who helped my team and me with VBS at the Boys' House.

I felt like I could be my excited, affectionate little self with Anya and that is something I don't feel towards just anyone. She really brought joy and love to my heart in the week that I got to spend with her. A part of me felt like I could relate to her, and it is something that I am still trying to understand. She made me feel loved and important. The funniest thing of all... we could only exchange a few simple sentences because of the language barrier so we didn't get to know each other well. I believe it is because of love that I felt the way I did. I imagine that is exactly what the people GHT has helped and established relationships with feel.



Alesy



Anya

The Gift of Serving, continued

Katie at the Picnic

My team also had some very lovely experiences with relationships. This trip was Katie Wright's fourth time to Ukraine. Keeping this in mind she has definitely had the time to get to know these people. It was beautiful to see how people remembered her, and in return she remembered them, which I am sure meant a lot to both parties. The relationships that Katie has established with the people of Ukraine seem so natural even with the language barriers.



Joanne Stone said, "A relationship that touched my heart was that between Uri and the boys in one of the groups. On his own he took on a protective yet very gentle relationship with those boys helping them when they needed guidance. One morning in story time two of the boys with Downs were sitting next to each other and started to do a little shoving. Uri got up very quietly and helped another boy move a chair between the boys and that completely solved the problem. It was a beautiful interaction in that it was gentle and respectful to the two boys and done quietly without disturbing the classroom. God has given Uri a leadership ability that is kind and very capable and the other boys respond."



Joanne and Uri

Another team member, Karen Greenslate, said, "Mother Teresa wrote that prayer is God's language that connects us to God and connects us in spirit to each other." Karen said that when she came to Bila Tserkva, and saw the staff and outreach of GHT, she was amazed and inspired. She wondered, with so much need, and so many people to help or reach, how do they know where to go next? They always start with prayer, seeking God's direction!



Karen and Tonya

Karen was so happy to meet Tonya, the woman on Nita's staff who leads the ministry of prayer, and who also leads worship with song and prayer. She leads teams that help people in need, goes to pray for boys at Boy's House, and builds relationships with those who need to know more about God's love for them. Tonya doesn't speak English and Karen spoke no Ukrainian, yet they found a connection in praying together and with others. Nita, Karen, Tonya and Alesy prayed over the grounds before the city-wide picnic in the park for the disabled started. Karen and Tonya told each other (with sign language) that they were 'soul mates.' As

Karen says, "I am so happy to be a friend in Christ of Tonya's. Truly I could see Jesus through Tonya." Karen told Tonya that she is committed to continue praying for her and for the prayer ministry of GHT.

(For a wonderful video of Impact's trip, see Sandy Dinkler's report on Impact's 2016 trip under Scott's Blog on our website: godshiddentreasures.org)



You Need to Do Something By Pastor Scott Yount

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God continues to do more than we could ever hope or imagine. Once again Ascension Lutheran Church in Waterloo, Iowa sponsored our 2nd camp, but this year they also sent a mission team to help with our worship songs, Bible studies, crafts, skits and more. They joined with our team of Ukrainian volunteers to help form an international "Super Team"!! I can't say enough about this team and how God used them in amazing ways. Nothing brings more joy to my heart than seeing these volunteers, many of whom were former campers of ours, give back to help people with disabilities in Ukraine.



Every team member, Ukrainian and American, brought something special to this camp. But having us all united together in prayer, worship and service was a glimpse of heaven, where all nations will come together to worship our Lord Jesus Christ. Their efforts and ideas made this camp better. Because of them we had a post office box where kids were writing each other encouraging notes every day. It was their idea to have a secret friend day at camp. The kids were so excited about trying to guess who their secret friend was. Most of them had no clue, because our campers were like gift giving ninjas. Here you can see all the hugs when people found out who their secret friends were!



The smiles on the faces of our campers were priceless. Our message to them was that they are all treasures to God, a treasure that God was willing to purchase at any price, even that of his son Jesus Christ. Take a look at these beautiful treasures.



You Need to Do Something, continued

The smile on Yura's face as he was being pushed by Pastor Len in a game of duck, duck goose is one I'll never forget. Perhaps the only image that was seared into my mind more than these smiles, was watching them sing with all their hearts every night as we sang camp songs and praise songs in Ukrainian and Russian and English.



There were so many amazing highlights from this camp, as well as our camp with the Sending Place and our VBS with Impact this summer. However, there was one quote that one of our volunteers, Slava, shared with Pastor Len that really speaks to all of us. Slava helped volunteer at last year's camp as well, and he said that when he first saw these kids, he just began crying, and he felt God say to him, "What good are your tears, how will those help anybody? You need to do something."

Slava, (here in the hat) was always the first one up and ready to help anytime chairs or a table needed to be moved, or the kids needed to be taken from one place to another. His actions were that of a servant and his quote speaks to every one of us: that we can look at the needs of this world, the problems across the globe and have our hearts break and fill with compassion, but ultimately we need to do something about it. In James 2:15-16 says "if a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?"

Jesus Christ, saw us dead in our sin, alone and separated from God, and his heart broke, and he went into action. Coming into this world, he lived his life as a servant, giving



his own life so that we could be reconciled with God, and have eternal life. Our faith in Christ and this gift we have received calls us into action. And I'm thankful to all these volunteers who came, who put their faith into action, and for all the churches who have helped support God's ministry here in Ukraine. And I would encourage all of you to think: What is God calling me to do?



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God's Hidden Treasures is a ministry that serves the needs of the poor, the disabled and the orphaned of Ukraine and brings God's love through personal relationships in the name of Jesus Christ.