

A little help—a big difference



Support for Kids Organization, Inc

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Letter from the founder

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Dear readers and supporters,

Sorry for the delay with my newsletter, but we were extremely busy and haven't hardly noticed that May approached so quietly.

I never thought that in my opening statements I would talk about anything but our charity. But unfortunately, another month passed by and we witnessed another devastation - this time it is the latest tornado. The death toll caused by the storms in the Southern region of the US have already reached 200+.

According to the National Weather Service website this is a "major tornado outbreak of historic proportions", where the number of casualties is expected to increase. Once again we realize how fragile is our world, how small we are and how little or nothing can humans do to prevent and withstand the forces of nature. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims of this terrible disaster.

Since my last newsletter, all the month of April we were extremely busy - I myself, on top of this charity and my art business, am one of the commissioners for the City of San Diego 2010 Redistricting Commission. It might be an honor, but it comes with too much hard work and the stress of being associated with public service and being constantly in the spotlight. Honestly, it is a little more than I anticipated.

Mike is constantly updating our website, he is on top of technical side and he is the financial brain of the organization. Having years of experience in project management he is trying to envision every project we are about to be involved in the long term.

Our Georgian manager—Manana (a.k.a. "Little Doll") is still battling the Georgian bureaucracy on the other end of the globe. But, despite all the difficulties and some frustrations, we are moving along. We will give you the update details in this issue.

Once again, thank you for your continued support and your interest.

Sincerely,

Ani Mdivani-Morrow

Unexpected shipment

In the last issue I gave a recap of the new very complicated and uncertain reform (about Small Group Homes), and while we are still don't want to give up on the idea to have our own private orphanage, we decided not to wait any longer and be frustrated with the silence of the decision makers and just continue doing what we have been doing before — concentrate all our efforts and resources on the basic daily needs of the kids. One of them is to provide kids with warm coats. As you remember from the previous issue, Mike was planning to purchase the material in Turkey and manufacture the coats in Georgia. But being so far away was most of the reason we could not find a manufacturer who was willing to do the job. I even had another idea - let the older kids in one of the orphanages do the job if we would provide them with a few sewing machines, fabric and patterns . It would have been an ideal scenario - training and some income for the older kids and the coats for the young ones. But again we encountered the problem - who knows where the kids are going to end up after this reform, who will manage them and where their new machines would end up.



As most of you probably remember our Chinese experience and shipping dilemma, we almost eliminated the possibility of buying anything , but Mike found a very good source for the coats here, in US (about the same price he could buy in China) and I decided to give it another try. Before we made a purchase, I used all my connections to avoid the shipping issue. I even wrote to the ambassador of Georgia in USA whom I know well enough to ask. Nothing had happened but the day when I had finally exhausted all my sources, by some freak

coincidence, I saw a posting by my friend on a social media network showing the Honorary Council of Georgia in USA visiting one of the Georgian orphanages. I completely ignored the protocol of good manners and decided to address with this request to a complete stranger - Honorary Council Lasha Darbaidze. I could not believe that not only he listened but he actually agreed to help with the shipment! It was an



absolute miracle!



As soon as I heard his confirmation that he would assist us with the shipping of goods to Georgia, I placed the order of 96 down filled winter coats (don't be surprised by this odd number, they come pre-packed in certain quantities). To avoid extra cost of shipping to California and then shipping them all back to the East Coast we arranged that all these 6 boxes be sent directly to Mr. Darbaidze's address in New Jersey, from where they will be shipped to Georgia. I literary took advantage of the incredible generosity and kindness of Mr. Darbaidze's offer and since I already had lost my dignity and good manners, I asked him if I could send him an additional couple of boxes of stuff I have been buying for the kids all along; some clothes that I was planning to carry

with me on the plane during my upcoming trip in September .

