



WISCONSIN BRANCH

Quarterly Newsletter

Relief for Human Need Worldwide

February 2023 - Volume 19 - Issue 1

I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you. - John 14:18



SPECIAL UKRAINE UPDATE



TO OUR FAITHFUL OGT FAMILY,

Another year has come and gone, and we are almost halfway through the month of February!! Time continues to fly by, and the world continues to cry out for Hope. It seems like we cannot get our aid out the door fast enough. We must stop and pause as we move into this New Year and thank our Lord and Savior for blessing us with such an incredible group of volunteers and supporters!! In 2022 the WI – Orphan Grain Train sent almost 45 loads of aid out our door. It's truly amazing and most importantly, we could not do what we do, without you!! So, thank you for your partnership with us, as we bring Hope to the world around us. We indeed have a good, good Father who continues to look after His needy children by using us as His hands and feet. What an honor and privilege He has given us to be part of His kingdom work!!

When the Ukraine war started early in March, we all came together with one mission in mind and that was to get help and aid to a people who were literally, battling for their lives. Within hours of the newscasts on this war, you were calling to see what could be done and how you could help. Diapers, hygiene, trauma kits, tourniquets, military boots, needed medical items, funding for support towards needed food and other necessities poured in!! It literally brought us to tears, your generosity and love for this precious people was above and beyond. Hebrews 6:10 says: ...He, Jesus, will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped His people and continue to help them. And I too say, neither will we. Our hearts will be forever touched by your gracious generosity and your continued support to the different causes and needs of the WI - Orphan Grain Train! The stories of the Ukraine were heart breaking and truly still are. We are devoting this Newsletter to the Ukraine and its precious people. You will see the aid workers and the faces of these strong, loving, fearless people, standing up for their beloved country.

Here is an update and prayer list from Vitaliy from Smolin ministries:

Cathy and the OGT team,

So, at this point, this last month has been the hardest on all fronts. Lots of soldiers are dying, the war is raging in the east in the Bakhmut area. Constant rocket shelling in the Kherson region and Zaporizhzhia region. We are at a humanitarian crisis because lots of organizations have run out of things to give and money to spend on the Ukrainian crisis. These days more than ever people need help, with food, clothing, hygiene, shelter, and heating.

Because of your support and continued blessing we've been able to help thousands of people, but the need is greater than what we can help. We need food, medical kits, trauma kits, medical supplies, hand and feet warmers, winter clothing, winter boots, any kind of furniture, bunk beds, tables...the kind we talked about that fold up and are easy to store, professional kitchen for the orphanage, stainless steel tables, sinks, fridge, dishwasher etc. anything!! And I know this sounds dumb, but we need everything, we are starting with nothing, so we need most everything. At this point because the economy is so bad and the country has been in war for so long, we need anything and everything.

Thank you so much for your dedication and big heart! God Bless all your hard work and loving on our country.

Sincerely, Vitaliy and Natalia Smolin

Smolin prayer needs:

For their family: That God would bless them with good health, with the kids going back to school, that they would be free of anxiety, that they could study well and feel protected.

For their ministry: That Vitality and Natalia would stay encouraged and be an encouragement to the team, for energy, protection, that their team would not get discouraged from doing what they are doing...it's hard to see and watch this continue and for continued support to aid us in doing God's work, in making Christ known to all.

For Ukraine: For Peace, God's protection and favor over the Ukrainian army, wisdom for the Ukrainian government, and for many to come to know their Savior Jesus Christ.

John 13: 34-35 says, *A new command I give you, Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.* My friends, you have indeed shown your love to one another and to this precious people through your support in so many ways to the WI – Orphan Grain Train. Your love is packed in boxes and sent around the world, making a difference in hearts of needy people everywhere. We will continue to send aid to the Ukraine as long as we can!! We will also have a list of needed items for the Ukraine, in this newsletter.

As we talk to different missionaries and Pastors in the Ukraine, they all are saying many people are coming to Christ every day. Their churches are bursting and the love of Christ is being shared with all who come. Praise God, in the midst of this evil war, God's love is shining through, inextinguishable!!! His plans and purposes are hard for us to understand, but we do know He is there, He is at work and His plans and purposes will prevail.

We serve a Mighty God, He is the Lord our Banner, so let's follow Him into this New Year, serving hand in hand, with hearts set ablaze to this incredible work He has called us too! Together we change lives forever!!!

