

Chornobyl Chronicle

CHILDREN OF CHORNOBYL RELIEF FUND NATIONAL NEWSLETTER FALL 2002 VOL. XXV



Scouts from the PLAST Boys' Camp at East Chatham, NY gather around guest speakers Nadia Matkiwsky, Alex Kuzma, and Olena Welhasch after a workshop on the Chornobyl aftermath.

Summer Camps Raise Awareness and Support for Children in Ukraine

For hundreds of Ukrainian-American youngsters attending camps in New York and Pennsylvania, the summer of 2002 was a time to reflect on the fate of children in their ancestral homeland and to engage in lively brainstorming sessions to help improve their quality of life. On July 10th, representatives from CCRF were invited to the PLAST Ukrainian-American Camp in East Chatham, New York to conduct educational workshops for schoolchildren and teenagers. CCRF founder Nadia Matkiwsky, Executive Director Alex Kuzma and Procurement Director Olenka Welhasch provided in-depth presentations on the Chornobyl aftermath and responded to a flurry of questions from campers eager for information on how they could be of help. Camp counselors integrated these workshops into this year's general theme of protecting the environment ("Earth, Air, Fire and Water") and reinforcing PLAST's traditional mission of community service, including the organization's pledge to aid Ukraine and to help the less fortunate.

"This was a great opportunity for our girls to apply and cultivate the virtues promoted by the international scouting movement", said camp director, Oresta Zobniw of Binghamton, New York. In August, thousands of Ukrainian-American scouts ("plastuny") from across the globe gathered in Lviv, Ukraine for one of the largest jamborees in recent memory. The PLAST organization was banned during the Soviet era, but has seen a strong revival since Ukraine won its independence in 1991.

Senior PLAST leaders are now exploring various proposals to intensify humanitarian efforts that can help combat poverty and disease in Ukraine, and to build a sense of solidarity with young people in Eastern Europe.

In June, CCRF received a charitable gift from the "Lisovi Chorty" Fraternity and girl scouts from the Newark area. On October 8th, the Black Sea Fraternity ("Chornomortsi"), many of whose members have been very active in support of CCRF, will be holding a "Lobster Night" fundraiser with all proceeds dedicated to our fund. Anyone interested in taking part is urged to call Mr. Orest Fedash at the Ramada Hotel & Conference Center in East Hanover, NJ (973) 386-5622.

Christmas Drive in July - At the "All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Camp" in Emlenton, PA, youngsters inspired by their Church's sponsorship of several orphanages in Ukraine organized a unique drive to provide Christmas presents to especially needy children. Under the leadership of counselor Charissa Martin of Brooklyn, NY and Natalie Kapeluk of Pittsburgh, PA, the campers assembled boxes filled with toys, personal hygiene products, children's clothes, coloring books and school supplies, all adorned with colorful wrapping paper. Next summer, the Ukrainian Orthodox League and its Office of Youth Ministry is making plans to send a brigade of up to 20 young volunteers to spend two weeks at one of the orphanages adopted by CCRF and the UOC-USA in an intensive campaign to upgrade living conditions and to work directly with handicapped children. Anyone interested in taking part in this mission is urged to contact Natalie Kapeluk at (412)488-9664.



Boxes pile up at the All-Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Camp in Emlenton, PA as campers prepare a shipment of packages for orphans in Ivano-Frankivsk.

Update: Buffalo-Area Art Project Adorns a Hospital in Lutsk

Our readers in Western New York region will be pleased to learn that a series of beautiful hand-made prints designed by schoolchildren in Kenmore and Tonawanda, New York have now been placed on display at the Volynian Regional Children's Medical Center in Northwestern Ukraine. Last spring, this colorful artwork was on display at the Burchfield-Penney Art Gallery in Buffalo. Through the efforts of our Buffalo Chapter President, Olenka Bodnarskyj-Gunn and summer intern Christine Duzyj, the prints were transported to Ukraine in June. The prints were created as messages of love and solidarity by students at the Kenmore East High School and the Charles Lindbergh Elementary School. The Volynian Children's Medical Center is located in the city of Lutsk, providing treatment for children with leukemia and other cancers linked to radiation exposure. Three districts of Volyn Province received large doses of nuclear fallout from the Chornobyl nuclear disaster, even though they were located more than 200 miles west of the reactor site.



