

A little
help - a big
difference

Support for Kids Organization, Inc

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Letter from the founder

Dear readers and supporters,

At this Holiday Season our thoughts turn gratefully to those who have made our progress possible. We are very fortunate having you as our friends and supporters as none of our accomplishments would have been possible 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*

Our Future Project

During my recent trip to Georgia we started a special project - help and support the orphans of the Georgian soldiers killed in Afghanistan.

Regardless of our sentiments towards military involvement and politics in general, the victims in this case are the kids who are left orphaned because their daddies protected peace far away from home so they could have a better future. This small country with barely 4 million people has over 1,560 soldiers in Afghanistan thus making Georgia the largest non NATO troop contributor in ISAF mission (International Security Assistance Force). Georgian infantry battalions are serving along with the U.S. marines in the most dangerous Helmand Province.



Upon my arrival, I contacted the Department of Defense of Georgia and got information about the Georgian soldiers in the ISAF mission. Number of fatalities is 29, 10 of them had children; about 200 wounded with 1st degree of disability meaning that they are missing one or both limbs. Maybe this number is insignificant compared to the loss of US soldiers, but this is still a huge loss for their families and all of Georgia. *Continue on page 3*



Results of our 5th Annual Fundraiser

I want to thank each and every one of you who attended our 5th annual fundraiser on October 20th 2013. Even though we were a little short from 100 guaranteed attendees (we had only 70 guests) we are very grateful to all our supporters who brought their friends and helped during the event. I would like to acknowledge the generosity of our loyal supporters who purchased the tables - Sharron Rowley, Lasha Darbaidze, Chris Hodge and Kire Builders/Brink Realty.

I would like to thank all the businesses and individuals who donated gift cards or other items to our event - Manchester Grand Hyatt, Disneyland, San Diego Zoo, Cole's Fine



Flooring, Stone Brewing Bistro and Gardens, Hornblower, Six Flags, Costco, H&M, La Jolla Playhouse, San Diego Wine Co, Original Pancake House, Tobin James, San Diego Padres, La Jolla Laser Clinic, Carol Morrow (Smith Optics), Jenna McClooney and Michael and Christie

Walsh. A very special thank to Stage 4 Entertainments who generously donated their time and talent and made the event even more memorable. We hope you will support them with your business. Total gifts' value donated was over \$6,700.00.



Thanks to all our helpers - especially to our irreplaceable auctioneer Dallas Woodring, Catherine Darragh, Kimberly Nguen, Katie Hekman, Nino and Anna, Ketty, Paul and Britney and Miss Brea. Thank you all.



We raised \$13,539 in total before expenses* (around \$ 4,500) compared to \$9,537 last year.

Broken down by categories: \$6,824 from the live and silent auctions, \$3,650 - from the brunch tickets, \$2,165 - from individual donors (very special thanks to Jeannie Foulkrod, Nancy Rau and Paul Iezzi for their incredible generosity), \$900 from the sale of the opportunity drawing tickets.

We really hope that you had a good time, enjoyed the great music, the food and unlimited drinks, you were there for the kids who really need your support. Thanks again.



** The expenses include room/food (\$3,000) and over \$6,700 cost of auction and opportunity drawing items.*

Our Future Project *(continue from page 1)*

After a long and exhausting week of communications with the Department of Defense, Joint Chief of Georgian Army, the Department of Veteran's Affairs, their policy makers and PR departments, I finally got their blessing and a car to visit families of fallen Georgian soldiers.

I had only one day to cover almost the entire country from west to east with 6 stops. I couldn't go there empty handed, so I purchased 3 boxes (about \$500 worth) of books from fairytales, coloring and puzzle books to superb publications on general education (science, art history, geography, etc.). It was not an easy task to visit these families not physically, nor emotionally – condolences to the widows in their mid 20s, looking at these kids and waiting for their reaction to meeting some strange American. Well, I visited them all and then I had about 10 days to accomplish something for these kids. I will not take your time describing

how I did this, but just tell you that:



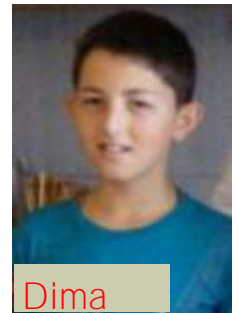
Gio

Dima has a private English teacher

Gio is in the American Corner studying English

Lizie is in the Art school that her dad wanted her to attend

Tazo has a private English teacher



Dima



TAZO



ZACRO



SABA



GEORGE



LI ZIE

Zacro, Saba and little George got some toys and bikes which are waiting to be delivered for Christmas.

As for the future plans, we want to

1. Continue emphasis on education
2. Continue to fund English classes
3. Arrange 1 week stay at a health resort for Zacro
4. Arrange summer camps for the kids once a year
5. Extend the group and include the kids of wounded soldiers
6. Connect these kids with their peers here, in USA who also lost their parents in ISAF mission.

As I mentioned earlier, our willingness to help should be separated from our sentiments towards military actions and our involvement in Afghanistan or any other conflict area. We are regarding our military servicemen as our heroes, we should always be grateful to their contribution and sacrifice. These children are their kids.



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A LITTLE HELP - A
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

Please help

CHRISTMAS 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 'Grandfather Snow'. He is traditionally portrayed with a long white beard, 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.



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