

Hope for Children News

October 2018

Dzirnavu 119-30, Riga LV-1050, Latvia, www.hope.lv, e-mail: hope@hope.lv, T.+371 27711245

"..but blessed is he who is generous to the poor "
Proverbs 14:21

Family Support

Gita is a volunteer and a mum of six children of which five are already adults. She is an amazing person whose abusive childhood had caused her to lose all trust in people (consequently she had no friends) but resulted in a desire to help other kids by fostering two children long-term. When we asked her what brought her to our Family Support Centre for help this is what she shared:

In 2010 I had a job but it was very poor pay. At that time I had 7 children to care for and was expecting the eight. The money we lived on was nowhere near enough to feed and clothe us all and a colleague at work suggested I turn to HFC for help. They helped me with everything, clothes for little ones and big ones, food, things for a pram etc, it was a lot of help. If I could manage somehow I didn't ask for help but turned to the centre when it got really tough. Unfortunately we lived in terror of my husband who became more and more emotionally abusive and I had to take the children away and rent my own place. I had no money apart from child support and an invalidity allowance but family loaned money until I could get help from social services. Little by little with the help of Hope for Children I could collect together furnishings, blankets etc, and they gave clothing, toys, food and money when we needed medicine, helping me pay rent until we could get income support. Christmas would have been empty without their help but this summer we had the most amazing gift of all, a holiday by the sea. Since we've never had a holiday by the sea before it was something like a fairytale and I learnt for the first time to really rest and play games with my children. It was like an explosion in my life that broke down barriers inside of me and I could begin to share my deepest hurts with those who truly care.



After paying rent and utilities Gita is left with only EUR 116 (£83, \$151) for food etc. for a whole month. Both she and her daughter have asthma and are desperate for help to cover winter heating bills.

School holidays are three months long and so families really appreciated an invite to a day camp we ran.



Last year 258 families received practical help from our Family Support Centre. We're so grateful for all the clothing, food, school materials, toys, household items etc that are donated but also for monetary gifts which we use to help buy medicine, replace a lost ID card, cancel a nursery school debt so a mum can return to work and much more.

Day centres

KAROSTA (PORT OF LIEPAYA)



Recently we had our autumn painting competition and according to the childrens' votes Maksim's picture was the best. He was so happy about that and when he received some chocolate as a prize told us that he would share it with his mum.

Maksim is 7 yrs old and is in grade one at school. He lives together with his mum, who has been diagnosed with cancer, his two sisters and little brother. His father has been unable to live with the family.

When Maksim first came to the day centre he would try to hide from everyone; he would get angry if he didn't like something, was withdrawn and would just play Lego on his own. Now though he smiles and laughs more often, takes part in activities with other children and with the help of staff is learning to control his outbursts of anger.

For Maksim the day centre is a very important place. Here he can relax, find peace and receive a dose of love from the centre workers, which for him is very much needed.

Dana Gederta, Day Centre leader

BOLDERAYA (RIGA, CAPITAL)



Tracy is one of our really valued volunteers who is not only great with kids and does fun activities but has been faithfully turning up every week for almost a year now.



Kids from Bolderaya and the other day centres were able to have week long holidays in our house by the sea this summer, resting away from their troubles at home.

It's a big event going back to school after three months of holiday and is met with celebration and ceremony in Latvia.

SKRUNDA (COUNTRY TOWN)

A beautiful summer, rich with adventures has passed and September began not only with joy and pleasant cares – what will I wear, what school bag will be given me, will my classmates be friendly, what will my new teacher be like, etc - but also with unknowns and the question ‘will our centre continue to exist at all?’ Our ten year rental agreement had come to an end and we could find no suitable alternative in our small town. We prayed together with the children with thanks for the time we’d had in our little centre and cried since goodbyes are always sad. In our wildest dreams we could not have foreseen such a speedy and suitable solution. When I was told to approach the Lutheran church minister I never knew that the church had a house that had been standing empty for a long time. On 27 September we moved into our new ‘home’ which has turned out to be better than where we were before, in every respect. The care of the church that we have felt deeply has resulted in us wanting to be better and more loving ourselves.