Two young patients from the cancer ward at the Volynian Regional Children's Medical Center admire one of the print murals specially made for their hospital by schoolchildren in Kenmore and Amherst, New York. (Photo by Christine Duzyj)

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Dear Sirs!

The administration of the City Children's Hospital thanks you very much for the attention and help you gave to our patients' health. Your humanitarian aid is both material and spiritual support and it proves that God hasn't left us at this hard period for our country. We thank you for everything we received due to your help, we hope and ask you to continue to help us with this humanitarian aid in the coming time.

Serhiy Storozhuk, M.D.
Chief Doctor

Chernivtsi City Children's Hospital No. 1
In a letter to Dr. Bohdan Slabjy & the
Central Maine Chapter of CCRF

Dear Dr. Zenon and Nadia Matkiwsky,

Please accept our sincerest greetings from the Volyn neonatologists. We would like to thank you once more for your beautiful gift in the form of the "Neonatology Manual" that was translated and published by the Children of Chernobyl Relief Fund. The manual was distributed among neonatologists in each delivery hospital of Volyn Oblast (Region). It has become a useful handbook in our everyday practice. Your help is especially important because today we all feel a lack of current scientific information concerning newborn care.

We are very much grateful to you and all the Fund workers for the invaluable help you give to Ukrainian Children.

We wish you all the best and always eagerly await your arrival in Ukraine.

On behalf of the Volyn neonatologists,
Tetyana Vihovska, M.D.,
Oblast Chief Neonatologist



Doctors at the Volynian Regional Children's Medical Center take pride in the new Manuals on Neonatal Care that CCRF translated, published and distributed during last April's national training conference.

Highly Esteemed Dr. Zenon [Matkiwsky]:

We sincerely thank you for the aid you recently provided to the Kyiv Maternity Hospital #7 in Kyiv. We received the phototherapy lamps from the PARAMED Company, which gave us the ability to carry out effective treatment of newborns with jaundice, whose prevalence is growing with every year. In the near future, we hope to receive a respirator for newborns which has already been at our hospital on a trial basis. With the aid of this equipment, we have been able to save the lives of several infants.

Dr. Olena Sulima
President of the Association of Neonatologists
of Ukraine



Tournament organizers, sponsors and CCRF activists join Congresswoman Louise Slaughter at the Shadow Pines Golf Club at the September 14th fundraiser. (Seated from left to right: Tamara Denysenko, Congresswoman Slaughter, Lesia Telega; standing: John Adamczuk, Roman Lesiv, Myron Babiuik, CCRF Procurement Director Lisa Milanytch, Rochester UFCU President Bill Kornlyo, Bohdan Skrobach and CCRF Executive Director, Alex Kuzma.

Rochester Golf Tournament

On Saturday, September 14th at the picturesque Shadow Pines Golf Club in Penfield, New York, the Rochester Chapter of CCRF and the Rochester Ukrainian Federal Credit Union sponsored their 4th annual charity golf tournament to benefit the Children of Chernobyl Relief Fund. Over 50 golfers enjoyed a relaxing afternoon of golf and camaraderie followed by cocktails and an evening dinner that featured keynote speaker U.S. Representative Louise Slaughter. As a member of CCRF's Honorary Board and a member of the Congressional Ukraine Caucus, Congresswoman Slaughter thanked the crowd that packed the Clubhouse banquet hall for its support of CCRF. "You should all be so proud of what CCRF has accomplished in Ukraine," said Mrs. Slaughter. "When I hear about the reductions in infant mortality and your success in fighting children's cancer, and setting up these neonatal units, I'm just amazed."

Tournament co-organizer Bohdan Skrobach congratulated the winning team of Andrew and Jerry Randisi, Clark Cogan and Jim McKeegan. He especially thanked Delta Airlines and other corporate sponsors who donated raffle gifts. CCRF Executive Director Alex Kuzma thanked the tournament organizers, the sponsors and golfers who helped to raise over \$3,500 at this year's event. The Rochester Chapter recently donated \$15,000 to help establish a new neonatal intensive care unit at the Ivano-Frankivsk Maternity Hospital. With a grant from the State of New York arranged by State Senator James Alesi, the Chapter also provided \$5,000 for prenatal vitamins to help reduce the incidence of birth defects and pregnancy complications in Rivnenska Oblast (Rivne Province) that was especially hard-hit by fallout from the Chernobyl disaster.

