

HART's "Orphan-Care" project provides one consistent loving caregiver to an abandoned baby living in an orphanage. We do this by employing local Christian women who daily provide love, stimulation, attention and meaningful interaction that these children need so desperately. The following is a story about one of these women; how she was impacted by this project and ultimately adopted a little girl she'd been looking after.

## Adopting a blind orphan

by Bohdanna Nevolko

Since my childhood I have been dreaming to work in an orphanage. My grandfather perished at war when my Mom was two years old. She often remembered her difficult, insecure life of orphan with tears in her eyes. These stories impacted me.

In our large family I was the oldest child. Since early years I was used to looking after younger brothers and sisters. Probably, God was preparing me to adult life at that time. Now I have four daughters who love each other and in the same manner the older ones look after the younger.

When I finally came to work in an orphanage I was very impacted by the little kids with serious eyes. Some of them almost never smile, they just cry.

They are deprived of parental care, mother's kindness and it influences their development in negative way. They badly need affection and attention.

I felt compassion to the calamity of each child, I couldn't sleep and eat well, I was crying all the time. I was in such a state for two weeks. I helped these kids with whatever I could.

My husband Ihor, was brought up in an orphanage so he knows what it's like from his own experience.

One day I was transferred to work with a group of invalids. These were kids with Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, and other physical defects. When I first came there I thought I arrived in hell. Each child presented a big problem and nobody could help or solve it. I was learning to understand these kids, I talked to them, took them by the hands, fed, washed them, walked with them.

The children got used to me in a short time and changed a little, they became calmer, happier, more active and talkative.

In August I saw Ulyana for the first time – a little, blind, helpless child. I was shocked with her misfortune, something moved inside me. I felt great pity for her. I started looking for some ways to help her. A doctor said that she had cataract and surgery would return eyesight to her.

Ulyana couldn't hold toys, she couldn't sit and didn't express any emotions. She would just lie down in a bed for a long time.

A thought occurred to me that the child who weighed 1 kg. 100 gr. when she was born, survived not for the purpose of lying down all the time. It seemed to me that it was my own child lying down there.

I saw Ulyana in my dreams, she was in my heart and head. I realized that in order to change the life of this girl she should be taken into a family.

When my daughters first saw Ulyana they asked me to take her home. God was knocking at our hearts.

I was praying with my husband, discussing

the issue, thinking it over. Finally, we arrived at the decision to adopt her.

The doctor said that the child would never see. In such a state she needed us still more. I believe God loves her and has special plan for her life.

In this case why shouldn't we allow God to channel His love through us.

I went to the city authorities and within a week I collected all the necessary documents. We had to overcome a lot of barriers. On December, 1, we became foster parents and on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December we took her home.

It all became possible because God loves everybody and especially orphans. We are thankful to God that He gave one more child into our family.

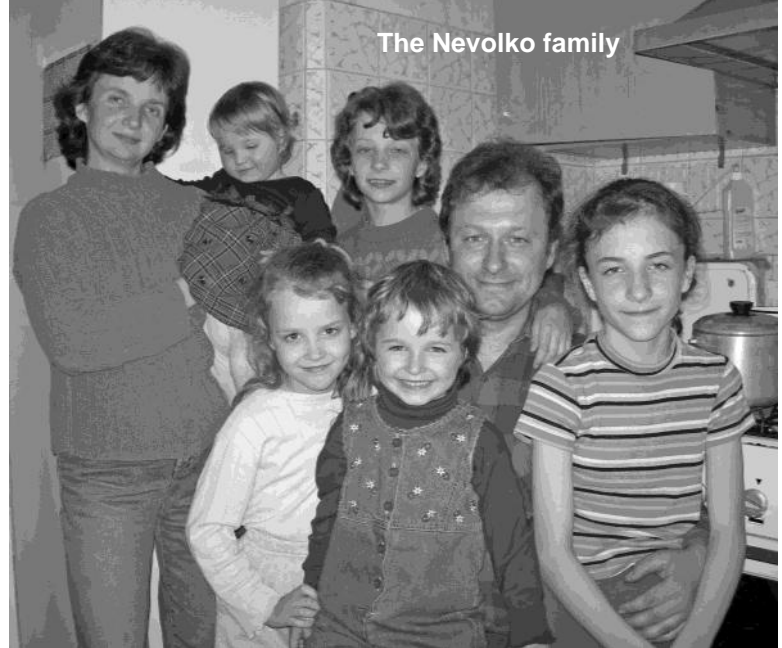
We all love Ulyana, we are happy when she smiles and has some success. She is changing from day to day. She can already play with toys, starts walking and talking.

She has become happy, reacts to all sounds, expresses her emotions. She likes to communicate, likes to be caressed, kissed, carried in hands. She goes to bed and gets up with smile.

We pray for Ulyana, and thank God for her. Each day is meaningful to us, filled with God's grace and blessing. And we believe the Lord will be able to do one more miracle – open her eyes.

**NOTE:** With HART's support the Nevolkos were able to take Ulyana to Poland to have her eyes checked by specialists there. Their assessment was that if eye surgery was successful, perhaps Ulyana would have 20% vision! The Nevolkos are a hard-working but poor family. They will need your prayers and support if Ulyana is to have this surgery.

The Nevolko family



Bohdanna, Ihor and Ulyana