



## The Brenna Engle Foundation

January 29, 2014

Dear friends,

The last two months have been full of activity for the Brenna Engle Foundation, both In Ukraine, and also with Rich's trip to Ethiopia. We have experienced many blessings, but have also been having significant challenges. As I am sure most of you realize, the political situation in Ukraine is extremely unsettled, and we pray that as future events unfold, there will be minimal violence and bloodshed, and that people will come to agreements through compromise. Depending on how things get resolved, it is possible we could see some impacts on our work relative to travel and money issues. We pray that this will not be the case. Please read further to see our Ethiopia report.

### Brenna's Home - UKRAINE

We last communicated in December about the Mayor of Lutsk visiting Brenna's Home and here is a picture of that visit:



This photo was posted by the Mayor of Lutsk on his Facebook wall from a visit to Brenna's Home on December 19. It says " this courageous women, a resident of our city, Valentyna Yankovska, has taken on raising all these children after raising two of her own. Honor and praise! " The mayor is on the left. They also presented Brenna's Home with a new washing machine. Congratulations, Valya!

### Two New Boys!!

We are excited to have two additions to Brenna's Home during December. Vitalik, age 14, arrived the week of December 16 and Vanya, age 13, arrived the following week. Both of these boys have come

to us after living in an orphanage setting. So far, they seem to be having a smooth adjustment.



Vitalik likes art. Here he is showing a drawing he made. He also received his new quilt from one of our retired friends who has made one for every child at Brenna's Home!



This is our new Vanya showing some Christmas presents he received. (Since we have two boys named Vanya, this one we will refer to as Vanya C.) We greatly need several sponsors for each of the new boys. (Contact us...)

Below is the first picture we have of all 14 "brothers and sisters" now at Brenna's Home. This photo was taken last week after the last of the Christmas boxes arrived in Lutsk.



Dima is opening a gift from one of his sponsors.





Each of the children received two specially handmade flannel pillowcases from one of our faithful supporters!

The children are healthy and are growing. Please continue to pray for the housemothers for wisdom and strength for the challenges of each day. We look forward to visiting them, yet we have not made plans to go to Ukraine until the political situation stabilizes.



### Brenna's Hope - Ethiopia

We have decided to call our work in Ethiopia "Brenna's Hope", as it characteristically fits for the work we anticipate being involved in. We do not foresee establishing a home similar to that in Ukraine, because it is not as consistent with cultural ideas and practice in Ethiopia. Our emphasis will be on supporting vulnerable teens, children, and families, while attempting to maintain existing family structures. This is "hope" that we can provide! There are some possibilities for supporting "created families", but we see our work there evolving over time.

While there, Rich met with numerous individuals and organizations already working on projects or with interest in developing projects. We anticipate working in several different areas of the country, and with a variety of humanitarian and church groups. The need is tremendous everywhere, at times overwhelming, because everyone is seeking help and support. Our challenge will be seeking discernment in how we can use resources most effectively to create the maximum benefit - not to create dependency and a feeling of entitlement, but to work strategically in situations where support, training, and rehabilitation can help to break seemingly hopeless cycles of poverty. Again, we believe our call is not to address the whole problem, but to make the differences in as many lives as possible through the support we raise.

### Our Ethiopia work has begun!

We are working with Hope Community Services in Northern Ethiopia to provide monthly support for vulnerable high school girls to complete their education. In this region of Ethiopia, many of these girls walk two hours or more EACH WAY to attend high school. This means they face dangers while walking in darkness, and also makes it difficult for them to complete their studies. Consequently they may drop out of school and are frequently used as wives for arranged marriages, even as young as ages 13 to 17. If this happens and they become pregnant, they face challenges with childbirth because their bodies are not fully developed. This may result in a condition known as [fistula](#).

We anticipate working directly with fistula victims for pre- and post-surgical support and training. Our initial work, though, focuses on PREVENTION-keeping these girls in school and helping them learn about the importance of finishing their education. We are initially providing for support for 10 girls at \$25 per month, which enables them to live closer to school, or to take transportation to school, minimizing the time they spend walking on roads.

Here are two girls I met that are already participating in the program through Hope Community Services:



Rigbe,(left) is in 9th grade and has a 2-hour walk each way. She is using sponsor money to use taxis to get to school (at \$1/day). Tsirha (right) is in 11th grade and despite a 3-hour walk each way (1 hour walk with a taxi), she has a 3.8 average in school. Tsirha also has an eye condition, strabismus (lazy eye) which is easily corrected by surgery. The Brenna Engle Foundation is covering the cost of her eye surgery (\$200!!).

This is one of Rich's favorite photos from the trip, with all the friends he met while in Debre Zeit:



You can view Rich's favorite photos from the trip here:

[Central Ethiopia Pictures](#)

[Northern Ethiopia Pictures](#)

### Future Plans for Ethiopia

1. We will focus on sponsorships for vulnerable high school girls to stay in school (fistula prevention and break the poverty cycle). The girls are identified through the high schools, based on criteria we provide. These girls are then selected through the local government Women and Children Services by applying a prioritization scheme provided by Hope Community Services. This program is in its infancy and has the potential to grow exponentially, so we will need all the support possible to make it a success.
2. As funding enables us, we will provide support for fistula victims through Hope Community Services. They have a facility which can be used to house these girls before corrective surgery, to strengthen them physically for 1-4 weeks. After surgery, they would return to the facility for recuperation, rehabilitation, and hopefully vocational training and skill development to learn ways to be self-supporting.
3. We have preliminary plans to work in 3 or 4 different cities in Central Ethiopia, through several different church organizations including Meserete Kristos (Anabaptist, Mennonite), Mekane Yesus Church (Lutheran), and the Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia. These will be finalized and developed as specific details are worked out. Of course, all the work will depend on the level of support we can raise.

These children became near and dear to my heart in such a short period of time. I can't wait to see them again and for them to meet Donna!



### Brenna Engle Foundation Fundraiser - May 3, 2014

We have established the date for our formal fundraiser in the Mid-Hudson Valley. It will be on Saturday, May 3, 2014, from 12 Noon - 3:00PM at the Poughkeepsie Grand Hotel. We will be communicating more about this shortly.

A verse that has been impressed upon me recently is 1 Thessalonians 5:24, "The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it." In context, this refers to the God of peace sanctifying, or making us holy, through and through. Meaning that as God calls to be made more like Him, He will give us the power to do what He calls us to do, as we continue to respond to His direction in our lives. It is not what we do, but what we allow Him to do through us...

We always appreciate those who remember and support us on a regular basis, and those who contribute as they feel led. Together, we are building up the character of children who otherwise would have little hope. The life we offer them is truly a New Life, and we are privileged to be used in this way.

If you desire to participate in the future of underprivileged children, please send a tax-deductible contribution to the Brenna Engle Foundation, 3 Albert Road, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603.

Another important way that you can participate is to share our work with family, friends, your church, and various organizations with which you may be associated.

Blessings to you! Love, Rich and Donna

On the web [www.brennaenglefoundation.org](http://www.brennaenglefoundation.org)

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Brenna-Engle-Foundation/101419966565747>

Youtube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Ah0gHE6eLM>

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Rich and Donna Engle

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