

Found, Lost, and Found Again

An orphan's journey to belonging and true faith — the story of Roman, a young man from Ukraine whose life was transformed by love, community, and the grace of God. This is a story of darkness turned to light, of a lost sheep who was found, and of how your generosity makes miracles like this possible.



A Troubled Beginning

Roman was a lost sheep. At just 7 years old, he arrived at Ark Orphanage in Novovolynsk, Ukraine, alongside his older sister, Kristina. They came from a household fractured by addiction — parents who regularly drank and used drugs — a home where chaos was the norm and love was a stranger. To escape the pain, young Roman would often flee outside, seeking refuge from a family environment that left deep wounds in his heart.

Their aunt, recognizing the danger these children were in, made the courageous and compassionate decision to bring them to Ark. It was a turning point neither child could have fully understood at the time. Behind them lay neglect, fear, and uncertainty. Ahead lay something they had never truly experienced: a loving family, a safe home, and the beginning of a faith that would one day define their lives.

Before Ark

- Living with parents struggling with addiction
- No stable, loving home environment
- Regular fear and emotional trauma
- Running outside just to feel safe

Arriving at Ark

Roman and Kristina were brought to Ark Orphanage in Novovolynsk by their aunt, stepping into a world utterly unlike anything they had known. For the first time, warmth, structure, and genuine community surrounded them. It was disorienting — but beautifully so.

First Impressions: A New Kind of Family

Roman's first memories of Ark are layered with warmth and a trace of wonder. He recalls feeling a little out of place — not because of unkindness, but because of the opposite. He had never been surrounded by so many children who were genuinely friendly, genuinely glad to know him.

"I felt a little awkward because I had never been surrounded by so many friendly children."

— Roman

This was the beginning of a profound transformation. Roman was enrolled in **HART's Child Sponsor Program**, and God began His quiet, steady work on this young life. Obedience — something that had never been modeled for Roman at home — became a skill he slowly, graciously learned within his new family at Ark. Where conflict had once been the only response to authority, Roman began to discover a different way of living in relationship with others.

"Before, when I didn't listen to my parents, we always fought with each other," Roman recalls. "Here, I was taught to love dad and mom no matter what." These simple words carry the weight of a childhood reclaimed — a boy learning not just rules, but love itself.



Growing Up in Grace

As Roman grew, so did his faith. The Ark was not merely a place to sleep and eat — it was a living, breathing community of love, mentorship, and spiritual formation. Older children looked after younger ones. Mentors poured themselves into their charges. And in this environment, Roman's heart began to open to something far greater than football dreams or childhood friendships: a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

At the age of 16, Roman penned a short but deeply moving testimony — words that captured the soul of a young man who had found what he had always been searching for:

*"In the Ark there are good and loving mentors and a friendly group of children. The older ones always look after the younger ones. In general, I really like it and I'm glad that I live here now. I am also excited about having an opportunity to visit a football section in a sports school. I dream of becoming a great football player. But most of all I want to always be faithful to God. I am very grateful to my Sponsor from Canada, who gave me everything I need to live in the Ark. It became my **true home** and I feel comfort and love here. To be honest, in such a happy family environment I would like to live for the rest of my life."*

These words, written by a teenager who once fled his own home in fear, speak volumes about the power of love, community, and faithful sponsorship. A sponsor in Canada — someone who may never have met Roman face to face — helped make this transformation possible. That is the miracle of programs like HART's Child Sponsor Program.

A Season of Wandering

But Roman's story does not follow a straight line from darkness to light. After turning 18 and stepping out into the world on his own, he faced the same temptations that claim so many young people who have grown up without stable family roots. The world outside Ark was unfamiliar, and the wounds of his early childhood — though tended to, never fully healed — made him vulnerable.

He succumbed to drugs. And drugs, as they always do, demanded more. Roman began stealing to sustain his addiction. The young man who had once written about wanting to be faithful to God was now living like a vagabond, in regular conflict with the police, his future growing dimmer with each passing season.

