

January, 2013

Dear friends,

Our trip to Brenna's Home in Lutsk earlier this month causes us to echo Paul's words in Philippians 4:4, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" We have much to be thankful for - there are twelve children living full-time at Brenna's Home, and they function very well together as a family unit! What a joy to meet the four new children in person (Sasha, 15, Vova, 10, Dima, 8, and Zhenya,7), and to see how well they have adjusted and been accepted by the other children. There are certainly different dynamics now with five energetic boys between seven and eleven.



The girls are now outnumbered by 2 to 1, but they seem very happy and content to be able to share one room as "sisters". Sasha has assumed the role of "big sister" quite well.



We again enjoyed the opportunity to be there for their Christmas, which falls on January 7. They certainly enjoyed the cards and presents which were sent by many people. They also enjoyed opening the boxes of clothes, pillows, and towels we had shipped the month before. Thanks to those who supplied new towels and pillows for Brenna's Home-they were needed!!

Kolya, will be 19 in February, and is in his second year of college. He was happy with a suit and tie.



Vanya, 17, is studying in cooking school. You can see how proud he is of the hat and coat from the Culinary Institute of America, sent by one of his sponsors.



Just as we found it much more difficult to spend time with each one of the children, it is also difficult to write about each one, without many pages. So we must capture highlights. Certainly our family time together in the main room at the end of each day was a highlight. We had a short devotional and then prayed together before saying goodnight.



The tree was set up in the downstairs balcony.



It was exciting to see the two new balconies and the staircase connecting the two apartments. It turned out so much better than we ever would have expected, essentially adding two more rooms (and heated). It really makes it feel like a HOME.



The finished staircase...



Upstairs

We had the opportunity to visit with Halya, her husband, Sasha, and their 6-month old son. Halya is now 22 and was one of the first children to come to live in Brenna's Home in 2005.



They asked us to participate in a two-day outreach program sponsored by their church in a different part of the city. It was nice meeting some new people and expanding our horizons in Lutsk.



Another "first" this trip was meeting the Director of Children's Services for the city of Lutsk. He is instrumental in sending children our way, as he sees the type of facility we have and the care the children receive. He also helped obtain the necessary approvals from the mayor for our "building project". We were happy to have the opportunity to meet and thank him for his help.



We were able to distribute shoeboxes sent for the Tabitha Children by Hyde Park Baptist Church. This was also a highlight for Emily Nargi, who accompanied us on the trip.



#### UPCOMING DATES

We will be doing a short presentation of our trip at New Beginnings Church, Poughkeepsie, on Sunday Feb. 17 at the 8:30 and 11:00 AM services. Also, a formal fundraiser is scheduled for Saturday, April 27, from Noon-3:00PM, at the Poughkeepsie Grand Hotel.

Summer Camp Mission Trip is being scheduled for the second half of July. Specific dates to be announced soon.

Please visit our website and Facebook page for more information and for lots more pictures and videos from our trip.

Thanks to all of you for participating in this effort to provide stability for these children. Together we are making a huge difference in their lives!

With Love, Rich and Donna