

CHEVRA REPORT



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

DECEMBER 2017

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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.

REFUGEES AND SOUP KITCHENS ▶



REPORT FROM UKRAINE ▶

This next report is from Irek.

We are planning a new soup kitchen in Berdyansk Ukraine.

The last my trip to Ukraine was a great time and opportunity to help and bless Jewish refugees.

Berdyansk is a city located on the sea of Azov, holiday region which lies in the south of Ukraine. During wartime activities that took place in the occupation of Crimea and then Lugansk and Donetsk, Berdyansk took a place where a lot of refugees found their place of stopping for a while, until the moment when war will be over, but war did  stop. Statistics say that in the beginning there were 22,000 refugees in the town of 100,000 people. Today it's 10,000 refugees, which is about 10% of the population. We contacted an organization called "Balto" with a director named Natalia. They are helping Ukrainian refugees and they are helping Jewish refugees as well (they have list of more than 250 Jewish refugees). We visited several families who escaped from occupied territory by military units favoring Russia's sovereignty. This situation offers a great opportunity to help by open soup kitchen there. We already found some funds for approximately 30 Jewish people, but there are 150 who desperately need support in that form of help.

Dear Friends,

This has been a very eventful year. We have kept all our soup kitchens going, and have been able to feed 1400 Jewish refugees from the Ukraine war. We are feeding them five days a week.

I recently returned from a trip to Ukraine, visiting our soup kitchens. People have been open and friendly, and most of all, grateful for our help. With great emotion, people expressed their thanks for the support we give to them. We are literally making a life and death difference for these people.

I am enclosing pictures of some of the people we are helping.

If your end of the year giving enables you to help us, we have worthy projects that will help save the lives of Jewish people in Ukraine. Please help us help them.

May this year be a good year for all our friends. God bless you,

Rabbi Dr. Michael Schiffman
Director of Chevra

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I think if we are able to start a soup kitchen for 70 people it would be great! One meal for one person costs between US \$1.35 up to \$1.50, depending on the season what is the market (cost of vegetables and meat etc.). It would be great with God's help, and if you will be able to help on this matter for these people there.

Elena, 57 years old, lives alone and fled in 2012 from the Donetsk region. Her children still live in Donetsk. She suffers from thyroid disease just before she left her family home, but because she has been diagnosed so late, she is now influenced by many organs diseases.

Stress and war had a direct impact of Elena's not easy fate. Her family and her origin crosses through different nationalities like: Czech, Polish, German and Jewish. Her grandfather was a Jew. After escaping from war-affected areas, she is living with her neighbor in a "summer house" just outside the Berdyansk. **While living out of the city, it plays the role of costs and expenses and fees that are often lacking people,** but on the other hand, they do not often have visitor and visits. This has a particular negative impact on getting and handling administrative matters: shopping, visiting a doctor, etc., because there is no transportation, so any logistics is impeded. The most important needs for today are the treatments and medicine. People like Elena are depressed and mentally retarded. We prayed with her and helped as well.

Natalia, 46 years old, had a Jewish father who died in 2013. She escaped with her husband and mother during the war from the Lugansk region. Now they are renting a small house far from the town because it is cheaper.

Natalia worked as a shop assistant, her husband as a welder. After escaping, he found a job at the factory. It was especially hard to find a job as a refugee. Refugees are often treated as second-class people. In addition, local people often do not give importance for work in terms of time and quality, which is met with disapproval. Natalia suffers from pain in her hips. She can not work and she should have had an operation when she was young. They thought about going to Israel, but it is many problems with it. For example, Natalia's mother is not a Jew, and she has to take care of her mother. They lost everything during the occupation, but what paralyzes Natalia is a fear.

Natalia has a 24-year-old daughter who lives in Tatarstan, the daughter of a child herself expressing the desire to reach Israel if her mother emigrates to Israel. Natalia's father survived only because he was in an evacuation on Ural. The family expressed their desire to go to Israel in the future. The situation in Ukraine unfortunately does not give them hope.

The whole family are refugees from Donetsk area. They are renting a flat and don't know what will be tomorrow. Alona, 29 years old, has multiple sclerosis, but lately the disease has progressed. She can no longer recognize people and has been lying in bed for five years.

Her 6-year-old daughter is trying to communicate with her and does not understand why she can not walk with her mother like her friends, and she does not have any contact with mom as well. For the family, it is a big trauma, especially since Alona was five years ago a normal woman. Sergei her father has problems with the

backbone of the situation is very hard and when it comes to family maintenance or living matters they have nothing to live. They need help and financial support and medicines, the only healthy person is Alona's mother, Natasha, who is taking care of her daughter and a frail husband everyday.

Nina, 75 years old, and Grigoriy, 82 years old, have been away from home for four years as refugees from Donetsk.

Until today, they rent apartment on the other hand is a cumbersome and big unknown for the future often fills with fear. The owner can for no reason sell or tell them to move out. They need not only material but also moral spiritual help. They left their homes and their work of 50 years was gone, they are scattered across different territories in connection with the political situation. Grigoriy had, during wartime, a heart attack. Nina had a micro stroke and was in a state before the infarction.

These are people who do not have hope and are broken inside, who need healing. For two days we were able to make meetings with music and the word of encouragement, to be testimony that they are not alone, that God is with them and that they are not forgotten, and that there are Christians who are pray for them. Then we made the Sabbath together and food parcels. People were crying because God touched their hearts and He did not forget about them. People said that they have hope for their lives and makes sense to live. We had a wonderful time and we pray that we would be able to open a soup kitchen for one of list His little brothers. We pray for it and we are asking for your prayers!

This woman found hope. One day her house, life was ruined by others ... She said, "I know why I am alive" ...

Shalom, Irek

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.