

The stillness that met me as I stepped out of the house simply confused me. The first thing that came to my mind was the absurd thought that I had slept through the whole Friday and only woke up on Saturday. A glance on my watch confirmed me that it was Friday and when seconds later my face started to freeze I knew that the sharp frost was the cause for the absence of pedestrians. Our parked car greeted me with a weak beep which already was the last sound it made. The electronic of the car was frozen, as many other things on this first day with the temperature being -32°C . Up to this day more than 800 people froze to death in Ukraine – the dark numbers of the deceased is quite a bit higher. Where some cars started to drive with the help of new batteries or after



being pushed for a while, other drivers used less conventional methods. A driver of a microbus in our neighborhood obviously tried to make a small fire under the diesel tank, to warm up the fuel a bit. In the end his expectations where surely exceeded, what is clearly visible on the picture.



Just when it became so cold, Nadja (a Christmas angle on the picture), our 12 year old, went through an enormous crisis. First she needed to be hospitalized to treat an infectious disease and hardly she was back she had major conflicts with the other kids. In the end she packed her things and secretly went to search for her homeless mother. One night spent on the cold train station brought her to her senses. The next morning she came back, dirty and hungry, a heap of misery. The following day she only slept and ate. We were glad nothing had happened to her and at the same time we realized once more, that the bonds of a child to its mother can be far stronger than fear, hunger and everything else.

Also Irina (photo), our youngest, misses her mother a lot. She is an exception amongst the Sunshine Kids – she was no street child, but was greatly neglected by her mother. When her mother disappeared for a month and nobody knew where she was, she went to the director of the school and asked to be brought to an orphanage. The director of the school brought her to us and since then Ira lives in Sunshine. She knows we are searching for a foster family for her and once in a while she comes to ask, whether we already found one. She is stressed by the fact that some children are already living in Sunshine for a long time and have not found families yet.





In the mean time we did everything possible to find foster families. On January 18th we held a conference under the theme “Foster families as modern form of educating children without parental care”. We had approx. 80 participants and according to our own estimations and the many feedbacks we passed on the idea of foster parenting in a good way.

On February 4th we started training future foster parents in Sunshine. The training program is supported by the organization “HOLT International”. They cover the costs of translating and printing the training material, bought us a notebook, a video projector and a photocopying machine, and financed the salary of a social worker for one year, who will visit and support the foster families.

Marek was also asked to collaborate in a study group of the Department of Family, Youth, and Sport to draft a governmental program for the training of foster parents. We now have 10 couples who either already have taken children or are interested in taking children into their families. We hope that Irina, Tamara, Nadja, Vitalik and others can leave Sunshine in the near future and find a foster- or adoptive family!!!



Tamara is also new in Sunshine! In our October newsletter we reported about her, “*Tamara is the most beautiful street girl that I have ever seen. Dark hair and eyes, now blurred and absent. I know her for a few weeks now. We have already tried to take her to Sunshine. She doesn’t want. Neither to us, nor somewhere else...*”

But on December 27th she stood in front of our door. A street worker, working for an other



organization, brought her to Sunshine. Like a proper street girl, she never went to school, doesn’t think much about health care, and has “street conform” manners and language. Nevertheless she is somehow is a pleasant girl and we just like her. As she visited us at home, she accompanied Nathalie doing house work and visibly enjoyed washing dishes, cooking and enjoying the closeness of an adult. On the picture you can see traces of the chicken pocks, which are treated with a green (!) disinfectant here in Ukraine.

Tamara took the place of Tanja, who changed to the „Life Skills Training Program“. The four girls in



the new house enjoy their independence. They admittedly still have difficulties with managing their money and finding shopping strategies, but exactly this is the goal of the training, that they will learn it with our help. On the picture Angela and Valia are in their room.

Our IVECO bus is again as good as new! Micha

Grimm brought together a team of craftsmen who took apart our vehicle to the “bone marrow”, repaired everything, welded, replaced, greased, and painted what was necessary. We thank Micha and his team, the garage Von Känel in Frutigen and all who got our bus ship-shaped. We truly appreciate to have a reliable vehicle again, especially in this cold winter.

Not long ago we had an unpleasant surprise in our apartment. The telephone woke us at four o'clock in the morning. As we woke up, our whole apartment already was flooded with hot water. The water main of the house (in the wall of our bathroom) had broken and the hot water ran from our apartment in the 16th floor (we live in the top floor) to the 12th floor. Until the caretaker of the house closed the water main we watched for at least another 30 minutes, how the hot water under great pressure splashed out of the wall. Until morning we cleaned and dried everything. Our parquet floor now looks like a miniature of the Berner Jura (Swiss mountains) and we can't close any doors anymore. Our neighbors from the 15th floor got it bad. He had just finished completely renovating and furnishing his apartment. The water destroyed the ceilings, walls, floors and some furniture. Who thought, that the “Big Water” could hit not only the Bernese Oberland?



On February 23rd we are coming to Switzerland. We are looking forward and our children ask every day, how often they have to sleep until then. We plan a meeting for all our friends on March 4th at 17 pm in the Frutig Spycher. You are welcome!!! We will inform you in details about the work here in Ukraine, show you photos and share our experiences of the last few months with you. Please invite your friends and families, who are interested in Kiev Kids. If you would like to meet us personally, please write or call us. It will be a pleasure for us, to have a cup of tee with you. You can reach us at any time under our email address wnuk@sunshine-kiev.org. From the 23rd February onwards you can also reach us on our mobile phone number 079 323 68 41.

We would also like to thank you very much for your support in the year 2005. Thanks to your donations we could finance Sunshine Children Centre and the street work, give out humanitarian aid, push ahead the renovations of the new house and always pay the salaries of our workers on time. If you are interested in the annual account you can contact the treasurer of Kiev Kids, Gerhard Weiss (gerhard.w@freesurf.ch or Tel. 031 869 31 51), from Mai onwards.

Our prayer requests for the next months are:

- Thank for the good year 2005
- Wisdom and patience in upbringing the Sunshine-Kids.
- Training and taking care of the foster parents
- Finding families for the children
- Sunshine Life while we are in Switzerland
- Upcoming parliamentary elections in Ukraine
- Health for Michelle and Pascal (they started coughing again)



We greet you warmly from a cold Ukraine and are looking forward to seeing you soon in Switzerland

[Nathalie and Marek Wnuk with Michelle and Pascal](#)

[And all Kids and Workers of SUNSHINE Children Centre](#)