The Rochester Chapter is planning two more fundraisers before the end of the year: a Family Night and Spaghetti Dinner during the weekend of November 2-3. For more information on these events, contact Mr. Myron Babiuik at (585) 872-4263.



6th Annual Danbury Road Race

(Danbury, CT) On Ukrainian Independence Day (August 24th), the Holy Trinity Orthodox Church held its sixth annual 5-K road race. Over the past six years, the Holy Trinity Race has become a popular event in the late summer, drawing hundreds of avid runners from Danbury, Ridgefield and surrounding communities, and guests from as far away as Colorado and Georgia.

This year's race drew a field of 115 runners, some as young as 12 and some as old as 73. The organizing committee, led by Jim Zeleniak secured corporate sponsorships from Wachovia Securities, Evian Water, the Colorado Brewery and Steak House, The Ashford Group, and Joseph A. Bank Clothiers.

The top three finishers in each age group received the traditional Slavic nesting doll trophies. The overall winner for 2002 was Danbury resident Sergio Ribeiro who finished the course in 15 minutes, 28 seconds. The overall winner in the women's field was Kathy Kost who finished in 22 minutes, 02 seconds. CCRF is grateful to all the organizers and runners who helped to make this road race such a success. To learn more about organizing a 5K race in your community, call (203) 748-0671.



Above, the winners of the 2002 Holy Trinity 5K Road Race gather for a photo on an athletic field at Western Connecticut State University.

Left, Rochester golfers follow a promising drive at the Shadow Pines Golf Club. From Left to right: Borys Yakowyna, Bohdan Melnyk, and tournament co-organizer and Gold Sponsor, John Adamczuk of Crossbridge Financial Group.

Summer Interns Help Monitor Progress at CCRF Hospitals

This summer, CCRF benefited from the insights and energy of two New York-area medical students who spent two months in Ukraine visiting our partner hospitals and developing reports on their accomplishments, as well as their most urgent needs. Christine Duzyj, a first-year student at Columbia Medical School and a native of Warren, Michigan and Alexei Wedmid, a student at New York University Medical School took the initiative to design their overseas internships and secured funding from their institutions to volunteer for CCRF. Ms. Duzyj spent most of her internship visiting hospitals in Lutsk, Lviv, Rivne and Chernivtsi while Mr. Wedmid devoted most of his efforts to hospitals in eastern and central Ukraine - Poltava, Dnipropetrovsk, Odessa and Kyiv.

"This was an incredible experience," said Christine Duzyj after her return to the United States. "CCRF is held in high esteem by its medical partners and they have worked very hard to live up to the faith and trust placed in them." Both interns interviewed a wide range of doctors and medical workers to obtain a more nuanced, in-depth view of the health problems and administrative challenges they face on a daily basis. They forwarded a variety of recommendations for CCRF's Medical Advisory Committee to consider. "We believe that Christine's and Alexei's insights could be very valuable as our medical advisers develop new strategies for improving the quality of care in Ukraine," said Alex Kuzma, CCRF's Executive Director.



CCRF intern Christine Duzyj poses with Ukrainian children whose lives were saved using CCRF donated equipment.

The health crisis in many regions remains very acute. In Rivne, for instance, Duzyj reported that most women visit the gynecologist only after becoming pregnant, making it very difficult to combat pre-existing infections without harming the fetus. Nearly 97% of all expectant mothers are anemic, 30% have thyroid anomalies, and a disproportionately high number suffer from other prenatal complications. The large supply of prenatal vitamins and folic acid CCRF delivered as part of its 30th Airlift last spring was deeply appreciated by doctors and patients at the Rivne Maternity Hospital. These vitamins were secured with the help of a grant from the State of New York, which was forwarded to CCRF by our Rochester Chapter. The interns noted that the neonatal intensive care unit delivered to the Rivne Regional Children's Hospital is being used extensively and both Rivne hospitals are being maintained in immaculate condition. (Hygiene is often a problem even in some of Ukraine's most prestigious medical

institutions.) Based on Christine's report, one of our top priorities for this fall will be the procurement of at least one neonatal respirator for the Rivne Maternity Hospital to help stabilize infants requiring transportation from delivery rooms to the intensive care ward at the Regional Children's Hospital. Anyone who might wish to help finance this \$10,000 piece of life-saving equipment is urged to contact CCRF at (973) 376-5140, or to forward a tax-deductible check to CCRF at 272 Old Short Hills Road, Short Hills, NJ 07078.

