

## You Can Partner with the Ukraine

The Presbytery of Milwaukee is working together with both Diaconia Connections and Father's House to bring residents of Otchiy Dim Orphanage to visit Milwaukee during the Christmas season of 2017, and, in turn, send American youth to Ukraine during the summer of 2018. This partnership between Father's House and the Milwaukee Presbytery has been requested by the founder and director of Father's House in direct response to some immediate and felt needs within their organization. Father's House staff believes that this exchange will benefit their residents in a number of ways.

During their three-week stay in Milwaukee (December 18-January 8), our Ukrainian guests will get to experience a mix of family time and volunteer work. During the American kids' winter break from school, youth will spend most of their time with their host families, learning their family traditions, and just being treated like one of the family. During this time, there will also be planned activities, intended to expose youth to U.S. culture, in which families may participate with the Ukrainian youth (and other host families). When school resumes for the American children, pre-planned volunteer activities at various organizations throughout the Milwaukee area will be lined up for the youth. Additionally, there will be a regularly-scheduled meet-up time for the youth to process their experiences and discuss what they have been learning.

The Presbytery of Milwaukee will also benefit from this exchange because it is a unique and meaningful opportunity to minister to people in need. It is also a valuable opportunity to grow in our understanding of other people and be ministered to by those with a completely different life experience from our own. Additionally, youth from the Milwaukee Presbytery will gain an opportunity for true cultural exchange, as youth would be welcomed to travel to Ukraine to spend time volunteering at the orphanage and living at Father's House.

There are a number of ways to get involved with this project:

- 1. You can serve as a host family.** Host families are responsible for providing room and board for their Ukrainian guest, and for treating them like a member of their own family during their stay in the U.S.
- 2. You can serve as a support family.** This is a great opportunity for folks who do not currently have kids at home to welcome our guests to the United States. Support families will assist the host families with anything they might need (e.g. rides, meals, spending time with the youth if the parents are not available, etc.).
- 3. You can make a donation.** There will be a number of outings organized for the youth and host families to do together. These might include a ski trip, going to a sporting event, seeing a performance of the Nutcracker, etc. You can help to make these outings possible by donating money, tickets or other items that may be fun.

**4. You can get your church involved.** See if your youth group might want to participate in some kind of activity or celebration with our visitors from the Ukraine. This will give them a chance to spend time with American kids who are their own age.

**5. You can pray for our guests and for the people who will be working with them.** We are also asking for prayers because without God's help our work is in vain.

Your help is needed. For more information, please contact Sarah Rand at <mailto:srand@pbymilwaukee.org>.