

Dnipro Appeal Update – January 2015

Firstly I'd like to wish everyone a Happy New Year and all the best for 2015.

I hope that everyone had an enjoyable Christmas and that Father Frost (aka Santa) was good to you. We certainly tried our best to make sure that the kids in Dnipropetrovsk had a memorable one.

This was, in no small part, thanks to the ongoing sponsorship of the kids, the generous donations received and the generous support in Ukraine from "Carlsberg Ukraine" and "Kyivstar". Without your support we would not be able to support the orphanage kids, and to provide them with the memories of 2014.

As highlighted in previous updates, these included an amazing trip to L'viv, numerous day trips to places such as Poltava, birthday celebrations each month .. and of course the Christmas celebrations.

It's all the more satisfying to see the kids enjoying an end to 2014, considering how tough a year it has been in Ukraine. Putting aside the ongoing conflict in Eastern Ukraine, it has also been a very difficult year for the Topolinaya orphanage and the family home orphanages financially. The rising inflation, and the poor performance of the Ukrainian grievna, is making it very difficult to purchase even the most basic items.

Unfortunately the outlook for 2015 is not much better. With the Ukrainian economy struggling and hostilities in the East looking set to escalate, it's going to be a struggle. Hopefully we can continue to support the children as much as we did in 2014, but we are anticipating a very difficult year.

On the plus side ..

This year we managed to organise 3 Christmas events for the kids. I've detailed the Christmas events, and included as many photographs as I can in this update. The feedback from the organisers, orphanage staff, and foster home parents was that the kids thoroughly enjoyed the events. I hopefully the looks on their faces, in the photos below, will confirm that.

Kyivstar Christmas Show – 20th December

On the 20th of December we were invited to the large Kyivstar office building in Dnipropetrovsk for a Christmas celebration and a show, put on entirely by the amazing Kyivstar staff. As well as Dnipro Kids there was also an invitation to refugee families that had been displaced due to the fighting in the Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine. It's hard to imagine how hard it must be for these families at the moment so it was nice of Kyivstar to invite them along.



The show took place in the main conference room of the building, which was large enough to seat around 130 kids and parents. There were also areas in the building that were set up for a Santa Grotto and various displays set up to let the kids have some nice Christmas photos taken.



The show, performed by the Kyivstar staff, was a traditional fairy-tale complete with snow princess, Father Frost, snowman, elves .. and of course a pantomime villain to “boo”!



At the end of the performance the room was filled with large balloons, much to the delight of the kids. I hope that there wasn't any damage to the seats as the kids jumped around trying to catch and punch any balloons that came near them.



Eventually the kids settled down and were ready to leave the conference hall, although the news that there were bags of sweets waiting for them in an adjacent room probably helped!

Christmas Party at the Grand Hotel – 21st December

On the 21st of December the kids woke up to the news that they would be heading to the Grand Hotel Ukraine!

Following on from the excellent event last year, our new helper Irina was instrumental in organising a big Christmas event for all the kids in a “wow factor” venue. The Grand Hotel Ukraine is one of the best hotels in Dnipropetrovsk, and the kids couldn’t believe that they were heading there for a party.



As well as inviting Dnipro Kids, there was also an invite sent out to a special needs rehabilitation centre. That meant we had 120 kids descending on the Grand Hotel Ukraine on a nice crisp Sunday morning. Making their way through the main entrance, opened politely for them by the hotels doormen, the kids were then directed to the main hall by staff .. and a very large polar bear!



What met them in the main hall was an amazing Winter Wonderland!



Every part of the hall had been decorated and themed, and throughout the hall were activities and themed stages. A lot of work had gone into it, and it looked fantastic. Irina tells us that the kids were shocked into silence .. although admittedly the silence didn't last very long.





Around each themed area, hosted by colourful characters and helpers, were activities, games and plenty of photo opportunities with the characters there.



