

US/NIS Municipal and Community Problem-Solving Program

PHASE I: 1997-1998

This program was a collaborative effort between CSCA-U and Uzhhorod, Ukraine from 1997-1998. It was funded by US Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and administered by Sister Cities International. The scope of this program was to engage in a problem-solving model to assess and provide effective strategies for addressing individuals with disabilities.

Shipments of equipment and orthopedic aides to Uzhhorod included over \$92,000 worth of wheelchairs and therapy equipment as cost-share for MCPSP. A delegation of 5 Corvallis members traveled to Uzhhorod to distribute equipment and provide training in orthopedic splint-making and ball therapy. The following is a chronological history of events:

January-February 1998: An Uzhhorod medical team (one physician, two physician-therapists, and two people with disabilities) traveled to Corvallis to receive therapy training, study access issues, observe wheelchair sports, and learn effective advocacy.

April 1998: A Corvallis team (one physical therapist, one occupational therapist, one wheelchair sportsman, and the project director) traveled to Uzhhorod to conduct further therapist training, establish wheelchair sports, and promote advocacy issues.

July 1998: A van was purchased in Uzhhorod to transport children with disabilities. The \$10,400 purchase price was donated by First Presbyterian Church of Corvallis.

October 1998: Dr. Ildiko Maltseva, an Uzhhorod physical therapist, completed a one-month internship in Early Intervention in Corvallis. A video introduction to Early Intervention was produced in Russian, PAL format, for use in NIS.

May 1999: Remaining MCPSP funds were used in May 1999 for a follow-on activity: the US-NIS Women's Consortium of Kiev conducted a one-week leadership training for Uzhhorod women with disabilities.

Phase II: 1999-2000

October 1999: The Optimist Center (preschool and therapy center for Uzhhorod children with disabilities) opened. The Center, only the third of its kind in Ukraine, is a collaboration among the Uzhhorod Optimists (Society of People with Disabilities), the Uzhhorod city government, and Corvallis Sister Cities Association-Uzhhorod.

November 1999: A shipment to Uzhhorod included over \$58,000 in supplies and equipment for the Optimist Preschool and Therapy Center and the Computer Center for youth with disabilities.

January – February 2000: Uzhhorod members (the Optimist center director and preschool teacher, the Uzhhorod superintendent of instruction, and a representative of the disabled

community in Uzhhorod) traveled to Corvallis to study successful operation of a preschool-therapy program, mainstreaming in public schools, and advocacy.

March 2000: Corvallis members (physical therapist, occupational therapist, and educational director of local center which combines therapy and preschool, a disabled sportsman, and the project director) traveled to Uzhhorod to work with Optimist Center staff on therapy and curricula, and to promote expansion of sports and recreational activities including effective community advocacy.

June 2000: Computer Center for youth with disabilities opened in Uzhhorod with furniture and three computers donated by Corvallis as part of MCPSP. Additional computers and equipment were funded by a European Union grant received through the support of the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Kiev.

Follow-On Activities: 2000-2001

September 2000: Three members of Corvallis traveled to Uzhhorod to establish “challenge games and sport competitions for children with physical disabilities and a weekly “motor fitness” class for school-age children with physical and mental disabilities.

December 2000 – January 2001: Remaining grant funds were used to provide Optimist Center staff with additional therapy and pedagogical training in Kiev, L’Viv, and Odessa, Ukraine.

(For more information, please contact Carol Paulson, Project Director)

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