

BRITISH HUMANITARIAN AID NEWS JULY 2016

Registered Charity - 1031547. 11, Devon Road, Canterbury, CT1 1RP Tel. 01227 453434

We don't know where the time has gone, (we suppose it's that getting older thing!) and we are horrified to realise that we have not sent out any news since February. We would like to thank all our dedicated collectors for the considerable amount of aid donated this year. However, just recently we have been receiving greater numbers of inappropriate items. We do not take household furniture except by prior arrangement. Old tape and CD players, televisions and radios, and bayonet light fittings are of no use out there. Odd items of china, ornaments, picture frames and vases are also of little use and take up valuable space. In fact, for household items we, and they, only really want the basic essentials.

SPRING TRIP



Collected aid

At the end of March, following an exhausting fortnight filled with huge collections in the UK, we were out in the Chernihiv Region distributing "cleared" aid to three organisations in Chernihiv and the Arattas, together with Social and Territorial Centres in Nizhin, Varva, Talalayevka, Novgorod Siversky and Cemenivka. At the latter we were told of their project to create a play/study room for the kids of parents attending meetings and with Varva Territorial Services where we will be helping with creating a new home for the elderly.



BHA Warehouse early March

The vast majority of these were amazingly positive about their work despite the depressing conditions of life in the region for the ordinary population. Only Novgorod seemed less enthusiastic. All are enormously grateful for all the help that you, our supporters, give to them. It makes a huge difference to their lives to know that some people, somewhere, actually care about them.

FINANCES

Thanks to two generous donations by individuals, we have been able to send out two further lorries with much needed aid. One in March and just recently on 21st. June we sent out the fourth of the year. This would seem to infer that our finances are healthy, but in fact all four of the lorries this year have been funded solely by individuals and the Charity is scarcely able to cover its running expenses. As well as your normal support we desperately need help to find other sources of funding. We will be grateful for any help



What we throw away can bring happiness

We are doing our best to economise and have fortunately found an Agency dealing with Eastern European transport that has come up with a considerably reduced cost for a lorry. The last load was with this agency and all went well so we will stay with them. Philip is also planning to personally finance a LHD vehicle that will be registered and stay in Ukraine. This will have two major benefits in that he will not need to spend the equivalent of a month each year travelling to and fro, and as the flight and ferry costs are roughly equivalent there will be a huge saving by not having to pay for 8 tanks of fuel per trip!

JUNE TRIP

The purpose of this trip was twofold. The first was to distribute the latest "cleared" lorry. This was carried out successfully except for the last

destination when, as usual, the Region's appalling roads, combined with unbelievably heavy rain storms, caused damage to the van.



The road to Vaganichi

A delay to the repairs, extended by the alternator's brushes failing, at least meant that the secondary purpose, converting the school building at Vaganichi, for the home for the elderly, could receive much needed attention. The delay, plus a Polish Customs strike also meant abandoning the van in Chernihiv and a flight back so that we could cope with loading the booked lorry.



Chereshenky Internat Kindergarten

The district Arattas, in Makosheno and Shchors, continue with their enthusiastic work for their communities and both received aid, while Chernihiv Aratta was busy this time helping their town's large number of displaced Ukrainians.



Distribution to the villages.

Endless changes to the fussy administration's requirements make everything to do with the receipt and distribution of aid a real hassle. The team deserve great credit for coping as they do. A further six organisations in the town and districts received visits and support, including a brand new venture "Integration" Centre for Medical, Social and Physical Rehabilitation.



"Integration"

In Vaganichi, it was disappointing to find that Nadia, the mother of "piglet family" was in poor health and struggling to cope with everything that she had taken on. The cheese production had escalated from a weekly visit to a farmers market to a daily processing of 170 litres of milk, from their own cows and from those of several villagers, with daily trips to Gorodnya and Chernihiv to sell the products.



Selling products at Gorodnya

While this is providing a useful, if unofficial, income the long hours of work involved are causing a great deal of tiredness and stress. To make things worse their ancient tractor is defying their valiant efforts to get it working.



Forlorn attempts at repairs

Philip, thanks to a windfall, was able to help and the older boys were the excited recipients of a small tractor that will cope with all but the heaviest work.



Sergei, the deceased father's natural son, is completing the sale of their family's property in Crimea and hopes to be able to invest some of the proceeds in the farm.



With regard to the ex school buildings, that will become a haven for the elderly, a focused effort has enabled the conversion of one classroom.



While there is still some finishing to be done, an office space, two rooms for staff and an area for toilets, washbasins and showers have been created.



New Staff Room

In the end room a set of kitchen units, courtesy of Crown Products, have been installed. The work on the water supply and waste water tanks is underway.



Lighting and power wiring!

The residential rooms will need some decoration and partitions and the electrics throughout will need upgrading. However, at least some progress has been made on the essential changes. It also seems that the problems with the ownership of the land have been resolved and we should soon be able to buy the whole site, thanks to a donation from America. All the work at Vaganichi so far has been done using recycled materials donated in the UK. To finish all the work we will need some funding that, at present, BHA is not in a position to provide.



New life in the villages

We have previously mentioned the Chernihiv Charity, Parents Voice. They have identified a large number of families with handicapped children that fall outside the categories helped by other organisations. They are just embarking on a project to create a Day Centre, with no charges, for these families, they estimate around a hundred! They have the option on an ex-council building, at minimal rent, which they will convert. We will be offering them what help we can.

We are extremely grateful to Alan, Pauline and team at Felsted Aid for a generous donation of two vans and a trailer load of surplus aid, together with a much needed contact for obtaining wheelchairs.

July 2016

Philip G. Edmonds