

SPECIAL VISITS AND PROVISION

The end of April and May saw several special visitors to Camp of the Good Shepherd. Chairman of the HHMI Board of Directors, Dr. Scott Packham and a friend of his Mr. Bart Tilly visited for a week to provide encouragement and support. The following exerpt is shared from Dr. Packham:

“Greetings from Camp of the Good Shepherd! I have spent a week with these lovely and strong Ukrainian people and have been so impressed with the ‘village’ they have created together here. On Saturday night we gathered the teens for a night in Sibiu, where we all enjoyed pizza and ice cream. There was laughter in the van all the way home. Sunday the entire crew piled into the vans to attend church followed by a picnic at a beautiful park. It is so amazing to see the love shown by the church here. They have provided a zoom app to translate the service into Ukrainian and invited them into their homes for Easter last week and welcomed them into their church family.

Although there are smiles and fellowship, all of them show constant stress thinking about what is happening back in Ukraine. The women talk and face-time with their husbands daily. One of them told me today that her husband agreed with her that they may have to stay here for a long time. I think as a whole they are starting to share that feeling.

We have made it clear that Heart of Hope’s commitment is to give them a safe place to stay for as long as it is necessary, provide for their needs, and help them to get home when the time comes. We all hope and pray that time will come soon. Your gifts are reaching those most in need here and are truly providing loving care in the name of Christ. Mr. Tilly and I will head back to the States after our quick week of service here with these dear refugees ever remaining in our prayers. Thank you Heart of Hope friends and partners for your prayers, care, and generosity.”

- Sincerely, Scott



There have been numerous Romanians that have also blessed our refugees – here are just two:



At Left: Fundatia Heart of Hope’s insurance broker, Dani and his family, provided a generous donation of food staples to get our refugees started!

At Right: When it was challenging to transport the boys to the barber – Mr. Marius came to camp!



It is the wish of the refugees to pass on their gratefulness for all who are providing for their safety and security. They are mindful that ultimately it is the Lord providing for them, but they want to thank those that are contributing and have loved them from afar. The wives also say thank you from their husbands who are so grateful for the safety of their families which provides peace and strength for them.

Thank You again for your generosity of treasure and prayers for all we serve in need in Romania.

Yours in Partnership,

Debbie and your
HHMI Board



JUNE UKRAINIAN REFUGEE UPDATE...AND MORE!



Pictured at left is a small sampling of the refugees who have been cared for at Camp of the Good Shepherd due to your generous donations. This photo was taken in the Sibiu City Center in April.

Each family has their own harrowing and courageous story. On the following pages I will highlight several of their stories and will continue to provide updates on Heart of Hope’s Facebook and Instagram pages, please follow if you would like to receive the most current updates.

I will return to Romania June 14th – so look for current updates soon!

While the last 3 months has seen HHMI respond to the Ukraine crisis we have also continued with our regularly scheduled ministry – albeit a bit hybrid at times! April saw us provide our annual ‘Gift from the Heart’ Easter program to the children in the Placement Centers. Gifts of shampoo, shower gels, deodorants, some toys, and a beloved chocolate treat were given to all the Centers in Sibiu plus one in Brasov County to remind the children how dearly they are loved by a Savior willing to die and rise again for them.

At each place the children were well aware of the war and the refugee situation. The ‘will we go to camp this year?’ question came quickly, and it was nice to see that the children understood that we would probably have to do camp differently this year. The first week of Camp will be Turnu Rosu starting June 27th. We will do 4 days of day camp at the Center and then a whole day out at Camp on Friday. The refugee response is ‘fluid’ and so following weeks will be much of the same as a hybrid response for our usual campers. Please pray for hearts to be blessed under every circumstance. Many of you have been so generous for the refugees we ask you once again dear friends to consider a special donation for general camp donations. With sincerest gratitude!



REFUGEE STORIES FROM
CAMP OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD
SOME OF OUR FIRST REFUGEES
THAT ARRIVED IN MARCH

Each person has a unique story, but their common experience is escaping with their lives from the war. Each adult had to make the choice to run to the unknown. None of them knew where they would land; they only knew they wanted to save their children. This week they have arrived to us in 3 different groups on 3 different days. They all arrived completely exhausted. They all have been welcomed to the safety and refuge of camp and are so very thankful and aware of God's provision for them.

