

We exist to serve the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of women and children, orphans, and children with special needs and their families in Ukraine with the love of Christ.



Last Angels on Earth by Larisa Marceva

MTU in a nationwide Ukrainian Magazine!

The Good Housekeeping Magazine UA printed an article about MTU's overnight summer camp program. A Ukrainian journalist, Larisa Marceva, shares her impressions of her first visit to a special needs camp.



If I had known, where MTU people were to take me, I would have refused to go, but nothing in this life happens accidentally.

'It is impossible to even think of such things without tears. I was simply told 'it is an unusual camp for children and parents near Zhitomir. It is going to be interesting for you as a journalist. Are you coming?' – 'Let's go!'



The fact that it was a camp for children with special needs I realized only as I got out of the car and found myself surrounded by children in wheel chairs. Some of them had weird and thus scary faces. Others couldn't open their crooked hands. A bold young man with stumps in place of hands and burnt skin looked at us with unfocused eyes. He became a victim of a great life injustice – happened to be locked in a guard house which caught fire. I could hardly swallow and started back to the car. I really wanted to go back to my comfortable and beautiful world, where obedient girls wear white bows and sporty boys ride scooters.

It seemed I was the only one overwhelmed by my emotions. My fellow-travellers threw themselves on kids. And the kids reached out to the guests sharing their news in their own way the best they could. Lunchtime arrived and the volunteers



wheeled the children to the canteen.

And the volunteers there held a special place. They were students from the US and Ukraine, as a rule, Christian believers, who spent their vacation at camps. There were 40 of them and they took care of 60 children. Nobody forced them to such an uneasy, in my opinion, test. However, those who came for the first time surely returned.

Taking a closer look I understood what was the most striking thing from the very beginning – everyone at camp looked happy. 'This is true' confirmed a cheerful Tanya B, MTU information manager, who showed me around. As a rule, these kids are cared for by their mothers. Most of the fathers leave their families to escape from the burden of cares and sidelong glances. And the lives of these mothers turn into an interminable fight for survival. The relatives prefer to withdraw from such an uncomfortable problem. Help from the government is scanty. MTU's camp is the only opportunity to relieve their depression and chronic weariness... and have fellowship with other people since most of the time they need to be with their children 24x7. And for the kids themselves, camp is the only opportunity to get outside of their apartment or house, and see the



river and horses, to pick flowers and mushrooms... Here they have found friends and feel needed and talented, and loved.

How should I communicate with them? What to say? 'The very same things you would say to your child,' Tanya replied.

Having more boldness now, I stroke a hand of one of the kiddos. His face wreathed in a smile, and I got ashamed. It was such a little thing - just a touch for sick child. Recent studies prove that simple touches stimulate the development of such children more effectively than medications.

We spent our whole day at camp. And even though from time to time I would hide in a car to cry, by the evening an amazing peace and calming filled my soul – a feeling that comes only after a long and sincere prayer. "Why would you support such children?" - wondered my neighbor, who I shared my impressions with. "They will never be whole. There are so many healthy children suffering. And here time and money is spent on such ..." I looked at her with pity. "These children are the last angels on earth, sent to remind us of our ability to show mercy and selfless love."

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