

Orphan Grain Train, Inc.

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Hope Given to Many

In 2018, Orphan Grain Train formed a meaningful relationship with 'International Charity Fund Peace 2008', and since then, the Republic of Georgia has received 20 shipments that immensely helped the Georgian people during their hardest times. Many of the families and individuals cared for are Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) or living in high poverty regions. After the Russo-Georgia War in 2008, many families had to relocate from the occupied Georgia territory of Abkhazia. Many villages with limited employment were formed from the relocation of these families. The photo above is very common among families with several children and living in extreme poverty. These four boys were thrilled to receive OGT donations of new Champion tennis shoes, Christmas Gift boxes, clothing, hygiene items and school supplies with backpacks! Many families were greeted on Christmas day by 'Santa' delivering these gifts, who otherwise would not receive the Christmas story of the birth of Jesus or gifts that show the love of Christ.

Continue reading on pages 2 & 3 of how your support provides for many families living in extreme poverty.

Hope Given to Many



Being disabled and having a limited income, this lady was grateful for crutches, boxes of clothing and hygiene supplies from OGT's Norfolk warehouse in Nebraska and New England Branch in Terryville, CT.

Since then, the organization's main goal has been to help those in need, provide relief and necessities to people, ease their burdens, and strengthen their social and economic conditions.

Peace 2008 pays close attention to the villages located near the conflict zone as well as places

Republic of Georgia is a smaller country of 69,700 square feet, which is a bit smaller than Maine with a population of 3.7 million people. The Black Sea is the western coastline of Georgia with Russia, Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan as boarding countries. Fund Peace 2008 was founded on December 25, 2008, to aid Georgian people who suffered greatly in the Russo-Georgian War in the same year. At that time, the western region of Georgia, where Peace 2008 operates, saw a huge influx of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) from the occupied territory of Abkhazia that needed immediate assistance.



School students in an IDP settlement in the village of Kheta are excited to receive OGT's Christmas Gift boxes, clothing and school supplies from 'Peace 2008'.



Loaded and ready to deliver to families living in extreme poverty in IDP settlement of Kheta.

where the population is mainly IDPs or has high poverty rates. The recipients of OGT's humanitarian aid are IDPs, people with disabilities, victims of domestic violence, the elderly, the homeless, orphans, families with 3 or more children, as well as schools, kindergartens, shelters, hospitals, daycare centers, IDP settlements, etc.

Many of these families do not have enough money to purchase necessities

so when they receive the donations it helps to stretch their monthly pocket book for needed food, prescriptions or personal items. To be uprooted due to war and placed where there is limited income and housing is a challenge for many. We are so blessed in the U.S. and able to bless these families with gifts, hope and Christ's love. Thank you, OGT supporters and volunteers, for being the hands & feet of Jesus for those in need worldwide.



OGT donations of adult diapers, medical equipment, wheel chairs and quilts are shared with many elderly people that do not have access to these items because of their low income.



Women at a shelter received sewing machines, fabric and supplies and opened sewing workshops to support and empower themselves and other women. They were also given a large amount of yarn that many warm sweaters were knitted from.

“New Earth”

by Pastor Ray Wilke, OGT's Founder & President

Every New Year brings new resolutions, new plans, new beginnings and lots of new opportunities and challenges. I have often been curious about God's plans for “New Heavens and a New Earth.” What does this mean? Does it mean renewal, or does it mean a whole new planet or a whole new cosmos?

There is a man and wife couple north of Tilden, Nebraska who sell tons of African Night Crawlers castings (night crawler manure) for improving the fertility of gardens and production agriculture. Soil experts agree that the castings help establish a microbial environment that releases natural occurring nutrients into the soil. The worms make “new earth” out of old earth.

There is another farmer in Lancaster County, Nebraska who claims that keeping “cover crops” on the soil, year-round allows nature to do its work in renewing the soil and in the water-holding-capacity. The roots of the cover crop allow the microbes to have a food source even in winter.

I believe that the worm castings and the cover crops are good renewal practices, but these things have been around for a very long time. These practices are probably new to most of us, but they are not new. What about “new earth” do we get that by following good old/new farming practices? Or do we get it by listening to what God/Jesus says about it?

He who is seated on the Throne said, ‘Behold I am making all things new.’ Seven hundred years earlier He said, “Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.”

This is the same “new earth” Person who gathered with His disciples on the night before his death and said to them, “Drink of it all, for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

There are lots of “new’s” in God’s New Earth Plan.

A new command I give you: “Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

I pray that this New Year will bring God’s “New Earth Plan” to you and to God’s Good Earth.



Pastor Ray Wilke, after mission trip to Latvia in 1992, he envisioned & founded OGT to help bring aid to God’s hurting people.

