

ONE FAMILY

# One Family News

January 31, 1999

Volume 4 Issue 1

## Merry Christmas!!!

Our 9th shipment, one we called our "Christmas Shipment," left October 26th. It was waiting for us when we arrived anxious to make these deliveries.

Can you imagine the feeling of going into a village of 56 refugee families just before Christmas and surprising each of them with food, houseware items (sets of dishes, silverware, etc.), hygiene supplies and clothing, and giving each of their children a bicycle and some toys? Can you picture what affect it had on them? We've written about these families in Gradska before. They are people who had fled their homes during the war leaving everything behind, who had moved into these abandoned homes in Gradska for shelter and who had been eking out a living finding odd jobs wherever they could. These are families who live daily with uncertainty because they don't know when the owners of the houses they live in will return and force them out to a life somewhere else. This is why we rarely see a smile in this village. The people are happy to have found this place, a refuge from the war, but worry about making a life and what lies ahead.

Being there with your gifts and watching them get their minds off of their worries, to smile, laugh and really enjoy themselves, made all the effort that went into getting this shipment there worthwhile.

When our truck arrived in this remote village everyone took notice and came out to see why we were there. It was so wonderful to hand them the boxes of food and supplies and to see what it meant to them as they realized someone cared. They were so thankful.

When the food was all handed out it was dark but we still had more to bring to them. We told them that we would be back in an hour and asked them to meet us in

*(Continued on page 2)*



When the truck arrived in Gradska, Bosnia-Hercegovina, everyone came to see what it was doing there. They were all surprised to find it was loaded with boxes of food, houseware items and clothing for each of them.

## Sewing a New Life

We've been looking for sewing machines since 1996 because we felt they had the potential to help some refugee families get back on their feet, to not only repair clothing, but to make a living sewing for others.

This November we got a call from a lady in Berkeley who wanted to buy one for us to carry in our suitcase, to give to a family and to see how it would work out. We jumped at the chance and gathered some extra thread, material, sewing machine attachments and a power converter. It all fit in one large suitcase. We wondered what the customs officials

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Domanovici Camp

*While it's really great to be able to bring these containers to Bosnia and to experience first hand how they make a difference in a small way in the lives of these refugee families, it never seems to be enough. The need is so great. As we were nearing the end of our stay in Bosnia, we loaded everything we had left in the warehouse into the truck to take to a refugee camp near the Croatian border that we had never been to before. We had enough food for 57 families along with dishes, clothing and toys.*

*The camp is called Domanovici. It was once a medical center and now it houses*

*(Continued on page 5)*

## inside...

<b>The Gift of Music</b>	<b>Page 2</b>	<b>September Shipment</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Computers for a School</b>	<b>Page 4</b>	<b>Our Wish List</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
<b>Hoop Dreams</b>	<b>Page 4</b>	<b>Do you still want this?</b>	<b>Page 6</b>



**Merry Christmas!**

*(Continued from page 1)*

the center of town. Then we went back to the warehouse in Lubjuski, filled the truck with 52 bicycles, and returned. The village has no street lights and with very little lighting in the houses it was pitch black. As we entered the village we couldn't see anyone and thought we might have to knock on doors. But when we went around a bend in the road, our headlights lit up a large crowd standing in the dark. The whole town was out there waiting for us. They had no idea why we were coming back but were happy to wait outside in the cold Winter air for us. We parked the truck in a field and positioned our car behind it so the headlights would light up the back of the truck. Then one by one our truck driver called out the name that we had put on the bike (a picture is on page 3) and a child came forward to claim it. It was the most wonderful sight to see these children so happy and their parents so happy for them. Even the older children, the mid to late teenagers who stood in the background to watch, loosened up when their names were called. From that moment on, the village was a different place.

In the days that followed when we returned to drop off some medicine, or a sewing machine or flour, we saw children everywhere happily riding their bicycles. They would ride close to our car waving and laughing. Their parents would come out to see us and thank us again. This village really changed that night. This was a Christmas that they will never forget and neither will our truck driver, our interpreter or us.