Apart from the 11 regular kids others come to us from time to time like four siblings that moved some 10 kilometres away. We’re proud of this family which is today doing much better than 6 years ago. The mother no longer drinks heavily, keeps the home clean and tidy and the children have a new step-father who is kinder towards them. The oldest boy is studying carpentry and the second oldest has plans next year to start training for a profession with a dream of one day building his own house. The rest of the children are changing for the better too. One of our teens has become so patient and now carefully looks after her appearance; she used to be something like the ‘ugly duckling’ - physically abused, low self-esteem, shy, fearful, - but has now turned into a ‘swan’. The younger children look up to her, she is a good example of not giving up but fighting on.

Thank you to everyone who loves us and cares for us here in Skrunda!

Vineta Tarame, Day Centre leader



We continue to work with children most at risk whose homes are often cramped and squalid, who have elderly guardians or whose parents are 'under the influence', severely depressed, absent because of the need to work abroad, etc and although the battle to get them into shape seems long and tough at times we are even ourselves amazed at what a difference a little bit of constant love and attention can make. We have a very positive atmosphere because we know that there's hope for even the worst cases and this hope has proven well-founded over and over again. Occasionally we hear back from children we helped in the past and it's so heart-warming, take for example the following from letters that we recently received from Yana:

I'm an adult whose past was very, very bitter and full of pain, not only emotionally but also physically. Already at the age of four I became a street child. At first our back yard was my territory but later the whole of Riga. When it became impossible to stay at home I took off and lived wherever I could; my parents drank, drank a lot. The street was my home, even if it was minus 20 C outside and my family became dogs, cats, rats and some other kids who I'd share my last piece of bread with if needed. We protected each other. With time my friends were lured away though and I became alone and began to roam but then I heard about you. I don't remember how old I was exactly when I came to your day centre but here was a place where I could eat hot soup, get warm clothes and the main thing was that nobody hit me, called me names or ridiculed me, for God was among you. For the first time in my life I could eat slowly unafraid of someone taking my food away. I remember Christmases and other holidays, how I helped one carer write a story; what a wonderful time that was! When my parents were drunk and fighting I was with you and they didn't care where I was.

I attended your centre for a year or so before my parents moved us to the countryside. After leaving Riga I was back to roaming the streets.... there was almost nothing I didn't experience.

Now I have been back in Riga for 13 years. I'm happy and alive thanks to you. During that year with you God sowed a seed of faith in my heart and this hope gave me strength even to this day. If it hadn't been for you I would have turned out like my parents, who I can see nothing good in now or in the past. I am alive thanks to you. I would so like to hug one of you and say thank you.

It's hard for most of us to imagine what it could be like to feel unseen and unloved that's why, beyond the practical help we hire staff to meet our kids, and parents, with a smile and the unconditional love of God in their hearts. **We're truly grateful for all your support that makes it possible to provide help not only at the beginning of the school year and at Christmas but all year round!**

*Helen M Vipass
Director*

On the matter of giving...

In the first three quarters of this year our running costs have exceeded income and reserves are seriously depleted.

Please consider becoming our partners by sending a monthly donation or generous one-off gift. Thank you!

Bank transfers can be made (in any currency) to our multi-currency account at:

SWEDBANK

Account name: Hope for Children

IBAN Acct Nr: LV36HABA0551015180257, SWIFT:
HABALV22

You can donate through **PayPal**
e-mail: hope@hope.lv

But we can also recommend **Transferwise**

(www.transferwise.com) for a very cheap but reliable way of making international bank transfers **e-mail: hope@hope.lv**

If you live in the UK

Stewardship services collect gifts for us, and can recover and credit 25% tax on your gift.

Donate online at **www.give.net/hopeinlatvia**

Check their web page www.stewardship.org.uk for other ways you can donate to 'HOPE FOR CHILDREN LATVIA' or call them on 020 8502 5600

If you live in the USA

Tax deductible and other gifts can be directed to MDN. **T. (218) 820-2283**

Address cheques to **Ministry Developers Network** and send to PO Box 3115, Riverview, FL 33569 with a note designating the donation to '**Hope for Children, Latvia**'