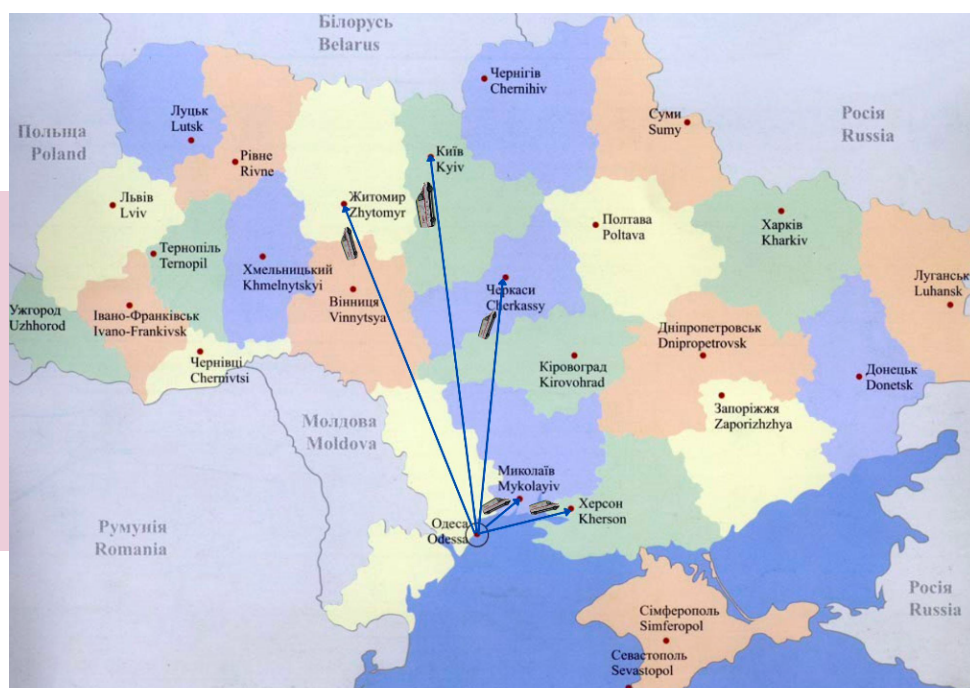
My prayer for you: *May the Lord bless you and keep you, may the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you and may the Lord turn his face toward you and give you His peace* (Numbers 6:24-26).

In His Faithful Grip,
Cathy Robinson
Branch Manager – Wisconsin Orphan Grain Train



The Mission sent humanitarian aid to Mykolaiv and Ochakov; Kyiv; Berdychev (Zhytomyr region), Kherson and Chigirin (Cherkassy region).

From the cargo of two trucks 4,750 people received help in total.



Odessa was one of the first cities to hear rocket fire in the early morning hours of February 24. There was chaos and panic in the city as many people left the country and those who chose to stay lost their livelihoods.

No one is confident about tomorrow. The number of refugees from destroyed Mariupol, Kharkov and other dangerous areas of Ukraine is constantly growing because of the hostilities.

Every day a siren sounds, which means that we have to prepare for the next strike. It is difficult for us to imagine the real number of people who need help at the moment.



PERSONAL STORIES

VICTOR

«My name is Victor, I am a refugee from the Donetsk region. I have health problems. When the full-scale war started, all my relatives went abroad and I was left here alone. I spent some time on the street, hiding from the shelling. How did I survive in the midst of this horror? My answer to everyone is that God keeps me safe! One day volunteers patrolling the streets stopped me and after listening to my story, they took me with them to their station. From there they helped me get straight to Odessa region, where there is a town for refugees. I have everything, I feel happy. Thank you Orphan Grain Train for the donated clothes. It was a great gift for Christmas!»



KATERINA

«My husband is fighting for the victory of Ukraine today. I am proud of him — he was one of the heroes who liberated Kherson. He doesn't know yet that our house in Mykolaiv region was damaged, I don't want to upset him. For now my daughter and I are living in the town for refugees. The conditions in the town are good, we are helped by volunteers. When we came here, we took only the bare minimum of clothing. There was a great need for warm clothes for my daughter. And today Orphan Grain Train filled it. May God bless you!»