(We will be providing more details and stories from the summer internships in our Christmas 2002 edition.)

Cardiac Conferences to begin in November

Every year, over 4,000 infants are born in Ukraine with serious congenital heart defects. Without timely diagnosis and corrective surgery, most of these children will die before reaching adolescence. Unfortunately, even in the largest Ukrainian cities, hospitals lack the basic equipment and training they need to correct these heart defects.

This fall, with the help of CCRF and a major grant from the Medtronic Foundation, the L'viv Regional Clinical Children's Hospital (LRCCH) will host a series of workshops and regional conferences to train over 700 doctors, surgeons and staff in the proper diagnosis and treatment of cardiac anomalies. Dr. Roman Kovalsky, a highly skilled cardiac surgeon who trained in the United States under CCRF's auspices in 1991-92 will be one of the leading trainers, along with Dr. Ilya Yemets of the Amosov Cardiac Surgery Institute in Kyiv. Despite the lack of modern heart-lung machines, blood gas analyzers, or other equipment, Drs. Yemets and Kovalsky have performed miraculous and life-saving surgeries on hundreds of children in recent years.

Over the past 18 months, 44 newborns underwent cardiac surgery at the LRCCH with only three deaths. The most common defects treated were expansion of constricted aorta, shunts for subclavian artery, removal of benign heart and lung tumors, expansion of constricted esophagus, and separation of tracheo-esophageal fistulas. The Lviv RCCH has received a great deal of hospital supplies, medicine and equipment from CCRF since 1995.

The training series funded by CCRF and the Medtronic Foundation will begin with doctors from the regions of Ternopil, Lviv, Chernivtsi, Khmel'nitsky, Trans-Carpathia, Ivano-Frankivsk and Volyn'. Traditionally, these regions received less medical training during the Soviet era and the doctors are eager to gain exposure to medical techniques used by their East European counterparts.

Within the next year, CCRF is working to secure a heart by-pass machine and a more powerful blood gas analyzer to expand the hospital's ability to treat more children threatened by more complicated heart defects. Anyone interested in providing financial support for CCRF's cardiac program is urged to send tax-deductible checks to CCRF at 272 Old Short Hills Road, Short Hills, NJ 07078. To discuss major gifts and specific earmarks, please call Alex Kuzma at (973) 376-5140 or (860) 652-0458.



Dr. Roman Kovalsky whose training at Boston's Children's Hospital and the Deborah Heart & Lung Center was arranged by CCRF, examines one of his newest patients at the Lviv Regional Clinical Children's Hospital. Olya Myklyasevych was born four weeks early, weighing only 1300 grams, with an atrophic right ventricle, and with a tracheo-esophageal fistula. Olya is the 5th child in a very poor family. Her first surgery was conducted when she was two days old, to place a feeding tube that would allow her to gain nourishment and strength. Her second operation, conducted after she had gained a bit of weight, separated her trachea and esophagus, to allow her to eat without food entering her lungs. A third operation opened her larynx, allowing her to breathe and eat more normally, and only her fourth operation enabled doctors to correct her heart defect. In this photograph, Olya is 6 months old and is expected to go home after one final operation to close the laryngeal opening. (Report by Christine Duzyj.)



At the Lviv Regional Specialized Children's Hospital, a young cancer patient and her mother brace themselves for another round of chemotherapy. During Airlift #30 earlier this year, CCRF delivered a large donation of leukemia medication to this children's cancer center. Thanks to our subscribers' generous support, the LRSCH continues to achieve high remission and survival rates that rival many Western hospitals.

