

Dear TUCA members,

Merry Christmas and Happy 2009 New Year!

As the 2008 Humanitarian Director for TUCA I wanted to send you a little update on the humanitarian activities that were made possible by you this year. As you gather with your family around the Christmas dinner table please remember that you were a part of making someone else's life joyful.



Since my regular job at Operation Blessing (OBI) is directly related to humanitarian aid in Ukraine (I manage Orphan's Promise, a special project helping orphans and vulnerable children around the world (for info check out www.orphanspromise.org), last Christmas I spent at the Berdyansk orphanage in Ukraine.

Among other things there, I was on a mission from TUCA, delivering gifts from TUCA members.

Remember the Shoemaker Orphans Choir children for whom TUCA organized the St. Nicholas party three years ago? The one where Wally was such a great "chortyk" at?

Even though many of the children that were at that party are already in America (adopted into families, and some may even come to this year's TUCA Christmas party), many are still in the orphanage and clearly remember the great celebration TUCA members put on for them in 2005. Some have already aged out of the orphanage and are now a part of our Training Center for Orphans, where they are learning English, computers and Life Skills.

These children and the others at the orphanage were very thankful that Ukrainians abroad do not forget them and care enough to send them gifts. Through the generous donation from TUCA we were able to get sweat suits for all 300 children in the orphanage. Through our connection with OBI's Orphan's Promise and Samaritan's Purse, we were able to also make a real holiday for the kids with fruits and sweets they don't usually get, as well as get each child a shoebox filled with toys and gifts.

The orphans asked to be taken to America again or at least to tell you all to come and visit them there... If only it all was so easy... For now, please, receive their warm greetings and sincere thanks.

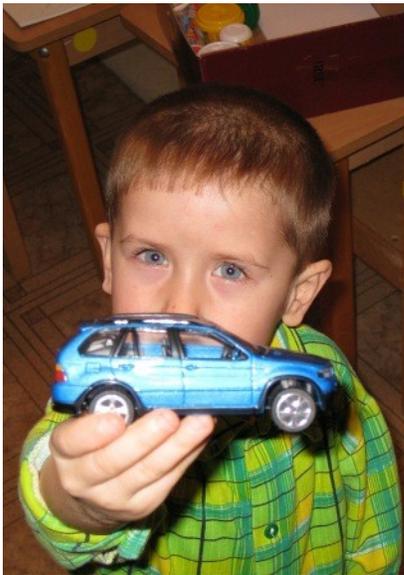




This summer at the TUCA picnic TUCA members have organized a fundraiser to build a playground in a baby orphanage in Ukraine in memory of Zina Grynewytsch. Through our connection with OBI's Orphan's Promise we received a grant of \$4,500 to add to the raised funds and now the website of the organization that is providing the playground states:

The Kremenchuk Baby Orphanage playground will be built in the name of Zinaida Grynewytsch, a Kremenchuk Baby Orphanage grandmother and native Ukrainian born in the Vinnitska oblast. The playground for Kremenchuk is now fully funded at \$11,000 thanks to the many generous donors.

http://www.orphansbrightstar.org/projects/2008/playgrounds_for_development.htm



Ukrainians have always been very caring, kind and compassionate and it has been such a joy for me to serve as a humanitarian director for TUCA, with people who do not only remember their heritage, but also strive to make a difference in the lives of other Ukrainians, especially the unfortunate children who were abandoned and left without parental care.



With this letter I am enclosing a DVD of one of my recent trips to Ukraine. This was made as a trip report to show my co-workers the work OBI is doing in Ukraine, but I think it is an appropriate report for TUCA, as well, since our organization has been an important contributor to OBI's work in Ukraine (Bill Horan, the President of OBI, was an honorary speaker at our 10th year Anniversary Banquet, and TUCA has contributed to several projects conducted by OBI in Ukraine, as well as OBI has contributed to the projects initiated by TUCA). Please, don't judge me too harshly- this is my first amateur attempt at videography ☺, but I hope you will like seeing Ukraine, especially if you yourselves haven't been there lately.

Merry Christmas to you again and, please, continue to be a blessing to others around you, and may your generosity be repaid to you a hundredfold in the New Year 2009.

See you all at the Christmas Party!

Nataliya Khomyak