



WINTER 2019



one heart BULGARIA

Hope • Life • Future for Orphans

Bulgarian Cultural Evening raises funds for babas

The fourth annual Bulgarian Cultural Evening was held November 9 at beautiful Le Jardin in Sandy, Utah. Director Polie Hullinger, a native of Bulgaria who has lived in the United States for 17 years, began this wonderful tradition in 2017—the Balkan-themed dinner and festivities, with music provided by Zivio, continue to attract Bulgarians and friends of Bulgaria from Utah and even farther afield.

In addition to the funds raised by ticket sales, guests were invited to enter a raffle for donated airline tickets; to bid on original art-work, including the final set in Scott Samuelson's "Bulgaria" limited edition series; and to purchase Bulgaria-themed gift baskets and items.

Proceeds of the banquet will go towards the Baba Program, which identifies, hires, and trains "grandmothers" who work with institutionalized children. To donate to this program, do so on Venmo @OneHeart-Bulgaria or through PayPal oneheart@oneheart-bg.org. Be sure to mention "Baba Program."





Welcome to Rancho Mitaka! By Deborah Dushku, One Heart Bulgaria President

I recently had the privilege of working with BCII's television production company to create a small horse therapy ranch for the children, to be featured on BYUTV's show, *The Fixers*. This was quite an undertaking! The TV production companies donated an indoor riding arena, fencing around the entire ranch, and a grand entrance with a boardwalk with a ramp so the children can easily mount the horses. They also donated their labor and many materials. Two horses were donated by a generous supporter in Bulgaria.

OHB gathered a team of twenty Bulgarian workers and enlisted the help of ten local missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to help with labor. We prepared for this project for eight months, prior to coming to Bulgaria, but built the entire ranch in only six days!

Horse therapy (Hippotherapy) is very beneficial to children with certain mobility disorders. Exercises and movements, such as reaching for objects, lying either forward or

backward on the horse, stretching arms into the air, etc. are performed while sitting and riding on the horse. This helps the child with balancing, coordination, and strengthening core muscle groups, all while enjoying closeness with an animal that is known for its ability to connect with children.



For many orphaned children, especially teenagers, emotionally connecting to people is often difficult, after a life of abandonment and several relocations. This lack of connection creates emotional problems and sadness for children. After many years of living without a family, they want to love and be loved, but no longer know how to give or receive healthy affection or create emotional intimacy. Depression, destructive behaviors, and even suicide can be the result of long-term abandonment. This is another reason why OHB provides therapy horses. While many of the teenagers we help struggle to feel safe and emotionally connected to others, they can more easily form sweet relationships with kind animals.

I had the wonderful experience of helping dozens of children go on their first therapeutic rides. I have heard their happy squeals of excitement and seen their faces light up with huge smiles. I've seen terrified teenagers overcome their fears, with tears streaming down their cheeks, as they finally

muster the courage to climb up on our horses and trust. It's difficult to describe how touching it is to see such courage and the resulting joy, knowing of their significant personal struggles, loneliness, and hopelessness.

Over the last nineteen years of working in Bulgaria's orphanages, we have learned that it is not enough to simply keep these children fed and breathing. A child needs so much more than food and medical care. Just like all of us and our children, Bulgaria's orphans need moments of joy, happiness, opportunities for personal growth including physical exercise, support, and love. And that's what our Horse Therapy Program is providing!

We want to publicly thank BCIITV and BYUTV productions for all their hard work and their generosity!

If you would like to watch the TV episode that features the creation of our horse therapy ranch, please go to www.byutv.org and click on ***The Fixers*, season 1.**





Welcome, Vanya!

Vanya Kalaidjieva is One Heart Bulgaria's newest team member in Bulgaria. She joins us as our Director of Finance. Vanya is a native Bulgarian, who spent more than 24 years in the United States where she received her MBA in finance from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. Vanya comes to One Heart Bulgaria with extensive experience that she gained at a variety of companies and institutions both in the United States and Bulgaria. She will help us streamline our financial model and budget and will also help us discover new ways to improve our financial systems. She will also be responsible for finding creative fundraising opportunities to increase our funds and facilitate the programs that we can participate in.

This December, One Heart Bulgaria and a group of humanitarian missionaries were able to provide a special Christmas for almost 50 children in Sophia. Because Vanya planned the visits in advance, the group was able to purchase presents specifically for the children they visited. At two of the homes, the children were able to build gingerbread houses. Vanya also spearheaded One Heart Bulgaria's very first in-country fundraiser! The concert,

which was held on December 8th at NDK, featured the band Radiostantsia as well as a raffle. We're so pleased Vanya is part of the One Heart Bulgaria team!



TO SEND A CONTRIBUTION RIGHT NOW, CUT OUT AND MAIL TO ONE HEART BULGARIA, 165 North Main, Providence, UT 84332. Do you want to make automatic monthly donations? Visit www.oneheart-bg.org.



I want to help! ☐ (Project) _____ ☐ General fund

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Email _____

Phone _____

☐ Please send me more information about One Heart Bulgaria, a non-profit tax-exempt charitable organization.



Hope • Life • Future for Orphans

• www.oneheart-bg.org