

CHEVRA REPORT



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

JUNE 2015

HELPING IS EASY!

Please consider supporting Chevra with your donations.

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

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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.

A PERSONAL NOTE ▶



MICHAEL BIGSTOCK

I am sorry it's been a long while since our last newsletter. My father broke his hip in March, and passed away in April. I am taking care of my mother. It's been a difficult time and I appreciate your understanding. I appreciate your faithful ongoing support of our work.

Dr. Michael Schiffman

Director of Chevra

UKRAINE ▶

We visited the Ukraine in February. For a few days we could see what the situation in the country, where war continues, looks like. We visited many people and brought them financial support as well as words of hope—that God did not reject them and did not leave them in this tough situation.

SUBURBS OF KIEV

Here is a house for Jewish refugees lead by a couple: Natasza and Jurij. It is opened twenty-

four hours a day. They give people not only a shelter but first of all a sense of acceptance and love. Here refugees receive all kinds of help to be able to apply for a visa to Israel. Right now the house can host fifteen people, but it is expanding. Soon there will be a place for thirty.

PASTOR FROM DONBAS

The hardest battles take place there. The war forced him to leave his land and now he helps to transport people from territories occupied by

separatists. Such transport is possible thanks to various networks of contact. However, it is very dangerous as separatists do not want people to leave. Therefore, sometimes they fire at buses. Refugees do not use big coaches for transport because they are much easier to destroy. Right now, renting one bus for forty people costs around \$600. Five or six coaches are rented daily.

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TWO VIEWS OF A SOUP KITCHEN ►





“Ukraine ” Continued »

CRIMEA »

BERDYCHIV

Next to the entry to the city, there are hundreds of people waiting for the bodies of the fallen soldiers to arrive. Kneeling, they show them honor. One of the oldest soup kitchens for Jews is in Berdychiv. It was established seventeen years ago. It is open from Monday to Friday.

They give food to 135 people every day, including sixty of the most ailing ones. The food is delivered to them by car. The price for one dinner is \$1.20.

Hundreds of Ukrainian churches are involved in various ways—especially by giving food, clothes and accommodation. There are 48,000 refugees in the city Zaporizhia. The local authorities are not able to help everyone. Fifteen thousand people do not receive any support.

RAJA

For decades she has suffered from multiple sclerosis. She is a widow, living alone. Raja does not walk. She requires nursing twenty-four hours a day. Messianic Jews from Zhytomyr pay for the nurse who cares for Raja most of the time during the day. But still for a few hours a day she is alone at home. She was robbed in the summer time. A masked man came to her house when she was alone. He stole her money and a mobile phone. ■

Dear Chevra, shalom!

I would like to give you a short update on the situation in Crimea. Currently the economic situation in Crimea is very difficult and continues to get worse almost every day. It has especially affected medicines, the prices for some medicines rose five to seven times yet the Russian analogues are considerably inferior compared to the Ukrainian counterparts. Therefore we bring the medicines from Zaporozh'ye and Kirovograd. The food prices rose two to three times. The government gradually raises the utility costs to bring them to the same level as in other parts of Russia where the utilities are four to five times higher than in Ukraine.

The most critical situation is with the medicines. During winter another area of concern was coal and wood supplies for heating, but today it is not relevant. We buy food supplies for people in Simferopol, and there we pay for their utilities. Many members of the congregation lack funds for either.

We expect big problems with water in the near future, since Dnieper water is no longer provided to Crimea, which may result in the shortage of water in the Crimean dam lakes. Because of all this many people lack funds to pay for the medical supplies, grocery products

and utilities. We, by God's mercy, have resources to share in their needs, thanks to your donations. As a result new people have started to attend the congregation services.

People are very grateful for the help they receive from the Lord via your ministry, it enables them to improve living conditions, maintain health and some cases even life.

I also want to thank you for funds that you send to me and Vova as they enable us to minister to God in Crimea for His glory.

