



Manna Messenger

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Ukraine Youth Ministry Classes—Winter 2009

Jan 19-23

Youth Min. Programming, Rivne (UkrT)

Jan 26-30

Youth Discipleship, Rivne (AmP)

Jan 26-Feb 5

Professional Orientation, Kiev (Mike)

Feb 9-19

Youth Ministry Principles for Pastors, Kiev (Mike)

Feb 23 - Mar 5

Curriculum Development, Kiev (Mike and UkrT)

March 9 -19

Youth Culture, Kiev (AmP and Mike)

March 16-20

Youth Culture, Rivne (AmP)

(Mike) - Mike teaches

(AmP) - American Professor

(UkrT) - Ukrainian Teacher

Website Updated with Videos and Photos

Connect with us at www.youthdiscipler.com to see videos about our ministry and Katya's story.



Teaching the Freshmen ... from Mike

In October, I taught the incoming freshmen their first class. Twelve new students added to our other 38 youth leaders studying in Kiev. It is again a great bunch from all over Ukraine. We have students from many different walks of life and ministries - from students with a burning desire to reach the youth of their area where there is no youth ministry, to a couple of students who already



Mike with Natasha (translator/assistant) and the 2008 Youth Ministry freshman class in Kiev.

have over 200 youth in their youth ministries. Two students' churches are within 10 minutes of the seminary, while a few others are near the borders of Ukraine. These differences give us some wonderful dynamics in the class, and this is one of the reasons I love teaching in Ukraine.

Each class of students comes in for two week sessions 4 to 5 times per year. This allows them to continue their ministries and jobs while they study. In the beginning of December, I met with the sophomore class for a prayer time while they were studying Church History and Worldview Analysis from other professors. They shared some needs concerning life and ministry. I have space to share from only a few of my Sophomores on the back page. During your holiday season, please take time to pray for these faithful youth leaders serving the Lord in Ukraine. *Continued on back page*

Katya's Journey

from Judy

October 7 was a frightening day, as Mike, Katya, and I sat with our lawyer, Ivan, in the Social Services office in Chernigov. Realization dawned that the authorities were going to take 11-year old Katya away from us and place her back in an orphanage. Katya's mother had given up her rights so we could proceed with adoption, but when she did so, Katya became a ward of the State. We had no rights at all, even though Katya had lived with us for 3 1/2 years. We asked the authorities if we might be allowed to keep Kate at home while we applied for legal guardianship, but they refused. An SBU agent (former KGB) was in the room with the social worker to make sure that everything was done by the letter of the law. Katya was to be placed in an orphanage in Chernigov immediately. We at least achieved permission for them to transfer her to Komorovka, to the orphanage where she had lived before. She had relationships there, and so did we. Because of our help over the past five years, we thought the director would allow me (Judy) to



Katya eating breakfast at the orphanage.

Continued on back page

... and Praying with the Sophomores



Kolya, Kiev

Kolya Jeleen, Sophomore, 20 years old (Kiev)

-- Kolya grew up in an orphanage in Western Ukraine and was reached for Christ by a church which visited the orphanage. He has been serving the Lord by being part of a few different youth leadership teams who direct camps for orphans and other youth. We teamed Kolya with our missionary friend, Doug Stoddard, last month. He is now traveling weekly to our Katya's old orphanage to teach Life Skills classes with the gospel weaved into the curriculum. The orphanage leadership loves him. He asks for prayers for his ministry and studies at the seminary.



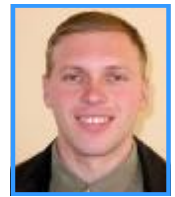
Maxeem, N. Sirogozi

Sasha Onishyk, Sophomore, 20 years old (Uzhgorod)

-- Sasha lives and ministers in a border town on the Ukraine-Hungarian border. He is part of the leadership of a church planting team which targets young people. Part of their unique outreach includes teaching Christian Ethics in the schools, youth retreats, and a break dance festival where they share Christ. Currently, they are planning a ballroom dancing outreach event to reach yet another group of students. Over 30 college students have come to Christ and are in the new church. Sasha has also asked us to pray for Ivan (28 yrs. old), one of my graduates from last May, who is on his leadership team. Ivan has a benign tumor near his brain and may need surgery.



Sasha, Uzhgorod



Ivan, Uzhgorod



Lena, N. Sirogozi

Maxeem and Lena Penkov, Sophomores, 24 and 22 yrs. old (Nijni Sirogozi)

-- This married couple are both studying youth ministry with me in order to plant a church in a town amongst youth where there is not even one evangelical church. In fact, they do not even know one Christian. Their Ukrainian home church (100 miles away) has sent them as missionaries to this town and are helping support them. They have a small hut without any modern conveniences. Pray for them as they develop friendships and start a small group Bible study in their home for youth.

Katya's journey - continued

stay there with Katya. He did not, and we had no choice but to drive away that night and leave her there alone. Katya has become a true daughter in our hearts. It was horrible to drive away!

The next 16 days were a blur of activity, especially for Mike as he chased down around 40 documents, had doctor checkups with at least 10 different doctors to prove he was fit for guardianship, traveled around the country to achieve signatures (like referrals for guardianship from each of Katya's siblings), and have meeting after meeting with people in the department of Social Services in Kiev. Mike was teaching classes at the seminary all along. I was able to spend a total of 7 of those days living with the English teacher in Komorovka, who lives across the street from the orphanage.

Ivan, our lawyer, worked very hard alongside us to get Katya home. After two weeks of gathering documents, we were ready for the guardianship hearing. A panel of 9 council members listened to our story, looked through our documents, and voted to give Mike legal guardianship over Katya. What a wonderful day!

When we left the building, Ivan told us the "rest of the story." He didn't want us to worry before. The prime minister of Ukraine had just passed a new law stating that foreigners were NOT to be awarded guardianship of a Ukrainian child. Ivan was sure this law had been written 'in the books' for two or three days. The authorities evidently hadn't seen it yet. Ivan said, "We did all we could, but there were still gaps — things that only God could do. We would not have achieved this without His help." One major 'God thing' was the fact that the director of

Social Services for our area of Kiev was against giving guardianship to a foreigner. She was at home, sick, through the entire process! Her assistant, Irina, had compassion for our situation and had helped us in any way she could.

So, after 16 days God released Katya and brought her safely back home to us. Mike is her official guardian. The only hard thing is that Katya is required to go to a Ukrainian school. Therefore, Kate is continuing with 5th grade at Kiev Christian Academy during the day, but three evenings a week she has a tutor and is doing all the subjects for Ukrainian 2nd grade through a Ukrainian distance school. The positive part of this is that Katya's Ukrainian language is coming back. It had fallen asleep with the lack of use.

We know that many of you followed this story as I wrote it by email. We thank you for your prayers for us and the wonderful notes of encouragement that we received from so many of you! We thank God for friends and family who really care. We have SO much to be thankful for. Most of all, we are thankful for the privilege of being God's children. He is ALWAYS with us, even when He allows hard things to happen. If you'd like to hear Katya's prayer of thanks when she returned home or her testimony in church, please go to our website at www.youthdiscipler.com. These were both precious moments, and we want to share them with you. There are also pictures of her time back in the orphanage as well as all of my emails containing the full story as it happened.

Draw near to those you love this Christmas. Thank you SO much for your constant support. May God bless you! We love you.