



One Family News

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It's Starting!!!

We mentioned in past newsletters the new wave of homeless families. These are the ones who had moved into abandoned homes in a safer area during the war. The Dayton Accord, which set the rules for the end of hostilities, stated that all displaced families are entitled and encouraged to return to their homes. This set in motion a process whereby refugees, living in abandoned homes, could at any time be expelled from the house whenever the owner wants to return. Most don't have homes to return to because they've been destroyed, and the area that they came from is filled with ethnic prejudice against them. So they are afraid of what awaits them when their time comes to leave. They must choose between returning and rebuilding in an area where they aren't wanted, going to a refugee camp, or to be homeless.

In the past few months, owners of the homes in Gradska, have been returning to look their property over and assess the potential for them to return. While they've always known this time would come, it has been an unsettling turn of events for the refugee families. Soon they'll get the official notification that they must leave.

We plan to stay in touch with many of these 59 families as they are spread out throughout Bosnia. We've been working with them since we started *One Family* in 1995. We've watched their children grow, celebrated special events with them, helped them with tools for work, and seen them make progress in establishing new lives in the Gradska area. We are very concerned for their safety.

What is happening in Gradska is being repeated all over Bosnia. The government has estimated that there are one million people who will be uprooted like this. There are many homes to be rebuilt, and much healing to be done. The war ended 5 years ago but the pain continues.



If a refugee family had one face, this is what they would look like. This is one of the families in Gradska who you have been helping through your donations. When we first found them in 1995 they were hungry and cold living in this abandoned house. You have really made a difference in their lives. We plan to keep track of them as they will be one of the first families to have to leave as homeowners reclaim their houses.

Just Ask!

You would think that after nine shipments we would have this down to a fine art, but each shipment seems to have a personality of its own. On shipment number nine we figured out that we could have the shipper hold the container at the port, giving us control over when it was actually delivered. This way it wouldn't be sitting in Bosnia tempting all who saw it and we could time its arrival to ours. It worked well for that shipment and we were able to get a lot done without the pressure of having to leave. So, as we planned the tenth shipment, we didn't book our flights until it left on May 8th.

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A Donor's Conference

We were invited to attend a conference attended by representatives from many organizations throughout the world who have been helping refugees of the war in Croatia and Bosnia. It gave us an opportunity to meet others who have been bringing humanitarian aid into these countries, to hear their stories and learn from their experiences. While several large organizations were represented, we were surprised to see how many small organizations there were who, like us, were touched by the cruelty of this war.

We often read in the papers about

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Just Ask!

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The shipper gave us an estimated date of arrival of June 18th. We gave ourselves an extra week and when we arrived the container was nowhere to be found. The shipper wasn't sure where the ship was, and thus couldn't tell us when it would arrive. Between phone calls to the shipper in Mississippi we took the time to enjoy Bosnia and the wonderful village of Medjugorje that we stay in. Ten days later as our flight home was approaching and we were convinced that the ship was lost at sea, the shipper told us that the container has been sitting in a port called Koper, but they couldn't tell us where that was. It seems that the paperwork that went with the container had a final destination of Koper. We found Koper, it's in Slovenia right up where Italy meets the upper part of what was once Yugoslavia.

By now it is Wednesday morning, we are leaving on Friday and the shipper is telling us that the best they can do is get it to us by Monday. So we went to church and handed the whole thing to Our Blessed Mother. If she wanted us to unpack and deliver it, she will have to get it to us. We started drawing up instructions for disposition of the container's contents and scheduled meetings with the people who would be doing the work. Wednesday afternoon we got a call from the shipper that the container would be in Bosnia ready for us to unpack by Thursday noon. Thank you Blessed Mother!

It arrived and by 2pm we were unloading. It took three and a half hours to unload. Three of us in the container, four volunteers outside moving everything into the warehouse, and four inside organizing and grouping together the deliveries. We took truck loads to two camps that night and at midnight packed the truck for a 7am Friday morning delivery to another camp in Grude (about an hour drive North). After a five hour drive to the airport in Croatia, we "collapsed" on the plane feeling thankful that we had the chance to make deliveries and ensure that everything did get into the hands of those who need it.



It took only three and a half hours to unload the container in Bosnia. This time they surprised us with a fork lift which made things go much faster. These food boxes weighed over 75 lbs each.

Contents of the May 2000 Shipment

When we first started sending shipments for refugees in 1995, we were concerned for their immediate survival. They were freezing as they slept in the snow, suffering from lack of medications and hunger. Because of the urgency, those shipments were sent by air freight and contained primarily warm clothing, medicine and food. As the "crisis" stage passed we began to focus on helping them get back on their feet and to support themselves. Our past three shipments were more balanced. They still contained food, clothing and medicines, but also computer systems for their schools, sewing machines, and bicycles for transportation. The contents of our 10th shipment is listed below. This mix is similar to the previous two and has worked very well serving the smaller refugee camps and villages.