MYKOLAIV

AND MYKOLAIV REGION

VLADIMIR

«I am Vladimir. I was recently released from military service for health reasons — I was dangerously wounded, the doctors even wanted to amputate my leg. I was released from the service...but where to go? Kramatorsk where I lived is being shelled every day, I was left without a home — it just burned down. I am now living in the town for refugees in Odessa region, where my friends advised me to go. There is everything for a normal life. Today I got clothes from the Orphan Grain Train. I thank the Mission from the bottom of my heart for help.»



SOFIA

«My name is Sophia. I am a pensioner and live alone. With the outbreak of war, life has become even harder than before. Have you seen the prices? My pension is barely enough to pay my utilities so I don't have to stay on the street. Volunteers help with food and today there was a clothing distribution. It's nice that you take care of the elderly. I am very grateful to Orphan Grain Train!»





STEPAN

«I go to receive humanitarian aid to Berdichev from the village of Romanovka. With the start of a full-scale war, the village started having problems. First, many people went abroad, and second, many markets closed and agriculture suffered huge losses. If the issue of food is somehow solved — then volunteers will help, then their own vegetable garden. But with clothes, especially winter clothes, it is hard. My sweaters have long since worn out, and my limited funds do not allow me to buy new ones. So, I came to the volunteers today, and they give out clothes here. To be honest, I took a lot of clothes. Many thanks to the Orphan Grain Train Mission for the clothes!»

KATERYNA

«When war started, I decided to stay here with my daughter. I know everything here, and no one needs me abroad. Despite the shelling, we live well, volunteers help and I have some income. I am bringing up my daughter on my own, as I have been divorced for a long time. There is practically nothing working in the city, so I have no way to buy clothes for my daughter. I thank Orphan Grain Train for the help it provided.»

GOD IS OUR
REFUGE AND
STRENGTH, A
VERY READY
HELP IN
TROUBLE.
PSALM 46:1





POLINA

«My name is Polina and I am a widow. My husband died in combat in the Donetsk region in 2014. I am raising my sons on my own. As fate would have it, only three buildings were damaged by shelling in the village where I lived. My house was one of them. I had to quickly gather what was left and go to Mykolaiv. I don't know how I would have coped without the help of volunteers...It was hard, very hard. I didn't want such a childhood for my sons. Thanks to Orphan Grain Train for not leaving us in the lurch. Thanks to you we are clothed and will make it through this winter.»

VALERIA

«My name is Valeria, I am a pensioner. All family (son, daughter-in-law, grandchildren) left Berdychev. They called me to come with them, but I didn't go. Everything is more familiar to me here. What am I abroad? Every month I get a food kit. All my life I have lived modestly, it is enough for me. And today I had a chance to pick out some clothes provided by Orphan Grain Train. Thank you!»



MARINA

«With the beginning of the war, my life changed drastically, not for the better. I lost everything: a good job, stability and hope that something would change. Nothing makes me happy — I live from one day to the next. The day is over thanks God...I never thought that war could happen again and I would catch it. I live very modestly, with enough money only to pay for utilities and some food. I'm wondering where to get money for examinations and treatment — my health has taken a turn for the worse since the start of the war. I thank the Orphan Grain Train Mission for not leaving me in the lurch. I can rest assured that I will not freeze this winter. I really need warm clothes, but unfortunately I can't afford to buy anything lately.»





HE SAVED ME FROM MY STRONG ENEMY, AND FROM THOSE WHO HATED ME, FOR THEY WERE TOO MIGHTY FOR ME. THEY CONFRONTED ME IN THE DAY OF MY DISASTER, BUT THE LORD WAS MY SUPPORT. HE ALSO BROUGHT ME OUT INTO AN OPEN PLACE; HE RESCUED ME, BECAUSE HE DELIGHTED IN ME.

PSALM 18:17-19

STELLA

«My name is Stella and I live in Ochakov. My life didn't work out from the beginning — my father left us when I was young, and my mother recently died of cancer. Only my grandmother is alive, whom I take care of. I work part-time in a cafe, but can I afford to buy good quality clothes with the salary I get? Thank God there are organizations like Orphan Grain Train, located thousands of kilometers away from Ukraine, that want to help people, whose hope is fading every day. Because of Orphan Grain Train I don't have to worry about what I can save to finally buy myself some warm clothing. May God bless you!»



DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS FROM OUR PASTORS

"BEAUTIFUL INDEED"

"One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer - at three in the afternoon. Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, 'Look at us!' So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, 'Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.' Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and leaping and praising God. When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him (Acts 3:1-10)."