The eldest man is Mr. Anatoley. Mr. Anatoley and his wife, daughter, and 2 grandsons decided to leave after their neighbor's apartment was bombed. He showed me the destruction, shrapnel and the bomb pieces. They grabbed what they could carry and got on buses headed towards the border. One of the boys carried his beloved guitar - his most precious possession - all of the way. After 3 days of travel, they landed at Camp of the Good Shepherd. They are catching their breath; they are relieved to be safe and in such a wonderful place. Their son-in-law (their daughter's husband and the boys' father) had to stay. As with all of our families, their phones are life-lines to keep contact and ease worried hearts. Mr. Anatoley and his wife Valentina have invited me to their city in Ukraine in July of 2023 to celebrate their 50th anniversary!



Our youngest refugee is shy Victor, he did not want his picture taken today! He is pictured with his dear mom, Ala. Ala's story touched my heart in a special way as I am also an only child. Ala and her husband were living in Crimea until the war in 2014 - they left everything and ran from there to start a new life not too far outside of Kiev, living with her mother. This past year her mother and her only brother died, leaving Ala with no other family except her husband. This war has now separated them. They live in a small village and her husband normally commutes about 30 minutes to the city to be able to work. As of this writing, he has not been able to leave their village for 3 weeks. Ala told me today that she is worried that he will run out of food. Like so many of the wives and mothers, she told me how comforted her husband is to know that she and Victor are safe and have all they need. Ala and I find each other each day, we pray for her husband in our different languages, we cry, we embrace.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS!



The first week of April we celebrated Mr. Anatoley's (our oldest refugee at 74) and Victor's (our youngest refugee at 3) birthdays!

In the midst of immense tragedy, heartache, and loss it is good to find moments of joy, moments of human celebration.



A MOTHER'S LOVE
CONTINUED REFUGEE
STORIES FROM APRIL



Pictured at Left is Olga with her son Daniel and daughters Anastasia and Alexandra. Olga thought she could wait out the war, maybe it wouldn't come to her town. Even after the electricity had been out for 6 days, she still had hoped that things might return to normal. The sirens seemed distant until the day a missile came through her neighbor's house. It was late in the day and the terrible blast crashed through her neighbor's house and violently shook their home. The missile had not fully detonated and so neighbors went outside to get a closer view. Her neighbor man's foot touched it and then it blew off his leg. Shrapnel lodged in another neighbor's leg, requiring amputation and severely damaged another neighbor's arm. The sirens started coming in waves, terrifying flashes of explosions bombarded their windows. Olga's house does not have a basement and she and her husband gathered their children, laying over them, underneath a spiral staircase in their home. As they huddled together, uncontrollably shaking and crying...she realized she had stayed too long. She had never meant to put her children in harm, she had never wanted to see them shake uncontrollably with fear as she was. As darkness approached, she knew it was too late to start driving. Olga prayed and cried out to God to spare their

lives and she would pack what she could in their car and begin driving at 6:00am. They had not been out of their house for 3 weeks during the war and she didn't realize how badly damaged the roads would be and she didn't know where they would land, only that they had to GO. With no sleep from the night before they departed their home as the sun came up with their beloved dog 'Foxy' in tow. They had to say a tearful goodbye to their husband and father. Olga could not convince her parents to go with them; though in their 70's and eligible to leave, they said "we were born in Ukraine, we have lived here all our lives and we would rather die here than go." So, this brave mother started her trek at 6:00am and finally landed in Bucharest at 1:00am the next day, having driven 19 hours and begging her children to keep talking to her so she wouldn't fall asleep. After a night in Bucharest, one of our partners sent them to Camp of the Good Shepherd! Olga bravely brought her children to safety, a mother's love not to be denied. Olga is an English teacher and has been such a blessing since they arrived, helping in every manner of translation. They have all settled in and are beginning to acclimate to the serenity and peace at Camp.

Olga and many of our moms watch their phones for any news from husbands, fathers, and loved ones. Some want to watch and know every news detail about the war and others can only look for a while before needing to take a break. Several of our refugees are from Mykolaiv and Odessa and if you have been following the news you know there has been much destruction there. The largest water provider for Mykolaiv was destroyed mid April and it is a serious concern to our refugees.

At Right: Nina and her 16-year-old daughter Tatiana were in our last group that arrived in April. They too fled not knowing where they would end up. As each refugee tells me so many similar stories, the most common thread I am able to see as an outsider is the hand of God's protection on them, His care and bringing them to this safe refuge.

Nina couldn't thank me enough for providing this safe place so she can truly tell her husband they are fine. She does not want him to worry, only to focus on his duties as a soldier in the Ukrainian army and to be safe. When they are able - video chat is their lifeline to comfort each other.