Thrivent Choice Dollars Expire Sunday, March 31 - Easter

Attention Thrivent Members – Please direct your Thrivent Choice Dollars to Orphan Grain Train before they expire on Sunday, March 31, 2024. Please keep in mind that the phones will be very busy on Friday, March 29th as this is the last day by phone to designate Choice Dollars. Why not designate your Choice Dollars **today**. It is simple and doesn’t cost you anything but your time. **YOU MUST RENEW THE DISTRIBUTION OF YOUR CHOICE DOLLARS EVERY YEAR. YOUR CHOICE OF A PRIOR YEAR DOES NOT CARRY OVER.**

There are two ways to direct your Choice Dollars. Go to www.thriventchoice.com or call 1-800-847-4836 and say “choice dollars” at automation.

Thank you for considering OGT when making your Choice Dollars donation.

thrivent®

Construction Begins

The new Servant Center was a vision for many years and is now a reality with walls and support beams put in place. The center will connect seamlessly to the Norfolk warehouse allowing ample parking for volunteers and those dropping off donated items. The 20,000 square foot addition will offer multi-level racks for maximum storage and provide effective flow of goods and efficient use of space. Breaking ground started in June of 2023 and soon after the structural beams were put in place and walls were attached. The grain bins even got a face lift with fresh paint. There is a lot of building yet to build but we are hoping to be completed in August of 2024.



Construction began on the Servant Center that will connect to the Norfolk warehouse in Nebraska. The larger sorting/packing room will help to accommodate larger groups for volunteering.



We continue to raise funds for the expansion

which will cost approximately \$7 million. We are very close to reaching our goal with only \$300,000.00 yet to raise. This is the largest fiscal challenge in our history. And yet, it pales in comparison when we see that Orphan Grain Train delivers almost \$48 million worth of aid annually. We believe the new Servant Center will increase the amount of goods distributed along with increasing the amount of Mercy Meals produced in their new larger facility which will attach seamlessly to the new Servant Center. We ask you to hear the cry of orphans and join us as we pray for the Lord's guidance in expanding His ministry.

Photos courtesy of Doug Burkink with Davis Design.

Orphan Grain Train Convention 2024 Save the Dates: Friday and Saturday, September 13 & 14, 2024

You are invited to Orphan Grain Train's upcoming convention so make plans now to attend. We are excited to host a portion of the convention in our new Servant Center, which is projected to be completed this August. Enjoy listening to recipients from the U.S. and beyond sharing how OGT impacts their region of the world. We are planning another exquisite quilt auction, fabulous food, and wonderful fellowship. Watch for more information as time gets closer!

Attention All Quilters!

Orphan Grain Train will once again have a quilt auction. We are asking that the quilts be new, good quality and stitched. Since space is limited, only one quilt will be accepted from each donor or organization. *All quilts have to be at the home office in Norfolk, NE before August 1st, 2024.* If you have any questions, please contact us at (402) 371-7393 or toll free at (877) 371-7393. We hope to see you this September!



Giving Tuesday's Blessings

There is not much said in the news anymore about the conditions and living arrangements of families that endured the horrific fire in Lahaina, Maui. Orphan Grain Train knows firsthand that the families are still feeling the devastation and pain from that day, August 8, 2023. We continue to work with Emmanuel Lutheran Church (ELCS) in Kahului with donating food and needed items to their warehouse. ELCS serves at least 200 people daily with needed hygiene supplies, food and other goods.

On Giving Tuesday, November 28, 2023, OGT was able to raise \$109,000.00 with an additional \$20,000.00 match from Thrivent to help purchase and ship food and aid to Maui. We are working closely with ELCS with the requested items for the families. As of mid-January, there were still 264 people living in hotels in hopes of receiving temporary housing soon. With housing, their needs will change to home furnishings and bedding. At the end of January, OGT's Norfolk warehouse in Nebraska loaded a 40 ft. container filled with Mercy Meals, eight pallets of 5-pound bags of rice, diapers, other hygiene items along with several boxes of purple Maui shirts from Thrivent. These shirts were used for Mercy Meal packing events and Giving Tuesday acknowledging serving Maui families.



Thrivent had shirts made for volunteers of packing events and Giving Tuesday to wear to show support for families in Maui.



Mercy Meals, rice and other aid is loaded for Maui at the Norfolk warehouse in Nebraska. Pictured L to R is Norfolk warehouse Asst. Manager Paul Brandt and volunteers Larry Tweedy and Brian Bagger.

