

A little help - a big difference



Support for Kids Organization, Inc

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Letter from the founder

Dear readers and supporters,

I missed the November issue because I decided to alter the frequency of our newsletters - make it quarterly rather than monthly. No, I am not too lazy to write it every month; there are several reasons for that change - flooding your inbox and mailbox monthly might give our newsletter the “junk mail” reputation; the news from Georgia is not very frequent or important [to us in the USA] and for me trying to make up something to fill up the pages doesn’t make much sense. But if and when such important news does appear, there will be a “special issue” delivered to you. So the next regular issue will be released in March, then June, September and December 2012. If for some reason you would prefer to be opted out from our mailing list, please let me know by a note or e-mail at ani@supportforkids.org. This way we can eliminate extra postage, paper waste and save some trees.

It’s the time of the year when we summarize our past and plan our future. We are not even 3 years old yet, but we are very proud of our achievements. In such a short period of existence our organization made a quite remarkable input in the lives of these kids and our accomplishments are encouraging for us to move forward. We like to think we got the government more involved in solving the kids’ problems.

We are very fortunate to have you as our friends and supporters and none of our accomplishments would have been possible without you, without your continued support and trust.

This is the perfect time to thank you and wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a New Year filled with happiness, love and prosperity.

Thanks as always and have a wonderful Holiday Season!

Sincerely, *Ani Mdivani-Morrow*



On the photo: The kids from Aspidza orphanage with their hand - made Christmas and ‘Thank You’ cards addressed to you, their American Friends and Supporters



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3rd ANNUAL FUNDRAISER RESULTS

Once again I want to thank each and every one of you who attended our third annual fundraiser on October 30th, 2010. I hope that it was not disappointing - beautiful view, good food, our amazing auctioneer - Dallas Woodring, great auction items, fun prizes for the opportunity drawings and my less emotional presentation / report.



Thanks to all our supporters who brought their friends and especially Rosie and Ernie Uyeda and Sharron Rowley who were also helping with check out, Nancy Rau , Mark Allen, Chris Hodge, Dallas Woodring and Nino Kiria who had a full house.

A very special thanks to the group of 20 Georgian – Americans from Los Angeles led by Dr. Lela Dekano and Father Ioane whose presence blessed our event and our cause. Father Ioane also donated his newly released book to our auction.

Thanks to all our helpers Catherine Darragh, Barbara Nix, Natia Turmanidze, Robin Allen, Katelyn and Amanda Woodring. Thank you all.

We raised \$11,800 in total before expenses compared to \$9,095 last year and almost \$9,000 at the first fundraiser. Broken down by categories: \$6,827 from the live and silent auctions, \$4,700 – from the brunch tickets and \$300 from the sale of the opportunity drawing tickets. Total gifts' value donated by businesses was over \$4000.



I would like to thank all our sponsors who donated for our event- Manchester Grand Hyatt, Disneyland, San Diego Zoo, Sea World, Coles Fine Flooring, Pala Casino, Global Laser, Costco, H&M Landing, Hornblower, Clark Cierlack Fine Art, Flagship Cruises, PRP Wine, Xanthus Realty, Magnia Bene, Mario's Restaurant, Original Pancake House, Reidy Golf, Carol Morrow [Smith Optics], Hornblower , ABC Chanel 10 News, KyXy 96.5 station, San Diego Padres, Outback Steakhouse, Six Flags, San Diego Wine Co, Prescott Insurance and Artloft.com. Special thanks to Lasha Shanidze who

donated 2 cases of traditional Georgian spirit - *chacha* and Carl Gilman for his beautiful stag horn plant (platycerium). Both items were a big hit. Thank you Lasha and Carl.

Please visit our website where you can find some coverage and also a kids [Movie](#) which I made especially for this event. On our home page click Videos button which brings you to the page with movie and slideshows. It's the first one titled Movie of Kids from 2009-2011.



