

THE BAPTIST HOME STORY

Arcadia Valley • Chillicothe • Ozark

Reflecting God's love in ministry to senior adults

AN OPEN LETTER TO OUR HOUSE OF MERCY DONORS FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BAPTIST HOME

Dear Friends:

The history of how a former Soviet army barracks building was converted and renovated to become an extended care facility to care for elderly Belarusian Baptists makes an exciting story. At the request of leadership of the Baptist Union of Belarus, The Baptist Home forged a partnership with them to complete this building on the campus of the Children's camp at Kobrin. In 2010, the construction was completed and dedicated in June of 2010.



The story of how this building opened to residents to become a vital center of ministry to the elderly has yet to be told. Several reasons have been put forth for not opening the House of Mercy to residents. They include governmental regulations, the poor state of the Belarusian economy and the seeming lack of support from the leadership of the Baptist Union, the board of the camp and the director of the camp.

Commitments from Baptist Union Leadership and Camp Trustees

Recently, Jim Nelson, Roger Hatfield and I traveled to Belarus to see what we could do to get the stalled process going again. When Jim and I got off the plane (Roger would join us later from Ukraine), we were ushered immediately into a meeting of the board of trustees of the Kobrin camp (Zhemchuzinka) and the leadership of the Baptist Union. We were assured by the president of the Baptist Union, Viktor Krutsko, by the chairman of the camp board, Josef Rychowsky and by the former president of the union, Nikolay Sinkovets, that they would be doing everything they could to see that the doors to the House of Mercy would open to residents. As we went around the table, similar assurances were given to us by each member of the board.

During our stay, on several occasions we met with officers of the union and members of the board of trustees for Zhemchuzinka, individually, in small groups and as a whole. We also met with Stepan Trubchik and Vladimir Vandich several times. Although there were personality clashes and differences of opinion, the strong assurances they were committed to the House of Mercy from all parties involved was unwavering.

Commitment from Government Official

While we were at Zhemchuzinka, Vladimir Vandich arranged for us to meet with a local government official from the Kobrin area. Valentin Trubchik (no relation to Stepan) assured us that the government would not be putting up any roadblocks to the opening of the House of Mercy. He also encouraged us to proceed with the project.



We were also encouraged by a tour of a recently opened Catholic House of Mercy near Pinsk. Anatoly Falco, pastor of the Baptist Church at Pinsk and a trustee of Zhemchuzinka, hosted us on our tour. The building turned out to be much costlier than the Kobrin House of Mercy and dealing with government officials more difficult. It took 10 years from start of construction to opening. But it did show us that it could be done. The House of Mercy at Pinsk has been open for about three months and is serving 25 residents.

Commitment from Belarusian Donors

It was also very encouraging to hear from two major Belarusian donors. Viktor Grabaruk, a Minsk businessman who has contributed substantially to the House of Mercy, visited with us in Minsk to reiterate his support for

the project and specifically for the leadership of Stepan Trubchik.

We also had dinner with Nikolay Shulyak, a successful Christian farmer from the Brest region who has donated fruit trees to the camp at Kobrin and has pledged to contribute farm produce to help feed future residents of the House of Mercy.



Our Commitment to You

We made a number of recommendations to the board of trustees regarding their oversight of all components relating to the House of Mercy. We emphasized once again that you, our House of Mercy donors, would not be satisfied until the doors to the House of Mercy are opened to residents and this ministry of compassionate caring begins to fulfill the purpose for which it was created. We are committed to see this happen.

We will be working actively and often with the Zhemchuzinka board, with the leadership of the Baptist Union, with Stepan Trubchik and Vladimir Vandich to begin this vital ministry within the next few months.

We are asking the Belarusians to become self-responsible and to fulfill their commitments to the aged of Belarus and to donors who gave sacrificially to make this ministry possible. We ask for your continued support and prayers for this project and for Global Aging Missions.

Thanking you again for your gifts and your patience,

Steven R. Jones
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