

## From Despair to Hope

**H**alyna (Helen) lives with her four children in the Carpathian Mountain region of Ukraine. It is one of the most destitute, poverty stricken areas of Ukraine. Her son Petro (Peter) is in HART's Child Sponsor Project.

Helen's story is quite typical in these parts of Ukraine. Her father had died fifteen years earlier and her mother was forced to raise six children by herself, all living in a one room house.

So poverty and hardship were nothing new for Helen. But then it got worse. Her husband went to Moscow to look for better work. He found work all right— but he also found another woman; and although he comes back to the village from time to time he refuses to help Helen and the kids financially.

Tragically the cycle repeats itself, as Helen is forced to raise her four children alone, just like her mother.

And as if things couldn't get any worse, several weeks ago a fire destroyed her house in the middle of the night.

Many of the homes in these regions like Helen's, are shared with farm animals with hay stored in the attic. An electrical problem caused a spark and the house was soon engulfed in flames.

Fortunately, Helen had woken up, realized what was happening and immediately rushed the children out of the house to safety, but was unable to retrieve anything from the house.

With no option except to move in with her mother, there were now 10 people living in a house consisting of a kitchen and a bedroom. The children slept on the floor.

Everything was lost in the fire, including their winter supply of potatoes.

And her primary food source for the children—milk, stopped because their cow is pregnant.

The situation couldn't be a bleaker one especially with the onset of the long winter months ahead of her.

In her desperation Helen planned to move with the children to a city on the opposite side of Ukraine, hoping to find work.

It was at this point God allowed HART to intervene. Nadia Remisova (Child Sponsor Regional Director for the Carpathian Mountains) heard about the fire and went to the village to check out the situation. She met Helen with her bags packed, children in tow, literally 10 minutes away from boarding a bus to travel into an uncertain and most likely disastrous future.

"It was God's purpose for me to run into Halyna that day", Nadia said, "She

was under such pressure and stress that she was desperate and not thinking properly. Helen's mother later confided to me that Helen had become depressed and suicidal."

Nadia's quick thinking and HART'S resources quickly stabilized the situation. We were able to provide Helen with \$500 to buy another old house.

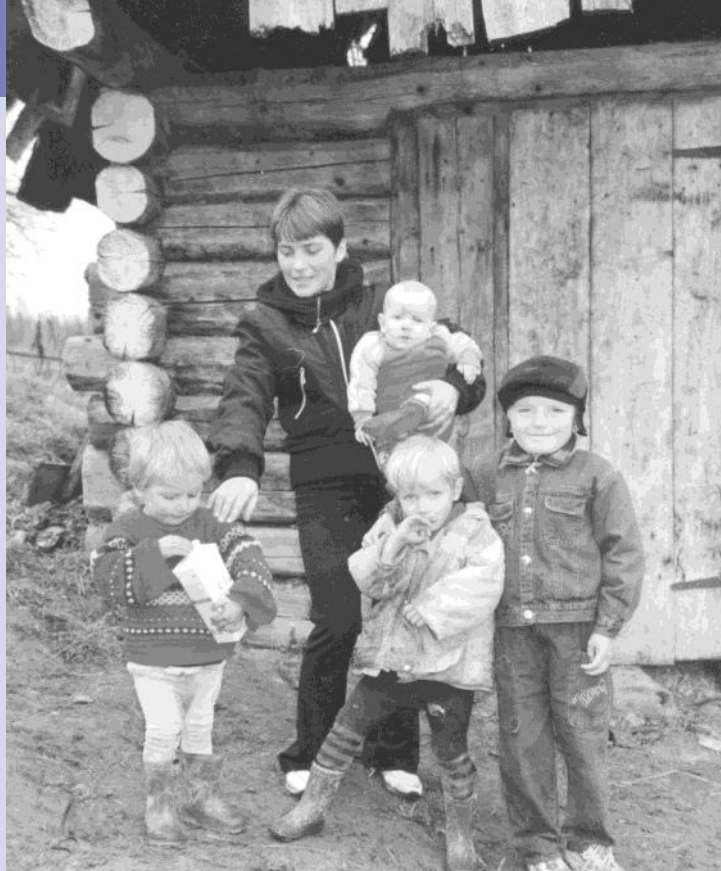
HART's office has been able to supply the family with clothing, sheets, blankets and winter boots.

Helen is extremely grateful. She can now stay in her village where extended family is able to help, and HART can monitor the situation and provide whatever else she may need.

An interesting side note; while scouring through the rubble of her home she found a gift that Peter's sponsor from Canada had given Helen last summer while visiting them. She has told us how much she treasures this gift.

Their sponsor in Calgary, Alberta has raised additional funds for Helen, however the need is so great. She must buy or build a barn; and she will also need to purchase a milking cow and a goat. Her son Peter is asthmatic and is sick a great deal of the time requiring meds.

Please keep Helen and her children in your prayers.



Helen and her four children; Peter is on the right



Helen's house after the fire