Thank you to the faculty and students of **St. Catherine's School** (in Morgan Hill) for their food drive, to the faculty and students of **St. Isidore School** (in Danville) for their food, clothing, and bicycle drive, to the students of St. Isidore School who worked so hard repairing the bikes and to **Danville Bike** for the many bicycles and for helping repair them. Thank you, all of you who receive this newsletter, for your incredible generosity. Without each of you none of this would be possible. We



*At the warehouse in Oakland, The food, clothing and houseware boxes are being packed on pallets while the bicycles are organized by size to be put into the container.*



*The food drives at St. Catherine's School and St. Isidore School collected enough food to give 113 families each a box of food.*

***The Gift of Music:***

*A Priest at St. Anthony's Church in Humac (just West of Lubjuski) tries out the electric organ. It felt great to see that it worked, to hear the beautiful Croatian music and to know they'll have music for Christmas.*





 *Students from **St. Isidore School**, with the help of **Danville Bike**, are fixing bicycles for children in Bosnia. Each of the bikes received new tubes and tires, some oil and a thorough checkout. It was time well spent. There were very few problems with the bikes when they arrived, but we did leave tools and spare parts just in case!*

 *Marijan, our truck driver, is holding a flashlight in his mouth as he tries to read the name on the tag. The children are anxiously waiting to hear their name called. Marijan borrowed this truck and volunteered his time to help us. He loves children and really enjoyed the time he spent making these deliveries.*



***Gradska is a different place these days. Everywhere you look you'll see children happily riding their bicycles.***





## Computers for Some Future Engineers

Computers are hard enough to learn, but trying to learn about them without actually having a computer is really difficult.

That's how it was at the Technical School in Mostar. This is a school for high school age children who have demonstrated a high level of technical ability. The school is temporarily housed in an old building in the downtown area because the original building was destroyed during the war. This building shows many reminders of the fighting that took place in Mostar, but at least it is heated and all the windows are intact.

The students are highly motivated. Here they learn the regular courses in language, history and math and they get many hours of training in computer science and electrical and mechanical engineering. The computer class was of interest to us since we heard they had no computers to work with. We brought them 11 IBM computers and 3 older Apple Macs, along with the power converters and cabling to set them up. The teachers and students were really excited. We set the first one up and they were anxious to do the rest themselves. It would have been fun to watch but we didn't have time. We got the impression they would be there late that night finally getting to do the things they were



Daniel Frank(c) and Stephanie Smith (L) attempt to stop a Bosnian boy from driving to the hoop.

## Hoop Dreams



Basketball is a very popular sport in Bosnia and Croatia. They are very much aware of the players who have played on the Croatian Olympic teams and have since moved on to the NBA and European leagues.

Just before we finished packing the October shipment, a family in Danville gave us a backboard, hoop and net to send. It couldn't have worked out better. When we got to Gradska, we saw that they had set up a backboard (made out of an old warped piece of wood) and rim in

an area in the center of the village. There was always someone there playing with an old ball. This was an important source of entertainment for them and some of the children were very good ball players.

We gave them the new backboard, rim, net and five basketballs for the village to share. As we were leaving Bosnia, they had the old backboard down and were anxiously working on the mounts to fit the new one. Who knows, maybe someone from Gradska will be on an Olympic Basketball team someday. We can hardly wait!



## A Shipment in September

*In September we sent our eighth shipment to Bosnia. With the help of several doctors, medical centers and **Heart to Heart**, this container was packed full of medical equipment and supplies. There were hospital beds for patient rooms, recovery rooms and operating rooms, beds for newborn infants, an incubator, examination tables, doctor stools, EKG machines and Lab equipment. There were also general medical supplies, supplies for surgery, orthopedic supplies, pediatric supplies and supplies for urology. The list goes on and on. It was impressive.*

*The shipment arrived in November and went directly to the hospital in*

*Mostar. They were very happy to receive it and sent us a note to thank and commend us on the quality of the items we sent. It will make a definite improvement in the level of care that they are able to*

## A Patient's Perspective!

Every shipment we've sent has included medical equipment and supplies. This one was no different, when we were there in December, we delivered an EKG and two EEG machines, bandages, stethoscopes, blood pressure cuffs, medicine and supplies to a hospital in Citluk. We could see that, while we brought half of a truck load, they needed many times that.

Two days after our delivery, Daniel Franke became ill and needed a doctor. So nervously we took him back to the hospital in Citluk. He was very concerned due to the look of the hospital (paint chipped off the walls) and because he knew they didn't have enough supplies. When the doctor recommended an IV, Daniel expressed his concern about how sterile it would be.

The doctor couldn't examine his ears because he didn't have an otoscope and explained that because of the war, the hospitals are still trying to rebuild and it will take a while. In the meantime they must make due with the few things they have. This is such a basic examination procedure at home, it's unfortunate they can't perform it there. You have to admire

## Sewing a New Life!

*(Continued from Page 1)*

would say when they saw this but figured to cross that bridge when we had to.

We took the machine to a lady in Gradska. From previous trips we remembered her saying that she had to leave her sewing machine behind when her family fled from their home in Zenica during the war. She was so excited to get the new machine. Right away she looked at the pictures in the book and figured out how to set it up. By the next day she had already sewn curtains for her windows and patched her children's clothes. The lighting was poor in the room so she set up a flashlight to shine on the needle so she could see. She had such enthusiasm and was so energized it was fun to watch her. Its easy to see that this could soon provide her with a means of income. We need to get more of these machines to take over there.



