

CHEVRA REPORT



Chevra means friendship. Our goal is to help our people in their time of need.

DECEMBER 2014

HELPING IS EASY!

Please consider supporting Chevra with your donations.

Please note our new giving address in Worthington, OH, effective immediately.

ONLINE ▶ At our website: www.chevrahumanitarian.org
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CHEVRA USA

Chevra is the American entity for our international effort. Chevra's work is a way people can make a real difference in the lives of many people in need.

NEW YEAR, NEW NEEDS ▶

Chevra has been very involved in Ukraine this past year. With the Invasion of Crimea, and the subsequent fighting in the Donesk region of the country, Jewish people, who have been caught in the middle have been fleeing to Western Ukraine, and some have been seeking to immigrate to Israel. Through our workers in Ukraine and our ministry partners, we have been seeking to help our people during this humanitarian crisis. This issue of the Chevra Report contains news from our co-workers in the region.

Our work is crucial to our people in Ukraine. As we approach the end of the year,



our funds are EXTREMELY low. Chevra is a small work, and we don't have large funding. We exist to help by the generous giving of our friends. Would you please consider a generous gift to help us continue?

Thank you for your support,

Michael Schiffman

Dr. Michael Schiffman
DIRECTOR, CHEVRA

RECENT ACTIVITIES IN UKRAINE ▶

Due to the rapidly changing situation in the Donbas region of Ukraine, refugees from cities like Lugansk and Donetsk fled from their homes. Many people decided to leave their houses in only few hours' time, leaving behind their belongings, clothing, documents, passports, etc.

Chevra has been involved in rescue operations, shelters, food kitchens, transport and *aliya* support. Our focus is on Jews who fled to safer

areas in Ukraine. Many thanks for your financial support.

FUEL COSTS FOR VAN

With this funding, two vans from our partner in Kiev could make various trips to the Lugansk/Donetsk region. These drivers have risked their own lives several times to enter the war region to pick up Jewish refugees from this area. Most of the time Jewish refugees carry only some

bags of clothing and other personal belongings with them, because they had only few hours to bring their lives into safety. These vans are also used to bring *olim* from the shelters and to the airport etc.

Golda M. from Slowyansk (*photo 1*), arrived in Kiev with only ten pounds of luggage. In the meantime we helped her to make *aliya*. She

Continued »



“Activities in Ukraine ” Continued »

now lives in the city of Karmiel in Israel.

PREPARING DOCUMENTS FOR OLIM

In the meantime we have helped over 200 olim to make *aliya*. Most of the people do not have passports or any other documents on them. We helped physically and sometime financially with buying international passports and obtaining various documents for Sochnut.

Alexander, a young man from Shakhtersk who walked to the closest city, said he left Shakhtersk, walking through the dead bodies. He was with his parents under the fire of guns. He came to Kiev with just a plastic bag, without a change of clothes, and with one pair of sandals. His parents stayed in the Zaporizhe region. On the arrival day we filed to make his international passport, gave him housing in the health center with food. He arrived safely in Israel!

TRUCKLOAD OF HUMANITARIAN AID

Chevra sent a truck from the central warehouse in the Netherlands (*photo 2*) to our local depot in Ukraine. This truck was loaded with humanitarian aid containing most needed product for our shelters. Amongst others, mattresses, beds, blanket, clothing, washing powder etc.

We send very regular full truckloads to various depots in Ukraine at costs of US \$5,000 per truck. We need another US \$1,500 for customs clearance and distribution.

Earlier, we trucked 6,000 mattresses and in the meantime, another 3,000 pieces are waiting

in our warehouse in Den Haag/Holland. One truck can take about 250 mattresses. Other trucks are being sent with duvets, new clothing and shoes, medical items, etc.

SHELTERS

Most of the refugees are mothers and children; we offer them shelter in different cities and villages in Western Ukraine. We help them with all arrangement needed for their *aliya*.

Winter is coming and we need to provide people with winter clothing and other items to survive in the cold. Furthermore, we operate various soup kitchens (*photos 3 and 4*) where *olim* who are staying in schools, old hospitals/sanatoriums, etc. can regularly get a decent hot meal.

Yekaterina Moiseyevna Chernopolskaya is one of the people we helped in Crimea. She was born in 1946 in Simferopol, to a Jewish family. During World War II her parents evacuated from Kerch (Crimea) to Chelyabinsk (Russia). During the war, the apartment where she lives now belonged to her mother's relatives. In this apartment Nazis arrested her mother's brothers with their families, thirteen people total, the youngest child was two-and-a-half years old. All of them were shot. Their names are written at the Holocaust museum in Israel. Yekaterina's parents had four children, and when they returned to Simferopol after the evacuation they experienced extreme poverty and hunger. Their father worked at the factory and was the only person to provide for wife and four children. Yekaterina finished school, then studied at Leningrad Institute named after

Gertsen and then at Simferopol Medical school. She continues to work as a masseuse in a public outpatient clinic. At work she often experienced anti-Semitism from her supervisors. She lives alone. Almost all her relatives live in Israel. Recently she suffered a broken leg. We were able to provide the medical nursing she needed, She is very grateful for the benevolent aid, which enabled her to buy medicine, groceries and coal for heating the house during the winter-time.

EASTERN UKRAINE

Here is a report we received the other day about the situation in Eastern Ukraine. Please pray for our workers, who are risking their lives to help Jews escape from the area (Jeremiah 16:16).

Shalom from busy Kiev.