May God bless you.

MARGARITA

Margarita was born in 1980 in Simferopol; her mother was a Jew. When she was little, her parents divorced, and four years ago her father died. Half a year ago her mother had to immigrate to Poland because of the persecution of the Russian occupying authorities. Margarita's husband left the family and lives separately, he hasn't been providing for the family for more than a year.

Margarita's son David was born in 2011. At the age of two the boy began to experience epileptic seizures. Currently he undergoes

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“Crimea ” Continued »

medical examination and treatment in the hospital.

A couple of years ago the Lord answered our prayers and healed Margarita from breast cancer, as her other attended the congregation’s services and asked to pray for her daughter.

Margarita is very grateful to the Lord for the food and medication benevolence, which she received through our ministry. Otherwise she wouldn’t be able to survive in her current situation. Currently she attends the services.

BENOR ABRAMOVICH AND ANNA YEFIMOVNA VINZ

Benor Abramovich was born to a Jewish family in the town of Byisk in Altai region (Russia), where his father was deported for being a leader of a Zionist organization Hashomer Hatzair. The family was banished to a free settlement. Benor Abramovich was three years old when the term of father’s banishment was over and the family moved to Simferopol. In 1941 his father went to war, while Benor’s mother with Benor and his older brother, who already studied at school, were evacuated to Cheboksary (Russia). After the war his mother worked at the School of Medicine, but in the ’50s was fired because of her ethnic background and found employment as a lab assistant in a hospital. Benor’s father continued to serve in the army as a military physician. In 1953 he retired from the army and became a chief physio-pediatrician of Crimea.

In 1950 Benor Abramovich finished school with summa cum laude honours. He entered the Medical University, which he graduated in 1956. After graduating the University he worked for three years in the city of Krasnoperekopsk in Crimea, then, successively, at the Second, Fourth and Sixth Hospitals of Simferopol. Later he joined the staff of the Crimean Regional Hospital named after Semashko, where he worked for 40 years. He retired in 2007.

Benor Abramovich and Anna Yefimovna have a son who lives in Simferopol and works as a physician. Their daughter lives in Israel as well as two grandsons, who serve in the Israeli army. Benor Abramovich and Anna Yefimovna both are disabled (2nd group of disability), have many diseases and badly need medication and food. They were grateful for the benevolence we brought.

We had a great trip to Ukraine and were happy to bless the people who work hard to help the Jewish refugees on their way to Israel.

We bought them a new refrigerator and helped to pay their monthly rent for the house through which hundreds of refugees pass on a monthly basis.

Ukrainian positions have been shelled heavily lately and there is a real danger that the flights to Israel would be suspended if Ukraine will declare a state of war. This would mean that we’d need to have other ways to bring the Jews home to Israel.

The outcome for our trip to Kiev was sad—the President’s Liaison for Donbass area told

us that the government has no access whatsoever to the archives in Donetsk and Luhansk.

IRINA GERASCHENKO AND LIA SHEMTOV IN KIEV

The separatists use the captured archives to trace the parents whose children were evacuated to Ukraine, in order to blackmail them. We will keep on working through our friends in the President’s office. Please pray for this, as there must be a solution. So many people need to find the documents to prove their Jewishness. Right now it seems that our only way to reach the archives is via our contacts in Russia ...

SUSANNA AND MIKAEL IN BEN GURION AIRPORT

Good report – We were so happy that everything worked out and we could greet Susanna and her son in Israel! It was such a joy to see them come to the promised land. They got their ID cards the very next day and we’ll help them to get settled in Tel Aviv area.

Yesterday we were happy to greet another returning Israeli whom we helped to come home from Ukraine. We get new requests on a daily basis and usually these are complicated cases that nobody works with—tourist “olim,” DNA tests, returning citizens, etc.

Another massive wave of Aliya has started—let’s do all we can to help the dispersed Jews home.

Please help us—together we can make the difference. ■