*A lady in Gradska is demonstrating how her new sewing machine works. In the background is a computer we brought for her two daughters to learn to use to help them develop skills for their future.*

## Domanovici Camp

*(Continued from page 1)*

primarily older refugees although there are 7 children there with their families. The camp provides shelter and one meal, a bowl of soup, a day for them. When our truck arrived, the people crowded around to see what we brought. We got a list of family names from the camp administrator and began giving out the supplies to the largest families first. Each of the children received toys and were very grateful to get even a ball to play with.

As we started nearing the end of the food, we could sense that the remaining people were becoming concerned that they wouldn't receive anything. We opened the boxes and split up the contents as much as we could and still didn't get to everybody. It was very difficult to run out in the face of such need. We have so much at home, our shelves are full of food. What we wouldn't have given for that food right then, to clean off our shelves and hand it all out to these people. There we were and there was nothing else we could do. The people all thanked us for coming and for helping them. They were very gracious, but we left there feeling emotionally drained. There is so much yet to be done.



### **Scenes from Domanovici (Clockwise):**

*Above, this girl just received a doll and wooden folding rocking chair (made by a man in Pittsburg, California)*

*Two boys are playing with Tinker Toys, a soccer ball and a wooden train (also made in Pittsburg, California)*

*Mark Franke with a little girl who is about to receive a Barbie Doll.*

*To the right: Deborah Scurlock works with two girls to find clothes for their new Barbie dolls.*



**Do you still want to be on our mailing list?**

It's been three years since our first newsletter, the one back in March 1996 that covered our first two trips to Bosnia with *SkyNet*. Since then we've been sending newsletters to everyone who had contacted us by phone or with a donation of any kind. Our mailing list is up to over 1,200 names and it's still growing.

This leads us to wonder how many of you, whom we haven't heard from in quite a while, are still interested in hearing about *One Family*. It's possible that some of you are just "filing" these newsletters with your "junk" mail.

These mailings are fairly expensive (about 46 cents each to produce and send). If you would rather not receive them, it would benefit both of us if you let us know. You would have one less piece of unnecessary mail to contend with and our expenses would be reduced.

So, if you would like to be taken off our mailing list, please let us know by leaving a message on our 800 number or

**Our Wish List!**

*One Family* continues to serve as a link between families in Northern California and the most needy refugee families we can find in Bosnia. Everything we've delivered has come from donations. We couldn't do any of this without each of you. We are planning another shipment later this year and hope to send more of the same items. The following are some of the things we are looking for (please don't limit yourself to this list, they still need so much):

**Family Food Boxes** (*Flour, oil, pasta, pasta sauce, canned fruits & vegetables, peanut butter, jelly, sugar, salt, rice, powdered milk, coffee, tea, vitamins, cookies, candy, tooth brushes & tooth paste, etc.*) *Avoid glass containers.*

**Baby items** (*food, chairs, strollers, beds*)

**Disposable and cloth Diapers** (*all sizes*)

**Powdered Soap** *for washing clothes*

**Items for Personal Hygiene** (*like soaps, shampoos, tooth brushes, tooth paste*)

**New Underwear** (*all sizes, esp. large*)

**Sewing Machines** - *good working order*

**Knitting Supplies** - *Yarn & needles*

**Houseware** *pots & pans, silverware,*

*glassware in good condition*

**Tools** *for home (metric) and garden*

**School classroom supplies** (*blackboards, chalk & erasers, paper, scissors, pencils*)

**Coloring Books & Crayons**

**Musical Instruments** (*all kinds including large items like pianos, organs etc.*)

**Bicycles** *in good working order (all sizes)*

**Sports Equipment** (*soccer equipment, basketball equipment, etc.*)

**Toys** (*Frisbees, balls, Barbie dolls, stuffed animals, tricycles, wagons, blocks, cars*)

**Vitamins** (*children & adult - Must not be past or even close to expiration date*)

**Medical Equipment** (*blood pressure, stethoscopes, wheel chairs, crutches, lab equip., hospital beds, dental equip., etc.*)

**Medical Supplies** (*Bandages, soaps, etc.*)

**Medications** (*Antibiotics, Asthma, Blood Pressure, Heart, First Aid & snake bite kits, etc.*) (*Medicines must not be past or even close to expiration date*)

**Financial Assistance** *for shipping and to purchase:*

Goats

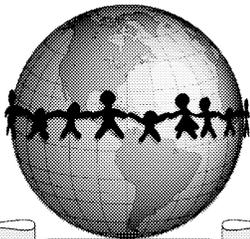
Stoves

Refrigerators

Heaters

Food

School items



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# One Family News

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