

# One Heart Bulgaria

HOPE • LIFE • FUTURE  
*for Orphans*

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## ***Urgent appeal for Slaveikov***

The largest orphanage in Bulgaria needs your help this winter! This orphanage is so big--200 children--that it literally eats up the two sponsorships which help to support it. Please join with sponsors Vicki and Tyler Ginn and the Best Ever Book Club to raise some extra funds so broken windows can be replaced in this huge, freezing building.

Right in time for the holidays, we need 100 donations of \$75 toward this cause. Instead of agonizing over your Christmas presents this year, make this donation in the name of someone (Mom, Dad, Auntie M . . . ) and we'll send them a Christmas card thanking them from the whole orphanage!

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## **Hydrocephalus Program brings hope**

Medical Program Director Brooke Bates and Dr. John Clark each spent time in Bulgaria this past September and October.

Dr. Clark, a retired neurosurgeon from St. George, Utah, spent a month in Bulgaria as part of a One Heart Bulgaria initiative to provide surgery to children with hydrocephalus. Dr. Clark performed several surgeries, trained local neurosurgeons, and also assessed needs for the further development of the program. He plans to return and continue his work with the One Heart Hydrocephalus Program.

Much of Brooke's time was spent working with Field Director Nikolai Gavazov in further development of the program. She delivered an additional 39 shunts to the hospitals in Sofia and Plovdiv and met with three Bulgarian neurosurgeons to discuss the procedures of the Hydrocephalus Program. They agreed upon the development of a "Self-Declaration" form for impoverished families in need of a shunt, and created a procedural protocol, or manual, outlining the paperwork and documentation process for orphanages or families receiving a shunt or medical care for hydrocephalus through One Heart Bulgaria.

Brooke also met with Judy Ridgeway from the humanitarian group Bulgarian Child, and they



*Medical Program Director Brooke Bates visits a baby who received a shunt through One Heart Bulgaria.*

discussed the possibility of working together on aspects of the Hydrocephalus Program. A group of U.S. neurosurgeons, sponsored by Bulgarian Child, will be traveling to Bulgaria in the spring, and will be able to utilize much of the information and research gathered by Brooke and Dr. Clark. (Continued on page 2)



*Seven-year-old Velina was the first recipient of a shunt through the One Heart Bulgaria Hydrocephalus Program.*

**(continued from page 1)** So far, a total of eight surgeries have been performed, using shunts donated through One Heart Bulgaria. Dr. Clark himself performed two of those surgeries. The program is expected to expand tremendously this coming year.

*Below: The picture of this child, suffering from hydrocephalus, inspired One Heart Bulgaria director Deborah Gardner to develop the Hydrocephalus Program. Now these beautiful children will have a new lease on life. Right: This child awaits a shunt surgery. The damage caused by hydrocephalus can be much mitigated if a corrective operation takes place before the child is one year old. Below Right: Hydrocephalus can also occur spontaneously or following an accident in people of all ages. Here, Mitko is recovering nicely after his operation to install a shunt.*



## One Heart Bulgaria produces benefit music CD

**Courage To Shine** is the name of a CD which will be available December 8 with 100% of the proceeds going to support orphans in Bulgaria. The compilation has been made with Kelly King Anderson as executive producer and art designer. Gainer Brunson did the mastering and CD layout was by Justin King.

Special thanks are due to April Meservy, Deborah Dushku Gardner, Mindy Gledhill, Justin King, Andi Pitcher Davis, Matt Anderson and all of the artists who care deeply and generously donated their music to this project for the Bulgarian orphan children.

Artists and songs featured on the CD include: **Mindy Gledhill** "Child of Light," **Stephanie Smith** "At Your Side," **Sam Payne** "Rise Up and Shine," **April Meservy** "Lullaby," **InsideOut** "Dona Nobis Pachem," **Paul Engemann & 1621 voice children's choir** "It Just Takes Love," **Karyn Grant** "Lullaby Our Children," **Brian Rhodes** "We are The Ones," **April Meservy** "Everything Speaks His Name," **Shane Jackman** "Tender Mercies," **Early California** "Standing" and **Jennie Bangerter Larsen** "Amazing Grace".

The CD costs \$14.95 plus \$1.50 shipping and handling. Please visit the One Heart Bulgaria website at [oneheart-bg.org](http://oneheart-bg.org) to order.







## Internalizing true charity

*Dan Nebeker reports on his One Heart Bulgaria internship*

Upon arriving at Saint Marina orphanage I was startled by the conditions of the home. That morning had we been told that the orphanage where we would serve housed many of the most severely handicapped children in Bulgaria. The home cared for just over 50 children, about half of which were able to walk or move themselves without help; only 6 or 7 of them could talk. It was a very difficult scenario.

