

Dear Friends and Family

Treuhiv, October 2005

At night the main train station of Kiev turns into one of the strangest places I have ever seen... Travelers



fight with their bags and luggage, the homeless sit in the corners, beggars hold out their empty plastic cups in hopeful gestures (hopeful to get some coins). Now and then a police patrol with eyes cast down hurries through the station concourse. It stinks from urine and digested alcohol. Nadja (photo), the twelve year old dark-haired girl who has only been living in Sunshine for a short time, is holding my hand so tight, that it almost starts to hurt me. Ania, the centre's director, accompanies us. We walk through this peculiar world trying to find Nadja's mother amidst all these shady characters. Again and again Nadja stands on her tiptoes and whispers into my ear, things like, "Do you see that woman? She is crazy and steals everything she gets her

hands on." Or, "Look, that girl is a prostitute.", "Here we stole a bunch of roses and sold them on Krischatik (the main street of Kiev)", or "Here I often slept." On one place she shows us a blood-stain on the wall. "This is my blood. I cut myself with a piece of glass." Proudly she shows me her forearm with the scar.

Suddenly she lets go of my hand and shouting for joy runs towards a girl of her age. Her friend reacts much less warmly and somehow slowly. Immediately we see that she is on glue. Tamara (in the middle of the picture), that's her name, is the most beautiful streetgirl I ever saw. Dark hair and dark eyes, now blurred and absent. I have known her



for a few weeks. We already tried to take her to Sunshine. She doesn't want to come, neither to us nor to anywhere else. What must have happened in her life that she chooses this underworld instead of a cosy home? We agree to meet again later and continue our pilgrimage through the dark reality of the train station. From an acquaintance we find out that Nadja's mother went to a street kitchen in another part of the city. Nadja is disappointed and we just want to go on, then we see a pregnant woman on a bench. Her face is blue; obviously somebody beat her up recently. As she sees us, she stands up, approaches us and smiles. Her smile looks quite terrible. Then we recognize her. Her name is Anja and four years ago, when we had no children centre yet, she used to come to our soup kitchen. The photo was taken back then.

Now she is only 19 years old but looks like an old woman. Her life is a world of hopelessness. Our Ania stays with her for a while. In the mean time Nadja leads me to a favourite place of the streetchildren. A

short while ago it was her favorite place as well. About 15 children hang around with bags of glue on their lips. Nadja flings her arms around one of her friend's neck and starts to tell of the life in Sunshine. The children listen very attentively and some want to come to the centre immediately. My heart breaks, when I have to putt these children off and try to explain to them, that we have no space. The 11 year old Julia comes with us; although we don't have space. I hope that she will not be at the end of her life in four years, as Ania. My heart is heavy...

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Since our last newsletter a lot has happened in Sunshine. In addition to Julia and Nadia we took in Vitalik, a 15 year old boy and his 18 year old siter Aliona. Vitalik is very withdrawn and for a long time we didn't know whether he would run away... It seems though, that he found a good alternative to life on the street during our adventure pedagogical activities. On the picture he is with our paragliding instructor on the training hill. Aliona participates in the "Life Skill Training" that we prepared for the young adults. They learn helpful skills they should know before entering adulthood. We take great



pleasure in the beautiful rooms we furnishing thanks to the International Woman's Club in Kiev (IWCK). The girls living there feel at home and we are daily invited to a cup of tea ☺. The second and third floors still wait to be completed. Now our priority is to isolate the outer walls of the whole house, before the winter comes.



Joshi almost completed building his workshop and in a few days he should be able to bring the machines from Switzerland. He has a few words for you:

*Hallo dear friends*

*We are already living in Kiev for four months now. We are renting an apartment and bought a car, which helps us get to work every morning. We have settled in well and adjusted to our everyday life. Lina works as a teacher in the Sunshine school and I'm busy setting up the workshop for the carpentry. Time and time again we had problems with fresh supplies of wood and the massive rise in prices slowed us down sometimes. My goal is to have the workshop ready to start by end of October. The roof is finished and now we are lining the outer walls . This fall we had superb weather for building, it*



*rained only on two days. Thanks to a short term commitment of Ramon Wäfler we already have electricity in the workshop. Therefore, whoever wishes to have a vacation house in the Ukraine is welcome to place an order with us! ☺*

*The transport from Switzerland with the machines to process timber will be done by a polish company in the next few days. Please pray that we will not have any problems paying duty on the machines, as this usually depends a lot on the mood of the responsible customs officer. Greetings from Lina und Joschi Schmid*

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In the beginning of September we received a transport with the humanitarian aid from Switzerland. Several tons of clothes, furniture and toys came. We sorted all the things and already started to distribute them. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Interbrock Thun (donator of various furniture), the “Jugendheim Sternen” (Home for boys in Switzerland, collecting and storing the aid in Switzerland), and the AVC Switzerland (for helping with the paperwork). Our sincere thanks further goes to our faithful friends in Frutigen, who as always, have helped a lot. Thank you all so much! For the coming winter we are fully equipped!



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The really good news is that our two Saschas could be placed in families. Sascha D. returned to his real mother. They already visited Sunshine and we have already been their guests. Sascha changed a lot during his stay in Sunshine, he became much less aggressive. As he was accompanied intensively in Sunshine School and as he had to learn a lot, he now gets good marks in his new school. Further, his self-esteem has grown and in his village he is known as the paragliding-pilot ☺. This keeps him out of trouble, which always seemed to find him prior to entering Sunshine. On the photo he is choosing humanitarian aid for himself and his family.



Sascha P. is a foster child now living with one of our caregivers. His dream of a family came true, although differently than he imagined it. Sometimes he misses Sunshine and all the privileges that are connected to it. He has a hard time not being able to hide from the many things that take place in the family. His foster parents know this though, and are very optimistic and believe he will do well in his new surroundings.

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Marek started a course for trainers of foster-adoptive parents. The topics of the course fits very well with the concept of the development of our centre: “Finding and supporting foster families for former street

children.” These courses not only help us to understand the problems of the children better, but help us to more efficiently understand and help them. Nathalie is busy writing lessons for the “Life Skills Training”, and this costs her a good deal of her time and energy. In the family we are playing UNO a lot – Pascal just can’t get enough of it. Michelle is always on her way with her toys; whether to church, to preschool or to Sunshine, her dolls have to come along. Pascal no longer only wants to watch how we bring and fetch Michelle, yesterday he actually for the first time wanted to “stay in school”. Our kids don’t leave the house any more without their bikes... and they probably are the only ones, who wear a bicycle-helmet in our neighbourhood.



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Our special prayer needs are:

- Thanks for Sasha D. who could return back home, and for Sascha P. who can live in a foster family now.
- For Nadja, Julia, Aliona and Vitalik: that they will adjust to Sunshine and build good relationships to the kids and workers.
- Health of the kids in Sunshine (many are sick)
- Ongoing monthly costs of Sunshine
- Finding foster-parents for the foster-family
- Building-site: House for the foster-family and workshop

We truly thank you for your faithful and regular support in prayer and in giving. Without you we could not do this work! Sincerely from Kiev

Marek and Nathalie Wnuk  
with Michelle and Pascal  
and all the Kids and Staff  
from SUNSHINE Children Centre

P.S. Our Homepage [www.sunshine-kiiev.org](http://www.sunshine-kiiev.org) is on the web in two languages now: English and German.