Year End Summary and Future Plans



From the humble beginning of an idea in June 2009 we have made much progress with our mission to improve the lives of these kids. In March 2009, 44 mattresses, pillows & blankets were delivered in one orphanage, in June 2009 65 pairs of new shoes were delivered to another one. 40 mate beds were delivered for Christmas 2009. In 2010, 380



pairs of warm boots, joggers and shoes, 200 pairs of jeans and other goods were shipped and distributed among 7 orphanages. In July 2010 there was a Teddy-Bear project. The same year we started the scholarship project. In 2011 after our 2nd Fundraiser we purchased 100 winter coats, denim jackets, warm sweaters and toys. Despite my medical condition after my accident, in September I flew to Georgia to deliver all these goods that had been shipped earlier. I visited Mestia and Aspindza orphanages (both hard to reach and in completely opposite directions from each other). These trips were definitely extreme in my condition, but I had big rewards - seeing the happy faces of these kids made me forget about my pain and discomfort.



In my early newsletters I mentioned the major change in the Child Care System of Georgia - transforming the existing orphanages to small group homes. In August 2011, the Georgian government announced a tender to seek providers for these SGH. We decided to participate in this tender and we won a lot with 3 houses in Eastern region of the country. I visited the houses we were supposed to manage, had the endless meetings with



government officials about the project. But after much further research and consideration (reviewing the budget, the government contract, etc) we decided against it and refrained from participation in this project. Of course the biggest obstacle was lack of funding from the government with many unknown expenses plus the financial responsibility from our part which was going to be far in excess of the original estimate. Unfortunately, it's still unclear how the government and other service providers are planning to implement this reform and take care of these kids with such limited funds. We were not willing to risk the stability of our organization or our ability to provide future help directly to the kids for these unanticipated expenses.

We decided to get back to our basic mission! We will continue to provide the basic help to the kids with clothing, shoes, school supplies, etc. Most importantly we have to try to continue to improve the lives of these kids. That was always our goal and we are committed to support the kids. If you remember, it never was about saving their lives, it was and it is about saving their future.

I hope you feel as involved with these kids as we do because you are the heart of our organization and provide the funds to continue. For certain, we can't do it alone!



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BIG DIFFERENCE

Your tax-deductable 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: Christmas Celebration in Georgia

Like so many things in Georgia, Christmas celebrations are a mix of old traditions and Western influences spiced up by national joie-de-vivre. As in other Eastern Orthodox countries, Christmas in Georgia is celebrated on January 7. This is a result of Eastern Orthodox churches mark Christmas Day based on the Julian calendar, which is now 13 days behind the internationally used Gregorian calendar .

Unlike its Western counterparts, Christmas is mainly a religious event and devoted Georgians fast for 40 days leading up to Christmas refraining for consumption of meat and dairy products (fish is allowed only on certain days). Traditional Georgian carols use the words ‘on 25th December Christ was born in Bethlehem’.

The Georgian version of the Christmas tree (Chichilaki) is made of soft wooden material with curled branches. Sometimes it is hazelnut branch which is carved into a Tree of Life-like shape and decorated with fruits and sweets. The western custom of a Christmas tree is also popular.

The Georgian equivalent of “Santa Claus” is known as *tovlis papa* (or *tovlis babua*), literally meaning a ‘Grandfather snow’. He is traditionally portrayed with long white bearded, dressed in national costume and wearing a fur cloak.

Another interesting thing is that Santa Claus does not visit the Georgian children on Christmas, but rather on New Year’s Eve.



While I was preparing materials for this issue, I discovered one Georgian tradition I was not familiar with. It’s called *Alilo* (from Alleluia) and it is a Georgian psalm performed on the Christmas eve.



Apparently it was established centuries ago but has been forgotten in the 20th century due to the communist regime. A few years ago this tradition was revived by the initiative of Catholicos-Patriarch of Georgia His Holiness Ilya II. This tradition is of charitable character for the vulnerable people.

In these photos kids are dressed in special costumes (they do look like little crusaders), marching in the streets and collecting sweets from the adults.