Endoscopy System & Ultrasound Installed in Lutsk & Chernivtsi

We are pleased to report that our new partner hospital in Chernivtsi has installed an Acuson-Siemens' ultrasound delivered aboard CCRF's 30th Airlift. A state-of-the-art Olympus endoscopy system has also been installed at the Volynian Regional Children's Medical Center in Lutsk. Thanks to our donors in Maine and Hudson Valley, NY, for making this possible! (More information about this donation our Christmas edition)



CCRF co-founder Nadia Matkiwsky meets with young campers ("novachky") at the PLAST camp in East Chatham, NY in July. Following the workshops, many youngsters were eager to learn how they could apply the scouting commitment to perform "good deeds" to the Chernobyl relief mission.

CCRF Testifies at Hearings

In the wake of the 9/11 tragedy, representatives of CCRF have been called upon to testify at several public hearings and forums on the aftermath of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and to share the lessons that may apply to increasing emergency preparedness at US nuclear facilities. In June, CCRF presented testimony before the Westchester County Legislature and at public meetings in Allendale, NJ and in New York City.

Calendar of Events

- October 8** - Lobster Night at the Ramada Hotel and Conference Center, Rt. 10, East Hanover, NJ
hosted by the PLAST Black Sea Fraternity (Chomomortsi)
- November 2** - Gala Fundraising Banquet Sheraton -Four Seasons, Rochester, NY
- November 10** - Benefit Concert featuring Julian Kytasty & Photo Exhibit featuring works by Joseph Sywenkyj & Penny Millar
Charter Oak Cultural Center
Hartford, CT
- November 16** - Night at the Oscars Gala Fundraiser at the Grand Chalet, Clifton, NJ
- December 3-8** - Chernobyl Photo Exhibit by Joseph Sywenkyj
Wooster Street Gallery
New York, NY
- December 14** - *
Mark your calendars
CCRF Metro Christmas Party
Location to be announced

New Jersey Governor hails Chernobyl relief mission

On August 24th, New Jersey Governor Jim McGreevey hosted a large gathering at the Governor's Mansion in Drumthwacket (Princeton Township) to mark the Eleventh Anniversary of the Declaration of Ukrainian Independence. Among the 1,300 community leaders invited from across the state were many CCRF activists and directors. In his prepared remarks, the Governor made special mention of the leading role that New Jersey residents have made in providing medical aid and technical assistance to the children of Chernobyl.



Governor McGreevey welcomes CCRF co-founder Nadia Matkiwsky at the August 24th Commemoration of Ukrainian Independence.

Tis' the Season to be planning !

As the Holiday Season approaches, many of our chapters and patrons are planning creative fundraisers to help CCRF build its financial campaign chest for 2003. Please keep CCRF in mind as you plan your Christmas parties and holiday revelry. We are very grateful to the Ukrainian Professional & Businesspersons' Association of New York/New Jersey that raised \$18,000 at its party last December. Even more intimate gatherings can generate significant revenues for our mission. CCRF is blessed with many friends in the musical community who have offered to perform at private homes as a benefit to CCRF. We also acknowledge the many groups of carollers who have raised funds and shared their holiday cheer with needy children in Ukraine. Some families are even foregoing Christmas presents and boosting their year-end tax deductions! For more ideas on how you can help, please call us at (973) 376-5140.



At our Connecticut office, CCRF volunteer Christina Melvin prepares to pack some of the large stuffed teddy bears collected by students at Berlin High School.

Connecticut Students Organize Toy Drive

Last spring, high school students from New Britain, Berlin and Kensington, Connecticut launched an ambitious drive to collect stuffed animals and new toys for children in Ukrainian hospitals. In a campaign initiated by senior Orysia Kouts, now a freshman at George Washington University, students at Berlin High School donated a large collection of new stuffed animals and teddy bears for children's cancer wards in Lviv and Lutsk. Teacher Dave Grigociewicz at New Britain High School inspired a similar drive for children's toys and games. The Hasbro Company also donated a large supply of Play-Do @ in response to a January promotional event for CCRF featuring World skating champion Viktor Petrenko. CCRF's New Haven Chapter helped to pack and ship the large boxes of toys with the help of volunteers Maria and Bohdan Antonyshyn, Christina Melvin, Bill Derlycia, Irene Oleksiak, Rev. Stefan Yanovsky and Mrs. Orysia Yanovska.

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