Unexpected shipment (*continued*)

The 3 boxes I was about to fill, were not just a regular, normal size. They were huge! I thought that maybe I would never have the same chance again and I rushed to the stores to add more and more stuff for the kids. At the end of the day these huge boxes weighing 40 lbs each were filled with 16 denim jackets, 24 assorted knit sweaters, 17 hooded jackets, 12 boys sweatshirts, reversible down vests, thermal t-shirts, 20 knit hats, 20 fleece scarves, 15 long sleeve t-shirts, 10 blouses, socks, underwear, 20 multicolor backpacks and a few digital games.



I think I mentioned before that every single item I ship or take to the kids is brand new, with a tag. We have never given anything which was used.

I don't have problem with the second hand clothes for my friends or even for myself, but for these kids it is a bit different - I just want them to feel special, that they are getting brand new stuff.



Mr. Lasha Darbaidze not only agreed to my request, he made it almost opposite - that I am the one who is doing him a favor by asking him to be part of this project.

I know I might have crossed the line of politeness, but I just want you to know that it is not in my nature to ask for a favor even from close friends and especially I don't like taking advantage of people's kindness and generosity. In this case when our mission and our cause to help kids is much greater than any protocol of good manners, I did it anyway.



Batono Lasha (*Batono* is a traditional polite form to address a male in Georgia followed by his first name), thank you so much for your incredible offer, thank you for your willingness to help a complete stranger, thank you that, regardless of the nature of your position, you have kept true human values, thank you that you remained down to Earth, thank you for being an example for everybody of what a man should be. Thank you, thank you, thank you.





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DIFFERENCE

Your tax-deductible financial gift is the most important action you can take to help this great cause. Please visit our site www.supportforkids.org donation page

Please help

Georgia up-close : Georgian Easter

In this issue I will skip one of the volumes regarding Georgian culinary traditions. Instead I will fill you in about the Georgian tradition of Easter Celebration.

Prior to Easter, all faithful Georgians perform “The Great Lent” which starts on the Clean Monday 7 weeks before Easter Sunday. Orthodox Lent is a time of fasting, which means abstaining from foods that contain animals with red blood (meats, poultry, game) and products from animals with red blood (milk, cheese, eggs, etc.), and fish and seafood with backbones. Olive oil and wine are also restricted. The number of meals on each day is also limited. The purpose of fasting is to cleanse the body as well as the spirit in preparation for accepting Resurrection at Easter, which is the most sacred of all observances in the Orthodox faith.

This year the dates for Orthodox and non-Orthodox Easter actually coincided, an unusual circumstance given the fearsomely complex ways that Orthodox and Western churches disagree about how to calculate the date of Easter. It turns out that the full cycle of Easter dates only repeats every 5,700,000 years, so these kind of coincidences will be unpredictable for the foreseeable future, unless we take the time to learn how to do the calculation ourselves.

On Easter Sunday you have to have ham, red eggs and *kulich* (also called *paska*), which is a sweet yeast-risen bread . It just wouldn't be traditional Easter Sunday table without a piece of this tall, cylindrical bread that has been blessed by the parish priest. Kulich is a cross between a bread and a cake with a slightly sweet crumb. As with most foods, the recipe varies from family to family. Sometimes it has raisins, nuts and candied citrus rind which makes it very close to Italian Panettone taste. It is extremely hard to make and I will not even suggest trying to make it unless you are a kitchen wizard.

Another thing is to dye eggs. In Georgia there is a root of one plant that is used precisely for this. But since I can't find it here and every time I return I forget to bring it with me, I use another natural source - outside onion skin. It does not have to be a red onion skin, brown onions do the same job. Traditionally the eggs have to be prepared on Good Friday. A few days before, I go to the several local grocery stores and asked the produce guys to save some onion skins for me. I don't think they had ever heard of such an unusual request, but I am doing this every year and I think they are used to this by now. Wrap each egg in this skin, place in a pot and boil as usual. Let it sit in this water overnight so the color can absorb better. In the morning, remove the eggs from the onion skin, rinse, pat dry and polish with a cotton ball dipped in an oil. The eggs will have natural, deep brown-burgundy color and they taste especially good after a such a long lent. [Text on the picture is: “Christ is Risen”]