The first of our duties was to assist the nurses. After breakfast, we carried groups of children outside to sit on blankets in the yard. The fresh air was extremely pleasant even after only a few minutes inside the hospital. We worked on puzzles, colored, practiced verbal communication, and took turns on the broken teeter-totter or the single swing hanging from an apple tree. On hot days, we filled the inflatable pool with water and the children would take turns splashing.

At lunch time we spoon-fed the handicapped children blended soup-like mixtures. Each was fed until full and refused to take another bite. After lunch, the children had two hours to nap. During this time, we helped with jobs like carrying laundry bags, organizing donations, and translating food ingredients and cooking directions from English to Bulgarian.

One of my greatest privileges was learning to feel comfortable around some of the handicapped children who so desperately need love and attention. Their deformed bodies and distorted faces made it very hard for me to feel comfortable holding them, hugging them, or even just being around them without feeling all tense inside. Overcoming that feeling of discomfort during the first few days was a great success for me, personally.

At the other orphanages where we worked, Slaveikov and Saint Ivan Vazov, the routine was much more exciting. We introduced baseball, American football, and frisbee to their traditional choice, soccer. In addition to sports, we played card and computer games, colored, and practiced the English alphabet. We went on walks through the village, did pull-ups on the monkey bars, had penalty kick shoot-outs, and constantly entertained children.

We also organized a project to install a new fence for the orphanage in Medven. The old fence was rusted and brittle and tied together with string, rope, cloth and anything else that would hold it together. We worked together with the "Maistor" (handy-man) to pick up the materials from town and to take down the old fence and replace it with the new chain link one.



Games and planned activities were always great successes. Whether we played baseball, American football, "fly's up," frisbee, or an organized soccer match, any activity that was planned went over very well. I would recommend interns planning at least one activity before arrival at the orphanage.

One Heart Bulgaria is an excellent organization for self-motivated individuals who want to participate in a loosely structured program. We were told by all of the directors of the orphanages and many of the care-takers that our presence was very much appreciated.

# Interns change lives, including their own

*Bryce Youngquist, a One Heart Bulgaria intern July to August 2006*

Our assignment involved three orphanages: Saint Marina, Medven; Slaveikov, Sofia; and Ivan Vazov, Razliv. We definitely received the true Bulgarian experience from the big Sofia to the tiny village of Medven.

Our activities varied from orphanage to orphanage. Some of our activities consisted of service projects (fixing a worn out fence and organizing storage rooms), going on walks, being a helping hand, talking with the orphans, playing all sorts of games (football, soccer, cards, Frisbee, baseball, ping pong), and overall trying to be role models for the orphans.

I brought over some sporting equipment. American football is an automatic success but the only game they could play was "500." Trying to explain and organize "two hand touch," was too complicated due to our lacking Bulgarian and the orphan's lack of patience. I brought over a wiffle ball set and we attempted to organized some baseball but that didn't last too long as there was too much fighting for who's up to bat. But it was a great toy to bring over for the orphans.

Our first orphanage was in Medven, at the orphanage Saint Marina. We only talked a little bit with Nikolai before getting on the bus. We did not have a clue of where we were going. We had the impression it was going to be about a two hour or so bus ride to the final destination. It turned out to be more than 4 hours on the bus.

Medven turned out to be a great experience for me. Nikolai talked with us a little bit and told us that Saint Marina only held orphans with disorders. This caught me off guard at first and was tough to get used to. The disorders ranged from Down syndrome to autism, cerebral palsy, and other disorders I'd never seen before. Interaction with the children was limited to about 15 kids and only 6 of them could actually speak. I'm glad I had the opportunity to work with those special children. It was life changing to be working with those types of kids for two weeks and it was great to be able to assist the workers there that do a great job with the children.

We tried to be helpful in any way possible to the orphanages. At times we may not have felt useful but looking back we were able to be helpful in a small way or large. Whether it was carrying disabled orphans up and down stairs or helping with repairs on the building, we were able find ways to be helpful.

Nikolai Gavazov is a great asset to One Heart Bulgaria. I am very thankful for my opportunity to participate in the One Heart Bulgaria internship program. It was a great experience that I will be able to look back on for the rest of my life.





# One Heart Bulgaria to provide bakery and apartment for teenage orphans

*Arizona couple raising funds.*

By Deborah Dushku Gardner

When Bulgarian orphans turn eighteen, they are released from their orphanages and sent out to fend for themselves. If they do not have extended family that are interested in housing them or assisting them, the teenagers have no way to properly reintegrate into Bulgarian society. Often these young adults leave the orphanages with no work skills or job experience and no life-skills training in general. To further complicate matters, Bulgarian employers and Bulgarian society as a whole shun them. The teenagers are often left with little choice but to become criminals, drug dealers, prostitutes, or beggars on the streets. For them, it is a matter of survival.