For Ark Orphanage manager **Liliya Vakulina** and the team who had loved Roman for years, this was devastating news. "It was painful to learn such information about a boy who once was so close to us," Liliya says. "There was nothing left for us other than praying and fasting." In their grief, they reached out — to God first, and then to Roman's sponsor, asking for prayer support during this dark time.

 Even in his wandering, God did not abandon Roman. Liliya recalls: *"More than once we saw God protect Roman from the terrible consequences of his actions. Even when it seemed like he had walked astray, at some point, God saved him and gave him the joy of salvation."*

The Power of Prayer



Faithful Intercession

Liliya and the Ark team prayed and fasted on Roman's behalf. They refused to give up on the young man they had raised. Prayer was their first and most powerful weapon against the darkness threatening to consume him.



Sponsor Support

Roman's Canadian sponsor was called upon to join in intercession. Across thousands of miles, a faithful supporter lifted Roman's name in prayer — proof that sponsorship is not merely financial, but deeply, personally spiritual.



Divine Protection

Time and again, God stepped in to shield Roman from the worst consequences of his choices. Though he walked far from the path, a loving God continued to guard his life — preserving him for a purpose not yet fulfilled.

This section of Roman's story is a powerful reminder that the work of child sponsorship does not end when a child turns 18 and leaves an orphanage. The seeds planted during those formative years — seeds of faith, of love, of belonging — take time to fully bloom. And in the in-between seasons, prayer is what waters the ground. Your prayers for sponsored children and graduates like Roman matter more than you may ever know this side of eternity.



Found Again: Redemption and Restoration

Through the persistent prayers of Liliya, the Ark team, a faithful Canadian sponsor, and the grace of a God who never stops pursuing His children, Roman broke free from the bondage of drugs. He completed a rehabilitation program. And in one of the most beautiful moments of his life — and the lives of everyone who had never stopped believing in him — Roman was baptized.

He became a member of the Evangelical church, stepping fully and publicly into the faith he had once held as a teenager and then set aside in the confusion of early adulthood. His childhood dream of truly walking with God had finally, miraculously come true. And in a story that doubles the joy, his sister Kristina was also baptized around the same time.

These two siblings — who had arrived at Ark as troubled, unloved children — were now standing together in the waters of new life. The scars of their past remained, but they no longer defined them. Instead, those scars had become the very instruments through which God would now work in the lives of others.

"God saved him and gave him the joy of salvation." — **Liliya Vakulina**, Ark Orphanage Director

Forgiveness and Family Restored

One of the most remarkable fruits of Roman and Kristina's restored faith is the grace they have chosen to extend to their biological parents — the very people whose addiction and neglect set them on such a painful path to begin with. Roman and Kristina have forgiven their parents. They visit them regularly. And every day, they pray for their salvation.

This is not a small thing. Forgiveness of this nature does not come naturally to human hearts. It is a supernatural work, born of years of prayer, healing, and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. It is a living embodiment of Ephesians 6:2-3 — *"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land."* Roman and Kristina choose to honor their parents not because their parents earned it, but because God calls His children to a higher way of living.

This kind of radical forgiveness is itself a testimony — to their parents, to their church community, and to every child at Ark who is watching what it looks like to live out the faith they are being taught. Roman and Kristina are proof that the cycle of pain can be broken, that generational wounds can be healed, and that love — truly given — always finds a way forward.

- ✔ Roman and Kristina now visit their biological parents regularly and pray daily for their salvation — a testament to the healing and forgiveness only God can bring.

A Life Poured Out for Others

Today, the boy who once escaped the chaos of his parents' struggles has become a pastor, sharing God's truth from the pulpit and walking alongside hurting children as a counselor and mentor.

Roman preaches and serves in a church in the city of Luboml, where he also runs a children's Christian club — a ministry that reaches young children who, like him, have never received love from their own parents.

He knows their pain from the inside. He speaks their language. And because of that, he reaches them in ways few others can.

Kristina serves alongside her brother in various ministries across Ukraine.



Together, this sibling pair — once two of the most vulnerable children imaginable — are now among the most impactful young servants in their region. They are living proof that God wastes nothing, not even the most painful chapters of a life.