You could decorate gingerbread men at one table, move on and get face painting done at another,



play with remote controlled racing cars, make and decorate Christmas trees,



plastic moulds, jigsaws,



magic tricks and sword fighting with a pirate,



bubbles, dressing up ..



you name it, it seemed like this Winter Wonderland had it all! I just hope the photographs can do it justice!



After the kids had managed to get round all these amazing activities they were moved into an adjacent hall, were treated to a huge banquet of pastries, cakes, sweets, popcorn ..



And sticky buns ..



This gave the staff the chance to clear the hall and then set up some seats ready for an afternoon of entertainment on the main stage.



Firstly there was a short pantomime play, and then this was followed by a number of acts that included magic, jugglers, acrobats, puppet shows and all sorts of weird and wonderful entertainment.



The kids absolutely loved the shows .. which all ended in dramatic fashion with a large “ticker tape” explosion at the end!



It was an amazing day for the kids, every single one of them was blown away by the spectacle, the venue, the treats and the performances .. and I’m pretty sure they’ll remember it for many years to come.

Ira, Irina, the Dnipro Appeal Committee .. and especially the kids .. would like to say a huge thank you to all our generous sponsors and donors that helped make this event possible.

Christmas Day Health Suite Surprise – 25th December

With the Christmas temperature dropping below -10 in Dnipropetrovsk, Irina came up with the excellent idea of giving our family home orphanages a nice Spa trip. So on the 25th of December 42 kids, and 6 foster parents, set off for the city centre Spa Centre.



The centre is part of the Tsunami Spa Hotel complex, which not only boasts an excellent Spa and fitness centre, but also offers luxury themed bedroom suites such as “Snow”, “Egyptian” and “Cave”!



The Spa centre had been specially booked for Dnipro Kids so they had the place all to themselves.

After getting into their swimming costumes the kids were treated to a show from the staff, dressed for the occasion of course. It might not have been a polished performance, but it was very funny and the kids really enjoyed it.



After that everyone was split into 3 groups .. small kids, older girls and older boys.

The smaller kids headed to a themed play area,



the boys to the main pool



and the girls to the saunas in the health suite.



After spending a decent amount of time at one area the groups were all moved round, to ensure all the kids had a bit of everything during the trip.



Obviously the younger kids were not able to go into the saunas .. but trying to see how many of them could fit into the jacuzzi more than made up for that!



And they were allowed a “free for all” in the main pool at the end of the activities.



It's unlikely that any of the kids would ever have been to such a nice SPA centre, so they were really enjoying the outing.

After all the activities the SPA centre also organised some snacks for the kids in the attached café. And it wouldn't be Christmas Day without a visit from Santa!



L'viv Trip Photo Albums

After the excellent trip to L'viv last September Irina gave each of the family home orphanages a computer disk filled with all the photos that were taken on the trip. Each home was asked to pick their favourite photos from the trip and give Irina a list of them. After getting the list from each home we then set about getting the chosen photos developed and placed into photo albums. The albums were then presented to each family home orphanage as a memento from the trip, and a chance to flick back through their favourite moments.





Most of the albums were presented during the Christmas events.

Child Sponsorship

If you are not already a Child Sponsor please consider direct sponsorship of one of the children that we support in Dnipropetrovsk. Your monthly contributions will assist in providing birthday, Christmas and summer trips for these kids as well as helping to support the many other projects that we help fund for the children.

For details about Child Sponsorship please email me directly steven@dniprokids.com

Donating to Dnipro Kids

We have a secure link set up on the main website, for anyone wishing to make a direct donation to the charity.

<http://dniprokids.com/donate-today/>

You can also make small donations by text.
Simply text DNPR14 £2/£5/£10 to 70070

Facebook

Visit the Facebook page and add Dnipro Kids to your friends list.

<http://www.facebook.com/dnipro.kids>

Yours,
Steven Carr,
Dnipro Appeal Committee.