

# NEWSLETTER



## ISRAEL

To not be able to physically minister in Israel during this pandemic has been disappointing. We pray the circumstances change quickly. Zoom has allowed us to stay in touch, for which we are grateful. In spite of pandemic restrictions in 2020, we were able to:

- Give financial aid to churches we work with. They have not been allowed to have in-person services since March, creating financial hardship.
- Help Pastor Sergey Bocharnikov financially after his house caught on fire.
- Support the Golani Brigade by providing fleece jackets during a cold winter. The Golani Brigade are the first troops sent into combat.
- Complete construction of the Memorial and Ceremony Stage on the Netze Oz military base under the leadership of Commander Leonid.
- Give finances to support our partner in Israel with distribution of food to elderly Jews in Jerusalem
- Continue financial support for the ministry in Be'er Sheva for immigrants and the feeding program

We are deeply grateful to all of you who have given during this unusual season to allow ministry to continue, knowing many of you have faced financial challenges yourselves. Our prayer is that our God supply all of your needs (Philippians 4:19).

Happy New Year!

*Jim & Pam*

## HOUSE OF JOY

### THE STORY OF 4-YEAR-OLD MAXIM IVANOVICH

Maxim's mother abused him a lot. Once he was beaten by her so hard that he had to spend 10 days in the hospital ICU. The court proceeded to take away her parental care rights. Maxim's aunt, his mom's sister, decided to take custody of her nephew. The aunt has two children and lives with a boyfriend who is not the children's father. Maxim was assigned to one of the local kindergartens. One day the teacher noticed fresh bruises on his body and contacted the local Child Protective Services with her concern. When the social workers arrived, they first met with the kindergarten principal who denied all the concerns and didn't let the social workers meet Maxim. Several weeks later the situation repeated itself. Maxim's teacher noticed fresh bruises on his body. She called Child Protective Services and asked them to come quickly and directly to their classroom. They did accordingly and started the procedure of taking Maxim out of his aunt's care. After a couple of days at the hospital, Maxim was sent to House of Joy. When our director first met him, she said "I am the person in charge here. What is your name?" He said, "Maxim. Are you really the boss here?" Yulia said, "Yes, I am." He replied, "Then you need to tell me this. Will I get beaten here too?" Yulia said, "Maxim, I promise, no one will ever touch you here!"

Today, Maxim is adapting really well. As his heart opened up, he started telling the workers all the crazy things his mom and aunt would do to him at this young age. The staff has noted that Maxim is very smart for his age and loves when someone reads books to him.



Maxim Ivanovich



House of Joy Assistant Director, Galina, reading a book to Maxim.



## 2020 REFLECTIONS

We definitely experienced the most unusual year of our lives in 2020. From mid-March until December, international travel was stopped to most countries preventing us from being able to enter Ukraine and Israel.

Ukraine did recently adopt a policy for Americans that they can enter the country for two days only if they arrive with a negative COVID test taken within 48 hours of travel. I am debating giving it a try in January, as we definitely need to get some items there. Israel currently is not allowing US citizens to enter its territory. The May, 2021, Holy Land Tour has not been cancelled, as we

are being told the travel ban will probably be lifted by then.

In spite of the unforeseen pandemic, ministry has continued due to our dedicated team. House of Joy successfully completed its government mandated transition to becoming an Orphan Processing Center in 2020. Twenty-nine new children moved into the home this Fall and are adjusting very well. Maxim's story on the front page is an example of the children that are brought to us. I believe you will understand how appreciative we are that you help to give these children a stable home and life.

Christmas is celebrated in Ukraine on January 7th. We hope to make this the most memorable Christmas ever for these new children.

If you would like to participate, please designate your gift "HOJ Christmas".



**AWAKING HOPE**

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*Holy Land Tour*

**MAY 5-15, 2021**

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