

The winter didn't want to end this year. Although it was the end of March, we had snow, rain, and



snow again. The weather was not favorable for street outreaches.

Nevertheless Oxana, our street worker, had been going to the kids on a regular basis during the entire winter. One Monday should have become a big day for the 13 year old Seriosha. After waiting for half a year (sic!) he should finally come to Sunshine! The whole night from Sunday to Monday he stayed awake, not to miss Oxana. At 6am he climbed on the roof of a newspaper-kiosk and waited... waited... until

he fell asleep despite the cold. Nothing came of the "longed for" Monday, but it turned out to be a great Tuesday☺. On Tuesday morning Seriosha came with his tattered clothes and falling apart shoes to Sunshine. After two weeks of regular and intensive bathing, having his hair done, and trying to get him to look descent and in order, he still looks like a real street boy. He seems to have the gift of making everything dirty and broken. After four years of deprivation on the streets it should actually surprise nobody, at least not our care givers. Nevertheless we hear a sigh here and there, saying "it is starting all over again." His story is sad and at the same time so



typical for a street child. After his mother died his father married again and he was first being teased by his step mother, and as he tells, then ill-treated too. The only escape he saw was running away. For four years he lived in the streets. We are happy to have our "new" Seriosha in Sunshine and hope to be able to tell you of his progress in our next newsletter.

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Hardly had warmth returned to springtime, and Sunshine immediately became funnier, louder and more adventurous. Our female dog, Lora gave birth to whelps and Tamara turned out to be a real "dog auntie". She lovingly cares about the pups; feeds them with a baby's milk-bottle and controls conscientiously how the other kids treat the



dogs.



Meanwhile our teenagers have everything except school on their minds. In order to direct the stored-up-winter energy flow on the right track, we started our first adventure-pedagogical activity. We took a three day tour with kayaks – it was absolutely fantastic. At this time of the year the water level in the rivers have risen and form

huge expanses of water (lakes), out of which trees and bushes grow. One has to paddle cautiously and disciplined but powerfully, not to be swept away by the currents. For two nights we spent in tents, fought against the cold and cooked on the open fire. The kayaks we used are two-seaters and they can only be steered when the rowers build a disciplined team and row constantly together.

On the first day we didn't get that far because of this difficulty, and now and then the guys cursed and screamed at each other. On the next day, the rowing already went much better – obviously they had learnt their lesson well.

On the third day, after a 65 km water-route,



we landed safe and sound, but tired in Litotshki, where we have our summer camps every year. It was strange to paddle on the flooded football field with our kayaks. Now we hope that our camp-site will dry before summer!

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The life of many children brought up in homes, especially of younger children, is often focused around the mother. As long as the mother lives, she stays at the centre of their thoughts, dreams and memories. Sometimes this mostly one-sided love turns into anger, insults and even hatred. But usually this takes only a short while before the picture of Mama is once again painted with light colors in front of one's own eyes and those of the other home children. The "missing mother" is the most frequent reason for kids to run away, to go and search her. After a short while they return, disappointed and startled by the real picture of Mama.

Nadja repeatedly searched for her homeless mother and usually found her at one of the train stations. We tried to help the mother with her lost documents, so that she would have a chance to receive social welfare. All was in vain – for three months we could not find her... Then she suddenly and unexpectedly came to Sunshine, together with her other daughter, who had just been released from the children's prison and... Nadja quickly collected her things and disappeared with them. We don't know if she will ever come back, or if we will ever see her again. On the one side it is good for her to be

with her mother again, on the other side we don't know whether this situation is for the good of Nadja. Most probably she'll stand in front of Sunshine in a few days and all will start from the beginning...

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Ira (on the picture with her mother 4 years ago) repeatedly comes and asks when she can actually go and live with a family. Each time we answer truthfully that we are searching for a family for her – until now without success. Every time she is disappointed and sad and she almost breaks our hearts.

In February, we started our training foster parents. On the first day of training 25 people attended. At the second and following training session more than thirty came. The participants have built a good group. The training is exiting and informative every time. We really hope to find foster parents for children from Sunshine in this group. Many participants though want to foster only younger children, but we have some meetings left “to advertise” our kids. Please pray, that these parents will decide on Sunshine Children.

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Anglea and Valia are a real joy for us. The “Life Skills Training” helping the girls to independence was a good idea. They not only become independent but also self-conscious and hospitable. Not long ago a TV-journalist, who wants to report on Sunshine, visited us. Our girls literally “seized” the TV-team. They provided the team with tea and cookies; they told them of the plans and successes of their lives (although a few things were exaggerated) and generally made a very good impression. As PR-professionals the girls surely would be very successful.

Valera and Vitja are in their final spurt in the technical school. They only need to complete a 3-months final practical training and take the final exams and they will be qualified motor mechanics.

Valera is in the process of getting his driver's license and proudly drives a very old Zyguli through our neighborhood. Vitja spends each weekend at home. His reunion with his family seems to go well.



Schmids also have some news. They moved to a 3-room apartment and can easily host guests now. So



you are welcome to visit them! Joschi will soon finish his first order – the interior extension of a summerhouse on the outskirts of Kiev. At the same time he saves Sunshine from all kind of floods, broken water pipes, repairs broken locks and gates, and makes everything possible to make life in general possible. Lina takes part in further training presented by a polish social pedagogue and she enjoys studying again.

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As a family we are occupied with our different languages. Michelle attends the Polish School in Kiev twice a week (taking 3 language lessons and 1 mathematics) and she is busy with learning to write. She found a friend there and suddenly the school got more pleasant for her. Pascal started speaking Russian and we as parents try to keep the languages apart for them. We miss Switzerland a bit, especially now that the snow doesn't hide the dirt on the streets any more and our stock of cheese has melted☺. We were delighted that so many of you came to our meeting for friends. And we thank all our hosts for not only inviting but absolutely spoiling us. We truly appreciate your support – it is beautiful to have you as friends. Please pray with us for the following requests:

- For Nadja and her family
- For foster parents for our children
- For the final exams of Vitja and Valera
- For two new care-givers
- For the coming-up summer camp

We love you and greet you from Kiev!

Nathalie and Marek Wnuk with Michelle and Pascal

Joschi and Lina Schmid

All Kids und Workers of Sunshine

