

ECL Door of Hope

Bringing Hope to the hopeless and Help to the helpless

“Making a home underground!”

March/April 2005



In the cold, snow and slush of a glum February afternoon, we met some of the street kids that live in empty sewerage pipes beneath the city of Kiev, in the Ukraine. They were not smiling as they are in the above photograph which was taken last summer. Thankfully, about twenty-five of them, boys and girls, are given a hot meal each day before returning to their underground home in the evening.

The food is supplied by a young man who himself lived on the streets when he was a teenager. His name is Tolek. Together with a team of ten people he feeds, clothes, gives limited social care, provides vitamins, and basic medical help to the homeless children existing below street level. The team also endeavour to provide advocacy for the children; for hospital care when it is needed.

Tolek was introduced to the Christian faith a few years ago. His heart is now underground with these children aged from **5 to 18**. In March, Door of Hope sent him some financial aid.

There are no exact statistics of how many street children there are in the Ukraine. Some statistics say that there are 50,000, 12,000 living in Kiev. Other sources say that there are 50,000 **only in Kiev** and about **100,000 in the whole of the Ukraine**.

Usually, their ‘homes’ are basements of decrepit houses, abandoned buildings, sewerage pipes, and city dumps where they burrow into holes.

DOOR OF HOPE, P.O. BOX 60, BATTLE, E.SUSSEX TN33 0QB.

Telephone/Fax: 01424 870836

Email: Doorhope@aol.com Registered Charity 1083260

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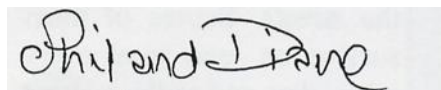
Those living on the streets can earn a small amount of money by washing someone's car, begging, stealing, and prostitution. Most of the children go to the streets because they do not have parents, or else their parents are drug users or alcoholics.

Official statistics say that 40% of street children are drug users. 42% are alcohol addicted. From 30% to 50% were or are sick with sexually transmitted diseases, and 25% are HIV aids infected. Most are ill with tuberculoses and various skin diseases. The majority of the children smoke and sniff glue regardless of age and sex. Inevitably, they have deep psychological problems. Even when better living conditions have been provided, much time and caring has to be provided due to the moral and spiritual deterioration that has occurred in the young lives. Food and a clean bed is not enough. They require love, personal attention and knowledge of human values.

In the light of such sad, disturbing statistics, Door of Hope's contribution to these children seems but a drop of water in an ocean. Nevertheless, we do our best with the resources that are available to us. We assist an orphanage for street children in the Eastern Ukraine, give financial aid to imprisoned street children in the Lvov area, as well as helping over two hundred poor families trying to cope (without any government aid) with their damaged cerebral children in Kiev. **At the same time, we are constantly looking out for new areas of dire need among the many rejected children in Eastern Europe.**

Your donation to our work among the forgotten street children will be greatly appreciated. As most of our supporters are aware, our overheads are kept low. This enables us to send the specified donations straight to the area of need. Be assured that your financial contribution will be wisely used. It is a consecrated gift that will be used to feed, clothe, educate, and bring Christian hope. We thank you in anticipation.

Wishing you peace and joy amidst the world's deepest despair,



Reverend and Mrs Phil and Diane Streeter



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