

SEPTEMBER 2020



GREAT VICTORY

On August 14th, the Supreme Council of the State of Kherson met in Ukraine to decide the future of House of Joy orphanage. We have been in a nearly four-year struggle fighting for the rights of the underprivileged children living in the region. A few years ago, Ukraine began an attempt to move away from all orphanages. While the objective was perhaps well intentioned, the reality is many children would have faced further neglect without a well thought out plan. The first plan proposed was, in our view, not possible to accomplish without great damage to children currently in orphanages, including House of Joy.

With the government position being to close all orphanages, we have fought long and hard to protect our children. We decided that the most practical approach to allow the continued ministry to the children would be to have a two-step process.

STEP 1 : Turn House of Joy into an orphan processing center. We have the perfect facility for this. Orphaned children would still be allowed to live in the home while 'in process'. The process is to find them a suitable home via either foster care or adoption. This would allow us to touch more children, as the process mentioned is generally lengthy.

STEP 2 : In approximately 2-3 years House of Joy would become a Family Support Center. This step allows for care for orphans as well as extensive training for single mothers and young families. This is the process we advocated for with the government, feeling it was best for the children currently living at House of Joy and for future children.

However, there has been extreme opposition to this within certain segments of government because of selfish interests. Several different proposals were resisted. Of the other final options, one was to immediately close House of Joy and give the building to the Kahovka Department of Education. This would have been catastrophic to our children. There has been an element that has wanted the building without regard for the care of children.

The vote was held on August 14th, and the State Deputies (Parliament) voted for our proposal to be the plan moving forward. Praise God! House of Joy staff was overwhelmed with joy and tears at the good news. House of Joy Director Yulia Ygoryvna said, "Tonight will be the first night in the last four years that I can sleep in peace without worrying for the orphanage future."

Hopefully, House of Joy will start to be filled with new children in the near future. Yulia quickly received a number of phone calls from an orphanage for babies, stating they have several outgrowing their age limit (3 years and older), and they cannot be kept in the baby orphanage any longer. Also, the officials from the state social services center publicly stated that they already have many on their records that have to be taken out of their families in the immediate future due to neglect. These are children that need a loving home environment.

Many of you have been praying faithfully with us all through this challenge. Although the final details are not totally resolved, victory is on the horizon. This is new territory for Ukraine. Therefore, it remains to be seen what implementation will look like. Thank you for standing with us. We are grateful for all of the support we have received, support that has manifested in so many different ways.

If you have a moment today, please pause and say a prayer for the staff and children as they adjust to this new direction. Pray for the children that we are about to receive, that they will receive exactly what they need through a loving staff.

Blessings,
Jim and Pam

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Summer fun continues at House of Joy. Your support makes it possible for us to love, provide, and care for these youngsters who have a lot to navigate in life. Thank You!



Your prayers are appreciated as we continue to work with the Ukrainian systems and individual needs of these children.



Outdoor activities keep everyone active and smiling.



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