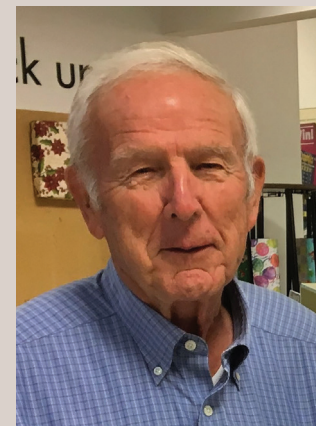
We also worked with Maui's Costco to have items of immediate needs delivered to ELCS warehouse. OGT purchased soap, diapers, pet food, bottled water, and other goods for families struggling with limited income. Many are finding it difficult to purchase daily necessities with lack of income and after losing car, house and job.

We will continue to work closely with ELCS to serve the precious families of Maui that have lost so much yet keep going one day at a time. Please continue to pray for these families and those working tirelessly to get them aid and in homes.

21 Years of Service

Cliff Kraft was instrumental in starting OGT's Mid-Atlantic Branch in 2002 and has been the Branch Manager since the beginning. Cliff retired from this volunteer position in January after two decades of service. He has faithfully showed dedication to developing and growing this location through the years. He has been a joy to work with and we wish him many blessings for his 'retirement'.

Cliff describes his MAB experience this way: "Lutheran missionary Tim Nickel first introduced me to the work of Orphan Grain Train in the 1990s. Inspired by Tim's message and moved by the Holy Spirit to begin a new branch, Cliff and a group of local volunteers committed to proceed and in September 2002 Mid-Atlantic Branch (MAB) was founded. It has been a joyful, yet challenging role that the Lord has blessed me with. To Him goes the glory! Our branch has gone through three locations to arrive



Cliff Kraft, OGT's Mid-Atlantic Branch manager retires after serving more than two decades.

at our current warehouse in West Grove, PA, where by God's good grace we are flourishing. We've shipped 35 forty-foot containers, from the Philippines to Africa and places in-between. We've helped with domestic disasters, and partially funded air shipments to the Ukraine and Maui. After 21 years of God's guidance, I have decided to retire from the leadership position. There remain many opportunities to take the Mid-Atlantic Branch of OGT to an even higher level of helping those in need both domestically and internationally." Thank you, Cliff, for many years of dedicated service!

Replacing Cliff is Rob Hall, Assistant Branch Manager and a volunteer since 2005. MAB looks forward to a future rich with God's continual blessings.

Adopt an Orphanage Update

Orphan Grain Train's Adopt-An-Orphanage Program is up & running! After some unavoidable delays, we are pleased to report that a team has been put together to deliver help to orphanages that have previously been sponsored. We are working closely with Rev. Evgeni Eraskatov & Rev. Oleg Belezhenko, the directors of our Hannah House ministry in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Besides delivering help to these orphanages, the Hannah House team will also be getting inside these orphanages to build relationships with orphans & orphanage directors, plus doing Gospel outreach. This is exciting, because previously it has been difficult to actually get inside orphanages & work directly, face-to-face with orphans & orphanage directors.

The Hannah House team will include Nikolai & Valentina, who have previously been instrumental in helping to make contacts & deliver help.

Young men & women frequently end up in orphanages in Russia because their parents are unable to provide proper care for them. These "orphans" are released from orphanages when they turn 17 or 18 & are left to fend for themselves. Young men are typically drafted into the Russian military, while young women are often exploited by the Russian mob & end up in lives of addiction & prostitution. These young women have a life expectancy of 25-years-old.

Hannah House provides a refuge for these young women. Classes are provided which teach them employment skills, such as cosmetology & barista training. Social & cultural programs are offered, along with spiritual growth activities that help them know their Lord & Savior Jesus Christ.

Those individuals & organizations that have supported these orphanages will be contacted very soon with more detailed information. For more information, email Paul Leckband: [pleckband@ogt.org]

Hanna House offers Friday night 'Chess Club' at a local coffee shop. A great way to hang out with friends and plan a strategic mind play.



Many coffee courses are taught to work at the Barista which is managed by the Hanna House. This offers work skills and ethics for a better future in their adult life.



Every Tuesday they gather for Fundamentals of the Christian Faith to grow stronger in their spiritual journey together. (Hanna House)





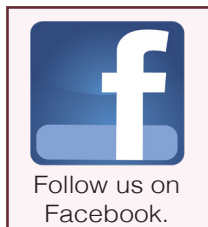
Orphan Grain Train

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Save the Date
OGT Convention
September 13 & 14, 2024

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Charity Navigator
has given Orphan Grain
Train "4 Stars", which
is their highest rating.



#orphangraintrain



A daycare center for children with disabilities were given hygiene kits. These children live in an IDP settlement with high poverty and limited income for families. Read more on pages 1-3 of how OGT aids families in Republic of Georgia.