- 64 Boxes of Blankets, Towels, Sheets and linen
- 104 Boxes of clothing
- 9 Boxes of computer Supplies (Paper, Ribbons, Power Converters)
- 29 Computer Systems (all with 486 processors)
- 3 Boxes of school supplies
- 164 Boxes of food (110 family packs, and 54 cases bulk food)
- 6 Boxes of hygienic supplies (soaps, shampoos, dental care, etc.)
- 41 Boxes of infant supplies (Cribs, Blankets, High Chairs, Diapers, etc)
- 74 Boxes of kitchen supplies (Dishes, Silverware, Pots and Pans, etc.)
- 66 Boxes of medical supplies (Dressings, Crutches, Walkers, etc.)
- Musical Instruments (2 Electric Organs, Banjo, a box of Sheet Music)
- 58 Boxes Sewing Supplies (19 Sewing Machines, Material and Supplies)
- 42 Boxes of Toys and Sports Equipment
- 73 Bicycles (all sizes)

Grude

This camp is about an hours drive North of Ljubuski. There are 102 refugee families staying here – 288 people total. Thirty of the families have children. There are 60 children. These families live in 75 wooden structures; each is approximately 15 X 20 feet in size. The camp has a kitchen where food is served to the refugees. It has a supply center and a camp coordinator who manages everything. Compared to the other camps we have been to, this one seems to be clean and organized. Since we were there so early in the morning, we didn't have the opportunity to interact directly with the refugees. We do know that they are getting by on donations. So we transferred our truckload of food, bikes, clothing and supplies into a supply shed to be distributed to them later in the day.



A 7am delivery of food clothing and bicycles to a refugee camp in Grude, Bosnia where 102 refugee families are housed in these temporary buildings.

Domanovici

This camp still gives us cause for reflection and leaves us troubled. When we were last here we ran out of food and, seeing the panic on the faces of the people, we were determined to return and do a better job of meeting their needs. This was one of our goals when we set out on this trip in June.

When the container arrived we set aside food, sewing machines, clothing, knitting supplies, toys and bicycles for this camp. We arrived there about 9pm and the crowd formed just as before. This is an older group of refugees. The average age must be in the late 50s. There are only 11 children there now. It's good the children are moving out because this camp is not a good place for them.

We started by giving each of the children a bicycle (picture to the right) and some toys. The crowd applauded as our truck driver called each child by name and handed them their bike. It was a special moment for these children. Off into the dark they would ride laughing and enjoying themselves.

The attitude was quite different when we finished with the children. We sensed the older people's concern, their fear that there was nothing for them. As much as we wanted to, it wasn't possible for us to give out things person to person as we've done in other camps. When we tried to

hand something out (e.g. like knitting needles and rolls of yarn intended for the older women), someone would come by and grab the whole bag and run off with it before they even knew what was in it. This was desperation as we have never seen before.

It was difficult to witness and frustrating because we felt their panic and we

couldn't put them at ease. So, rather than cause a riot, we unloaded the food and supplies from the truck into the camp's supply center to be handed out later under the control of the camp's staff.

Once again we left Domanovici with heavy hearts realizing that we can't directly help the people there.



This young boy in Domanovici raised his hands and yelled "Da!" ("Yes!") when his name was called. The crowd applauded at his reaction. You can see the children in the background waiting for their names to be called. The bikes were pre-assigned so we were sure to match the bike's size and gender to the child and to ensure that every child received a bike.



When the container finally arrived in Ljubuski, Bosnia, it was really exciting to open the door and start unloading. There was so much to be done and we were all anxious to get started. It was unloaded into the warehouse on the left.



Mary Franke and Sandy Smith in the warehouse work feverishly organizing deliveries for the camps as the container is being unloaded in Bosnia. We had only one night to get everything delivered.



Sometimes just a conversation does more good than anything that could be brought in a container. Here Helen Scurlock (right) spends time with a woman at Domanovici camp. Helen made many friends in the short time we were there.



Members of the Knights of Columbus from St. Isidore's Church in Danville volunteered to repair bikes. They overhauled 35 bikes on a Saturday morning in November. The bikes were loaded on a container in the photo below.



Bicycles are loaded and ready to take to the warehouse where they will wait to be sent to South America and Bosnia. They provide an emotional lift for the children and a means of transportation for the adults.



Thirty-one bikes are loaded on a container bound for an orphanage in Guatemala. They will arrive just before Christmas and will help to make it one the children there won't easily forget.