Roman frequently returns "home" to Ark — the place that saved him, shaped him, and loved him into who he is today. He reconnects with his adopted family, encourages the children still growing up within those walls, and reminds them by his very presence that there is a future and a hope waiting for them.



Roman with his ARK "family"

Your Generosity Makes This Possible

Roman's story is not just his story. It is the story of every person who prayed for him, every person who gave to make Ark Orphanage possible, and every sponsor who chose to invest in a child they may never meet on this side of heaven. Because of people like **you** — people who donate to Christian orphanage projects and child sponsorship programs — Roman's life is a story of triumph, not tragedy.

From Liliya and the entire team at HART, and from Roman and Kristina themselves: ***thank you***. Thank you for your faithfulness, your generosity, and your prayers. You are not just supporting a program. You are writing stories like Roman's. You are investing in transformed hearts, restored families, and future ministers of the Gospel who will carry the light of Christ into the darkest corners of their world.

Together, we are giving vulnerable children the opportunity to build new lives with God — lives of purpose, of love, and of eternal significance. Roman was found, lost, and found again. And because of you, there are more children just like him who are waiting to be found.

Sponsor a Child Today

Join HART's Child Sponsor Program and give a vulnerable child in Ukraine the love, care, and spiritual foundation they need to flourish — just as Roman did.

Give to Orphan Care

Your financial gift supports faith-based orphanages like Ark in Novovolynsk, providing food, shelter, education, and the love of Christ to children who have nowhere else to turn.

Pray Without Ceasing

Join us in lifting up the children, staff, and graduates of HART's partner orphanages. Prayer is the foundation of everything — as Roman's story so powerfully demonstrates.

"Even when it seemed like he had walked astray, God saved him and gave him the joy of salvation."
— Liliya Vakulina, ARK Orphanage Director

Epilogue - thanks to HART supporters

"The seed that was sown in me since childhood in the Ark has sprouted through all the difficulties, and I praise Jesus for it. I would like to thank you, dear HART supporters in Canada and the USA, for being there for us and for investing in us.

I know that the existence of the Ark is directly related to you, to your ministry here. You play a big and important role in the lives of the children and in my personal life.

God has also blessed me with a wife, Ivanka, and we have a daughter, Emilia, who is 2 years old and is always with us everywhere we serve. At the moment I am a church minister, youth pastor, and children's ministry leader in the city of Liuboml, Volyn region. My wife and I minister to young people from the church.



We also go to a local student dormitory to visit unbelieving students and preach the Gospel to them, sing songs, drink tea, and pray. Many of them come to church for services.

We also minister to local children from Liuboml every week, holding a children's club, where many unbelievers come. There we tell them about Jesus, play games with them, and pray with them. Parents come to the events we held through their children." — *Roman*

Lilliya gets the final word on Roman:

"Because of faithful supporters like you, and your generosity toward our Christian orphanage, Roman's story became one of triumph instead of tragedy.

Not only did Roman return to the Lord, but he also grew into a passionate and effective ministry leader.

Today, he is investing his life in helping others experience the same hope and transformation that changed his own life."



"Roman Kantor, who had the status of an orphan because his parents were deprived of their parental rights, **received the status of a child of God**, and out of a sinner whom the devil wanted to destroy, God made him a minister of the Gospel, one of His brave warriors, a loving husband and father, a worthy man."

Dear HART Community and dear President of HART,

Thank you for helping change so many destinies and for creating brighter, happier futures for countless children. The impact you are making is truly life-changing and is something worth dedicating one's life to.

May God richly bless each of you. Please know that we pray for you, love you, and deeply value the friendship and partnership we share. Your kindness and faithfulness are bringing hope where it is needed most.

Sincerely, The family of the Children's Ark and the family of Roman Kantor

What God has done in Roman's life is a powerful reminder that when you invest in a child, you are also investing in the future impact that child may have on countless others.

In early 2026, HART welcomed Roman and his church under our umbrella as an official Partner Pastor and Ministry. We are excited about this new chapter and look forward to sharing the stories of changed lives that will emerge through Roman's ministry in the years ahead.

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