One Heart Bulgaria works to put an end to this dilemma by creating programs whereby teenage orphans can learn valuable job skills, life skills, and social skills for their successful reintegration into society. With the help of Faun Childers' fundraising efforts, One Heart Bulgaria's first project in this area will be a small bakery with two apartments on the second floor.

Faun learned about One Heart Bulgaria from an old copy of the Deseret News. When she came across an article about the organization, her heart was touched and she decided to see if she could be of any help to the organization.

"When I received Faun's email," recalls Deborah Gardner, One Heart Bulgaria Director, "I was stunned! I had been praying that God would send me someone who could really help us and Faun was that person."

Just as interesting was Faun's response to Deborah: "I had to laugh...you had been praying? I had been praying to find something I could get involved in that was meaningful and worthwhile. The answer to both of our prayers...a three year old article."

With the support of her husband, Pete, Faun decided to take on fundraising for the Bakery and Apartment project. It is a huge endeavor with the cost of the bakery building itself at \$6,500 and the renovation, equipment and apartment furnishings estimating an additional \$6,000. But Faun is determined and has thought up every kind of fundraiser possible to try to raise the funds.



*Have you seen the Muffin Man? This gentleman is the professional baker who will teach and supervise the bakery program.*

"We are retired. We do not have a lot, but we sure have enough to share. It would give us great pleasure to help some of God's little ones."

Bakeries in Bulgaria are very popular and provide the perfect opportunity for teenagers to gain work experience. Teenage orphans willing to work in the bakery will receive the proper training and supervision through the hiring of a local baker. Revenues generated will be given to the orphanage as well as provide a wage for the baker and orphans. On the second floor of the bakery there are two rooms and a bathroom, which need to be renovated and properly furnished in order to turn them into an apartment for those orphans who work at the bakery. The young people will be supervised, monitored and required to comply with specific rules of housekeeping, conduct, curfew, and safety.

One Heart Bulgaria still needs more support to continue with this project! If you would like to donate or help fundraise for this project, please contact Deborah Gardner ([deborah.gardner@oneheart-bg.org](mailto:deborah.gardner@oneheart-bg.org)) or telephone 435-764-3093 or get in touch with Faun Childers at [faundear@yahoo.com](mailto:faundear@yahoo.com)

# Jan Wray finds time to care

Jan Wray is honoring her Bulgarian heritage by her participation in One Heart Bulgaria. Her grandparents immigrated from Bulgaria, and her interest was piqued when she learned about a humanitarian organization focused on helping orphans in the land of her ancestors.

Jumping in with both feet, Jan, who teaches dental assisting at Davis Applied Technology College, involved the school's Health Occupations of America group in a fundraiser for One Heart

Bulgaria. With a goal of collecting 300 warm pajamas or sweat sets to be sent off before Christmas, they had already received 100 sets by November 27th. Much of the response was the result of an article about Jan and One Heart Bulgaria which appeared in the *Ogden Standard Examiner* on Thanksgiving. The Children's Place in the Layton Hills Mall brought in \$300 worth of sleepers. By early in December the group had received 350 sweats and pajamas with 200 more promised.

With the help of Jan's husband, an excellent woodworker, the Health Occupations of America group also made Tuscan-style clocks which sold for \$65 each and were personalized with the name of the purchaser. They have already sold all that they made and are back-ordered for 24 more, with proceeds going to ship the sleepers to Bulgaria.

Jan and her husband, a dentist, plan to travel to Bulgaria next year to provide dental care to the orphans through the Smiles program.



Kira Neumeyer, HOSA president, works on the Tuscan-style clocks the group is making to raise funds for Bulgarian orphans. Photo appeared in the *Ogden Standard Examiner*.

## *Yard sale raises funds for One Heart Bulgaria*

Tania Hansen, who is originally from Bulgaria, attended the One Heart Bulgaria board meeting in September. It was her first time attending one of our meetings, and she was so moved by our cause and our plea for general funds that she decided to hold a fund-raiser yard sale to benefit One Heart Bulgaria.

Tania rallied support from her ward members and friends who donated items, time, and even money. There were many donated items and a number of people came all day to help. The first people showed up at 6:30 a.m. to help her set up and then there were four people at a time in shifts, helping run the sale. Many of the people who donated items were widows; she was very touched that the widows were taking care of the orphans!

The total amount raised was \$730.