According to the Concordia Self Study Bible, "The gate called Beautiful, was the favorite entrance of the temple court, it was probably the bronze-sheathed gate that is elsewhere called the Nicanor Gate. Apparently, it led from the court of the Gentiles to the court of women, on the east wall of the temple proper." This gate received a lot of foot traffic, so it was a good location for the lame man to beg. He was a regular fixture for those who went into the temple to pray.

I'm sure that you have come across people in need like this man, who maybe stood by a stop sign, or sat near the entrance to Walmart with a cardboard sign asking for money. Their

location wasn't very memorable, and heaven only knows how they got there. Sometimes, out of compassion, we have helped them. Other times we might have hesitated, because we didn't know their situation and whether the money would be used in an healthy way or not. It's difficult sometimes knowing the difference between helping and enabling.

In the case of our friends in Ukraine, who we are helping through Orphan Grain Train, there is no question that they legitimately need our help. We don't pass by them at a beautiful gate, but we do encounter them through the pictures and stories that we read, and we see that they desperately need our aid.

Unlike Peter and John, who didn't have money to help the cripple, we do have financial resources that we have been blessed with by God to help the less fortunate. Like Peter, who had faith that God could heal the lame man in Jesus' name, as seen by his reaching out to help the man up; we too have faith in the mighty name of Jesus for God to meet the needs of the people in Ukraine through our gifts, by giving them a hand up, not a hand out.

Seeing the joy of the crippled man, who had never walked, but was now jumping and leaping and praising God, a fulfillment of what Isaiah foretold as a Messianic reference (Isaiah 35:6); we pray and long to see the day when the people of Ukraine are liberated, when God willing, the war is over for them, and they will be jumping around praising God in delirious joy. Until then, may we continue to do what we can to support these beautiful people through our efforts with Orphan Grain Train.

The Beautiful gate was a location that identified a beggar and verified the miracle for the people. Already, Ukraine is a beautiful location where we have seen God at work bringing healing and joy, in the midst of suffering and darkness. Let us continue to pray for God to do beautiful things through our donations for the people in Ukraine and throughout the world.

Pastor Bruce Lamont

SPECIAL NOTES

Please remember when you have Orphan Grain Train coming to pick up a load, make sure you have a few people to load up the truck.

Orphan Grain Train is in need of children's shoes and clothing (sizes INFANT through children's size 12) new or lightly used.

Another item we are really low on is hygiene kit supplies, like towels, bar soap, toothbrushes, combs, bandaids, and nail clippers.

Thank you for your support!!!

MOST NEEDED ITEMS FOR UKRAINE AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- Diapers, Costco Kirkland brand or Huggies only,
- Feminine hygiene products all kinds
- Hygiene Kit supplies, Bar soap, sturdy combs, nail clippers, towels, wash clothes, toothbrushes, band aids, plastic soap boxes, small tissue packs
- Toothpaste, make sure expiration is at least a year out
- Winter/summer Children's, infant/toddler, and men's clothing, right now we have enough women's clothing. But we are short on these other important categories.
- Winter coats, boots for all sizes
- Tennis shoes for all sizes
- Quilts, blankets, and bedding, new pillows only
- New socks and underwear for all
- Mittens, gloves, hats and scarves
- Monetary donations for major medical, food and diapers etc. etc. Monetary donations made to our general fund are helpful because we can order all these items in bulk, except for clothing, quilts and bedding. When we buy in bulk our dollar stretches much farther.

Thank you for your continued support towards OGT!!
Together we change lives forever!!!

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I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you. - John 14:18

ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN MISSION STATEMENT

In loving response to Christ, the Servant, the Orphan GrainTrain movement encourages and enables God's people to share personal and material resources in bringing Christ's name and character to needy people both far and near. Sometimes that character expresses itself as a word well spoken, sometimes as a bandage well applied, and sometimes as a child well fed.

If someone you know would like to receive this newsletter, and is not on our address list, please let Linda Isberner know. If you wish to have your name removed from the address list, please also let Linda Isberner know. Thanks!

If you have an article or picture you would like to include in the next newsletter, please contact Allie Sherron by phone or email. If you prefer to send by mail, please contact Linda Isberner.

Linda and Allie's contact information can be found on page 10 of this newsletter.

WISCONSIN - ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN
Is an option for your
THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS!
Thrivent Choice Dollars need to be
designated by March 31st on a yearly basis.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!