

Highlights of TOUCH 9 Delegation's Trip to Ukraine September/October 2009

Twenty-one members of the TOUCH 9 Delegation traveled to Ukraine including:

Nancy Boom	Sabra Killen	La Dawn Park
Mike Boom	Els Lofgren	Alice Rampton
Katie Boom	Joan London	Mark Rampton
Jesse Ellis	Mauri Lowery	Bonnie Reagan
Heather Finch	Bill Maier	Pat Summerton
Peggy Giles	Jeanette Maier	Marc Vomocil
Judy Juntunen	Judy Norman	Peter Vomocil

The delegation included a librarian, a business consultant, two medical doctors, a retired historian, four nurses, two social work grad students, home-makers, a university professor, two accountants, a day care provider, a forester, and two recent university graduates. The delegation members were from Oregon, Washington, and Utah. Everyone paid for their own food, airfare, ground transportation, and lodging.

TOUCH delegation members carried over 1000 pounds of humanitarian supplies in their suitcases including 1400 pairs of socks, ca.100 pairs of underwear, 30 quilts, 100 hygiene kits, 100 school kits, 50 stuffed animals, school supplies, sponsor letters, small toys, 50 pair of gloves, candy, 130 TOUCH t-shirts, and 6 suitcases of medical supplies including ostomy supplies, vitamins, a microscope, glucometers, lab supplies, centrifuge, audiometer, blood pressure cuff, bandages & gauze, syringes & needles, and dressings for chronic wound care.

Highlights of the activities by Delegation members include:

1. Visiting Public School #14 and learning that enrollment is up due to The TOUCH Project bread and milk program.
2. Seeing the beautiful tiled courtyard at Public School #14 with its flower beds and safe playground thanks to TOUCH donations.
3. Feeling lucky with beautiful weather except on only one cold day when we took children shopping at the open air bazaar.
4. Enjoying a sunny outside BBQ and potatoes baked in the ground out in the country with about 50 youth from the New Family Program. It was a lovely setting next to a river.
5. Having a group of Uzhhorod teens announce that they are starting a "Cactus Club" with plans to visit the Chaslivtsi Orphanage and do art projects with the kids, teach subjects of hygiene, goal setting, leadership development, problem solving, and help with letter writing to their TOUCH sponsors. Three of the 14 member Cactus Club have traveled to the US as AFS-FLEX students and include Michael Mashakada (exchange student to Corvallis, OR), Vika Ivanytska (exchange student to Philomath, OR) and Angela Mashakada (exchange student to Vermont). Their vision is admirable and we applaud their enthusiasm and creativity.
6. Taking 100 kids shopping at the open air bazaar. The kids from Chaslivtsi were all proudly wearing their new bright yellow TOUCH tee shirts.
7. Watching a group of youth very skillfully play the Marimbas which were brought to them last year by the Corvallis Maharimba band members.

8. Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the Rehabilitation Center with the children and their families by marching through the streets and enjoying an integrated concert.
9. Observing the Pavlovo young women and young man who proudly showed us the expansion of their Farm Home. We were privileged to tour their garden and see the fruit of their efforts in root cellars piled high with canning jars and stacks of potatoes.
10. Working with the Psychiatrist and the Director of the Chaslivtsi Orphanage to better understand what they are doing to protect the children from abuse.
11. Meeting with the Uzhhorod Sister Cities Association members.
12. Viewing the DVD of the 3rd Petrovo Summer Camp-2009 and seeing the remarkable benefit to the children from particular efforts of Pat Fahlbusch (of Darmstadt, Germany) and **TOUCH** Director, Zita Batori-Tartsi.
13. Enjoying the comradeship and services provided by our 30+ teen interpreters, many who volunteer year after year.
14. Participating in the fun and festivities in Uzhhorod during City Days, a celebration of their 1116th birthday!
15. Observing the **TOUCH** kids as they carefully drew pictures or wrote messages for their sponsors on the annual report forms.
16. Walking down the beautiful cobblestone streets of Uzhhorod and seeing friends and **TOUCH** children.
17. Attending the Social Work Conference and learning more about the traumatic effect that violence has on children
18. Setting the groundwork for the implementation of a new curriculum which will teach children about personal safety and appropriate touching.
19. Watching as 1400 pairs of socks were sorted into size and kind piles in our hotel room. The socks were gathered by LaDawn Park and Colleen Stohlton and a group of young women.
20. Seeing a treasured microscope delivered to a deserving medical clinic in Uzhhorod. This microscope belonged to and was donated in the memory of Dana Hansen, a revered cytotechnologist at Good Samaritan Hospital in Corvallis, who died in 2008.
21. Once again feeling grateful for the hard work and efforts of our **TOUCH** Coordinator in Ukraine- Zita Batori-Tartsi and all of the program directors, teachers, and volunteers who take care of **TOUCH** kids on a daily basis in Ukraine.

Many delegation members met with their sponsor child and participated in individual activities while in Uzhhorod. Mike and Nancy Boom and Els Lofgren, all RNs, met with Uzhhorod citizens with ostomy needs and presented them with supplies. Dr. Mark Rampton lectured to 250 Family Practice physicians at the Medical School. He and Dr. Bonnie Reagan examined over 60 **TOUCH** children at medical clinics. Dr. Reagan also met with members of the Jewish community in Uzhhorod including the Rabbi. At the Social Work Conference, Dr. Judy Norman, Jesse Ellis, and LaDawn Park presented on the post traumatic symptoms associated with violence. Els Lofgren, Peter Vomocil, and Mike Boom represented Corvallis at the Sister City celebration during City Days. Peggy Giles arranged for the delegation to attend a Q&A session at the public library in Uzhhorod.

Thank you to all of our loyal sponsors and donors who support the children in The **TOUCH** Project. You are the ones who make all of this a reality.