Yesterday almost all Slaviansk has been full of bombing. Military actions are now happening closer to Kramatorsk. It is a really terrible situation. No water, no electricity, and as a result there's no possibility to charge mobile phones, just local ones.

A driver who was helping us has lost his house because of bombing. Now he's in western Ukraine with his family. Yesterday, one family of Hesed leaders spent almost all day in a bomb shelter. We couldn't reach them; the connection was lost. Thanks to God, her daughter called us from Jerusalem and gave us her local number. In the evening we have the great luck to reach them via local phone.

Today in the morning, during enormous shooting, our driver took her and her husband,



3



4

he really saved them. Now he's taking them to Kiev. We'll give them housing near our house. There are more people in there (east)—we need a miracle as some of them are disabled people.

So, now we are waiting for driver, who knows the way. Every day, sometimes a few times a day, the situation changes. For the mo-

ment we can travel via Krasniy Liman (name of the place).

This morning (7 am) we rented a car from Sloviansk to Kramatorsk and tomorrow the car goes to Dnepropetrovsk with Mira Israilevna, 85 years old. Also we have a few women with children from that place. Terrible to explain how Mira crying in my phone.

We found a driver and he helped her with one bag to bring to the blok post, after having taken her bag and walked to the other side without the car, and from that side was a bus. Now she is in Kramatorsk at my friend's house and will be there till morning.

—From our workers in Ukraine

THANK YOU FROM DONESK

Letter from a refugee from Donesk we helped this past fall:

My name is Eduard Mikhailovich Kazakin. I'm 51 years old. I was born in Donetsk, Ukraine.

I'm writing this letter on behalf of all my family including my spouse Nina, my son Michael, his spouse Oksana and their two daughters Anna (7 years) and Victoria (2 years), our daughter Olga and her husband Andrew, and their children Artem (6 years) and Lillia (4 years).

All of us were born and raised in Donetsk. We studied and grew up in Donetsk. Studied, worked, raised our kids and grandkids. Probably you already know Donetsk became one of the centers of military activities. It became dangerous for your life to stay there. We became witnesses how industrial and cultural areas of the city are being destroyed and how peaceful citizen of the city die. We all are

hoping for the end of this unannounced brother killing war. But even now it is obvious that to restore the region it will take years and may be even decades.

In this situation we can see only one solution for ourselves, our kids and grandkids: repatriation to the historical motherland, to the country of Israel.

On behalf of all the members of our family, let me express sincere thankfulness to you and your assistants for the given organizational and financial support for our family during the time of preparation and directly with repatriation: we were given nice housing in the suburbs of Kiev, organized food during our stay in Kiev, organized transportation to the railway station in Kiev, consulate appointment we were given a financial help, moral help and psychological help.



THE KAZAKIN FAMILY

As a result our son Michael with his family is in Israel in the Karmiel city from August 3rd. My daughter and her family successfully went through the consulate appointments and received a right to repatriate. We should leave on September 21, 2014.

Let me show my gratitude one more time for the attention from every area for every member of our family in such a difficult period of life for us. I wish you and your team health, peaceful heavens and happiness.

With all respect,

—Eduard Kazakin

REPORT FROM ISRAEL >

We are continuing to work in Israel, in S'derot and Jerusalem. In Israel, we help not only holocaust survivors, but all elderly as well as single mothers, and the handicapped. We recently received this letter from our associate in S'derot:

Shalom Michael,

The promised latter rain came this month and as the parched land from the summer heat soaked it up, new life and green fields appeared.

Your support is like the "latter rains" as it not only brought new faith and hope to our lives to see the shelves full of food for another month, but also to those we give it to as they come in to open doors and another month of food for them to take home.

It is through your love and generosity that this is able to happen. From the bottom of our hearts (myself, our volunteers and the 450 families on our list ... THANK YOU!

In Jerusalem, we have been distributing gift cards to the elderly and they can purchase what they want. Its less humiliating for them, and makes it easier for them to get exactly what they



MIRO NOVAK/BIGSTOCK

need, either medicine or food. Most of the people we are helping there are Ukrainian Jewish Refugees, who were fleeing the war in Ukraine. Here is a letter from someone we helped:

"Two weeks ago we succeeded in contacting our relative who lives in Yasinovataya in the region of Donetsk. His late mother is the sister of my mother and his late father is also Jewish—Yefim Moiseyevich. V.T. My cousin asked us to send him money to get him out of that hell of war that is going on in Donbass. We gathered as much money as we could. He escaped hungry and without anything with the last train from Yasinovataya

to Harkov and from there he flew to Israel. His 66-year-old sister, Tzilya, lives in Netanyah. She and her husband are both handicapped. Obviously, their life is not easy but anyway they received V.T. in their home. Last week V.T. went to the Ministry of the Interior and presented himself as a war refugee. Their answer was that they do not care about such a status, but if he is Jewish he can bring his papers and a proof that he has no criminal record, that he is divorced, etc. You do not know what's going on in Donbass—everything is bombed, local authorities do not work—he cannot go back there to find his documents. All his relatives and I can confirm that 55-year-old V.T. is a quiet and modest Jew. We do not know what to do. He does not have any medical insurance, money, etc. We do not ask any benefits. It's an exceptional situation; he is a Jewish refugee and should be treated accordingly. Isn't our country established for this purpose—to receive the Jewish refugees from all over the world?

—A.V.

Chevra USA is very grateful to First Fruits of Zion for covering the cost of printing and mailing the Chevra Report, thereby ensuring all your donations go directly to helping people in need.