A Donors Conference

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how one ethnic group carried such hate for another, but we didn't get to hear about how they helped each other survive. Some of these stories came out during this conference. One of them in particular touched us. Remember when Sarejevo was encircled and being destroyed by shells raining down from the surrounded hills? Well, in the midst of all that chaos and destruction, a Sarejevo Bakery produced and gave away 8,000 loaves of bread every day to refugees, orphanages and hospitals. Flour was smuggled in at night over the dangerous roads into this city. This is a remarkable example of cross-cultural support because the manager of the bakery is Muslim and the person who requested his assistance was the Archbishop of Sarajevo (a Croatian). Many people survived because of this one man's willingness to step beyond "ethnic boundaries" and help all those people suffering around him.

During the war 451,900 homes were destroyed. People and organizations from Germany and Austria sent 8,000 square kilometers of lumber to help renovate and rebuild the damaged homes. They also helped build several hundred prefabricated wood structures like the ones in Grude (pictured on page 3). Many containers of roofing materials were shipped from America along with teams of volunteers who repaired roofs.

An organization in Switzerland risked danger by delivering wood burning stoves over treacherous roads to families who had no power.

An orthopedic workshop, named Protetika was set up in Split and provided over 3,000 free services to those maimed during the war.

Our news is so full of stories of selfishness, hate and greed, it's easy to think we are losing our heart, our ability to care. Hearing these stories about how people risked their lives for strangers was uplifting. All of you have been a part of this by getting involved and giving so generously to these people in their time of need. We want to pass along their thank you for responding, for being there for them. **You are the greatest!!!**



Tacna (marked with an "x") and Ilo are cities in the southernmost part of Peru.

South America?

We've always been aware that right on our southern doorstep is poverty and despair that rivals almost anyplace in the world. In particular we've been concerned for the young children who are living on the streets in Latin America being forced to fend for themselves.

We have an opportunity to work with an organization that is deeply involved in helping the poor children in Tacna and Ilo in Southern Peru. Tacna is the largest city in the area with a population of about 300,000. Ilo is an important port city with approximately 100,000 inhabitants.

In the past 30 years, this organization has setup four schools (3 of which have both primary and secondary education), two small clinics served by volunteer doctors and dentists, a Center for the Working Child and a homeless shelter for abandoned children.

Because of the extreme poverty of the families, no tuition is charged in 3 of the schools. Quite a few of the children suffer from chronic malnutrition, which is a common problem in Peru. Two years ago a study by the Ministry of Education indicated that 51% of the grammar school children in Peru suffer from chronic malnutrition. The four schools provide meals as well as education for them.

Child labor is also serious problem in Peru. A UNICEF study reveals that there are 2 million working children in this country of 25 million. The Center for the Working Child is helping 300 of these children (shoe-shine boys, car washers,

newspaper vendors, etc.). Half of them come in each day for lunch in the cafeteria. They receive free medical care and get help with their studies.

There are about 40 million "Street" children in Latin America. ***This is equivalent to the populations of California, Oregon and Washington combined – all children – all homeless!***

We are interested in this organization because they are struggling to make ends meet and they are literally saving the lives (emotionally and physically) of these children. Their homeless shelter is set up to provide food, shelter and protection for the street children in Tecla and Ilo.

One Family is still a very small financially efficient organization that has been blessed with an outpouring of help from generous people all over the Bay Area. Thanks to you we have been able to make a difference for refugee families in the small villages in Bosnia and Croatia.

In many ways, these street children in Latin America are refugees just like the refugees in Bosnia. They are victims of civil unrest, forced from their homes as a result of extreme poverty, and are fending for themselves against incredible odds.

This situation in Latin America has been tugging at our hearts. We'd like to send a container of aid to Peru and follow it to see what affect it has. But we can't do this without you. We need your help. Please consider the items on our "Wish List" (on page 6), call us and help us to get this shipment on it's way.

Thank You!!!

We have been blessed with help from so many places. It seems that whenever we need something, it arrives sometimes totally unexpectedly. You can see from the pictures in the last three newsletters that we have been doing a lot with bikes. During our first trips to Bosnia, we saw that countless numbers of cars were destroyed. The refugee families had no means of transportation. It was obvious to us that bicycles would be a big help. So we started asking for them.

The owner of *Danville Bike* really responded to our request by donating 165 used bikes over the past 2 years. We also received a large number of bicycles from the *East Bay Depot for Creative Reuse* and from the *Knights of Columbus* at St. Isidore's Church in Danville.

We can't thank them enough for their generous response to our request.

Volunteers Needed

Are you interested in lending a hand fixing some bikes, sorting or loading? If so, leave a message at the number below and we will call you.

One Family is registered as a non-profit charitable organization. Your donations are tax deductible.

Our Wish List!

One Family continues to serve as a link between families in Northern California and the most needy families we can find in Bosnia and in other countries. We are planning another shipment to Bosnia and a small initial shipment to help the street children in Latin America. We hope to send more of the same items because this combination has worked out very well. The following are some of the things we are looking for:

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)

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, ball gloves etc.)

Toys (Frisbees, balls, Barbie dolls, stuffed animals, tricycles, wagons, 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 needed items.



ONE FAMILY

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