

March 27, 2021

Dear **TOUCH** Sponsors and Donors,

Happy Spring!! (finally it is here...)

ALL CHILDREN HAVE A RENEWED SPONSOR- THANK YOU

We are always grateful when each child in the program has a sponsor. That gives them a feeling of security, too! Many of the programs in The **TOUCH** Project have been affected by COVID, resulting in fewer children joining the New Family Program or Pavlovo Farm Home Program. Nine of our donors are currently on a waiting list to sponsor a child. Thank you for that patience.

For anyone wishing to make a general type donation to The **TOUCH** Project, the process is now easy and quick. Just go to this link and look for the “Sponsor or Donate Today” button in the lower right-hand side of this page: <https://sistercities.corvallis.or.us/the-touch-project/>

***THE COVID19 VIRUS IN UKRAINE**

Here are the most recent stats and current data on the rise in the virus in the Ukraine and the Transcarpathian Oblast during the last month which showed a new surge in cases. The vaccination process is finally underway in Ukraine with medical personnel and senior citizens receiving the first doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine.

In Ukraine:

Coronavirus Cases: 1.35 million	February 23, 2021
Deaths: 26,531	February 23, 2021
Coronavirus Cases: 1.65million	March 26, 2021
Deaths: 32,737	March 26, 2021



In Transcarpathia (Oblast or state where Uzhhorod is located):

Coronavirus Cases: 37,427	February 23, 2021
Deaths: 840	February 23, 2021
Coronavirus Cases: 52,234	March 26, 2021
Deaths: 1237	March 26, 2021

***COVID SURGE CAUSES SHUTDOWNS**

We were saddened to hear that the New Family Director, Valentina Chervonookaya, contracted COVID and was hospitalized for a period of time. She has been released from the hospital and seems to be recovering. We send her our heartfelt *Get Well* wishes.



Because of the recent surge in cases in Ukraine, the country introduced several restrictions again. This led to the closure of Public School #14, the New Family Program, Chaslivtsi Boarding School and the Rehabilitation Center for children with disabilities.

*THE PROGRAMS IN THE TOUCH PROJECT

We thought it might be a good idea to refresh everyone's memory on various aspects of **The TOUCH Project**. Some of you are new and may not completely understand how it operates. Here is a **TOUCH 101** refresher:

1. **The TOUCH Project** was started 21 years ago in Corvallis, OR by Sabra Killen & Alice Rampton.
2. The program was formed under the supervision of a non-profit called the Corvallis Sister Cities Association (CSCA). You can support this wonderful organization by becoming a member at <https://sistercities.corvallis.or.us/membership/>. The **TOUCH Project** receives great advice, website presence, monetary support, non-profit benefits, and a working partnership through CSCA.
3. Corvallis, Oregon has 2 official sister cities- Uzhhorod, Ukraine and Gondar, Ethiopia
4. **The TOUCH Project** is specifically affiliated with the Corvallis Sister Cities Association-Uzhhorod Council
5. There are currently about 400 children and young adults receiving support from **The TOUCH Project**
6. There are five programs that **The TOUCH Project** supports in Uzhhorod, Ukraine. They include:
 - a. **The Chaslivtsi Boarding School** provides a living situation for about 40 children, ages 7-17, who were abandoned or needed a home away from home. Some of the children reside at the boarding school on a full-time basis and other children travel home to relatives on weeknights, weekends or certain occasions. Classroom instruction and meals are provided
 - b. **The New Family Center** is for children and youth with at least one parent who is deceased, deprived of parental rights, ill, or abandoned the family. The children are often cared for by a grandparent who lives on a small pension. The program provides a center where children may receive a hot meal, meet friends, study, shower, wash clothes, and gain instruction in music, dance, art, sewing, languages, and computers.
 - c. **The Rehabilitation Center for Children with Disabilities (also known as Path of Life Center)** serves individuals from 1 year of age to adulthood with various physical and/or mental disabilities. They usually live with their family and come to the center for schooling, physical therapy, socialization, and training. Over 20 children with disabilities have now been mainstreamed into the public schools. Before the center was created in 1999, children with disabilities stayed at home or in institutions.
 - d. **Public School #14 (PS14)** is a public school in Uzhhorod. The majority of students are of Roma ethnicity and many are from impoverished situations. Donations are used to purchase books, supplies, playground equipment, musical instruments, and improve the school facilities. An anonymous donor in **The TOUCH Project** provides bread and milk each morning for the children during the school year. PS#14 is the oldest operating Roma school in Europe.
 - e. **The Pavlovo Farm Home** provides opportunities for young women who often graduated from area orphanages or boarding schools. They are given a safe & nurturing environment on a farm setting where they can develop talents and marketable skills. They learn how to manage money, apply for a job, grow crops, take care of farm animals, and gain friendships.
7. Of the five **TOUCH** programs, only the New Family and Pavlovo Farm Home have the option for individual sponsorship of a child. The other three programs are benefitted in an overall manner.
8. In addition, **The TOUCH Project** supports programs that specifically benefit the children including an Educational Fund, a Dental Care Program, and others as the need becomes apparent.
9. Our beloved Ukrainian director for 20 years was Zita Bathori-Tartsi. She retired last year and moved with her husband to be closer to family in Hungary. Our Interim Director is Vasya Chubar who is doing a great job!
10. Delegations have traveled from the US to Ukraine each year since 2000 except in 2020, due to COVID.
11. Each delegation member pays for all their expenses including flights, hotel, food, ground transportation, etc.
12. Individuals can support **The TOUCH Project** by making a financial donation of any amount.
13. Individuals can offer support by sponsoring a child for \$75.00 per year.
14. Individuals may be encouraged to gather new socks, toothbrushes, quilts, or other items as a way to support.
15. All funds raised are usually hand carried to Ukraine, although those donations were wired in 2020-21.
16. Over \$1 million dollars has been raised by donors and sponsors in **The TOUCH Project** during the last 2 decades.
17. Donations to **The TOUCH Project** are tax-deductible through the Corvallis Sister Cities Association.
18. The newly updated website link for Corvallis Sister Cities Association is: <https://sistercities.corvallis.or.us/>
19. **TOUCH** supporters come from Iceland, Germany, Canada, and 18 states in the USA.
20. The project is operated by volunteers. Donor dollars go to the kids!

Again, stay safe and healthy! Hopefully, this virus will pass and it will happen faster if we all do what we need to do. Thanks for your support and check the list of sponsors and donors below to ensure your name is included.

Sincerely, Alice Rampton, Co-Chair
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