

2023 | 2024
ANNUAL REPORT

Gift of Hope



See how the
Gifts of Hope
you make possible
have brightened
the lives of
children.




MISSION
EURASIA
Train to lead. Equip to serve.
CANADA

THE GIFT OF *Hope*



This past Christmas, as every year, children throughout Eurasia smiled as they received their **Gift of Hope** packages. They opened their gifts to find socks, mittens, hygiene products, and other practical items they need—plus the toys and sweets they really like! Most important of all, each Gift of Hope included a children's Bible so these young ones can learn about Jesus and the love of God.

This program, which means so much to the children, is possible because of **kindhearted supporters like you**. We can't thank you enough!

Children represent the future of God's work in the world. They are also the most vulnerable to the harshness and cruelty we see all around us. This is why, at Mission Eurasia, we put such an emphasis on ministry to children. They need all the love, truth, and encouragement we can give them.

HOPE—NEEDED NOW MORE THAN EVER

Children in Desperate Need

Conflict, disfunction, death, destruction—these are all part of the reality children throughout Eurasia experience every day.

Sadly, an entire generation of Ukrainian children is now growing up knowing the horrors of war. The endless fighting in their country has deprived them of their homes, their parents, and their friends and loved ones.

Many of the people we serve now are widows and fatherless children. This has brought a somberness to our ministry over the past year. But against this bleak landscape the Gift of Hope program means even more to those who have been blessed by it.

And your support is even more appreciated.

Thanks be to God, this ministry has been wonderfully fruitful and effective.

While much of our Gift of Hope program has focused on the war refugees in **Ukraine, Moldova, and Poland**, it is also bringing joy to children in countries such as **Armenia, Uzbekistan, and Mongolia**.

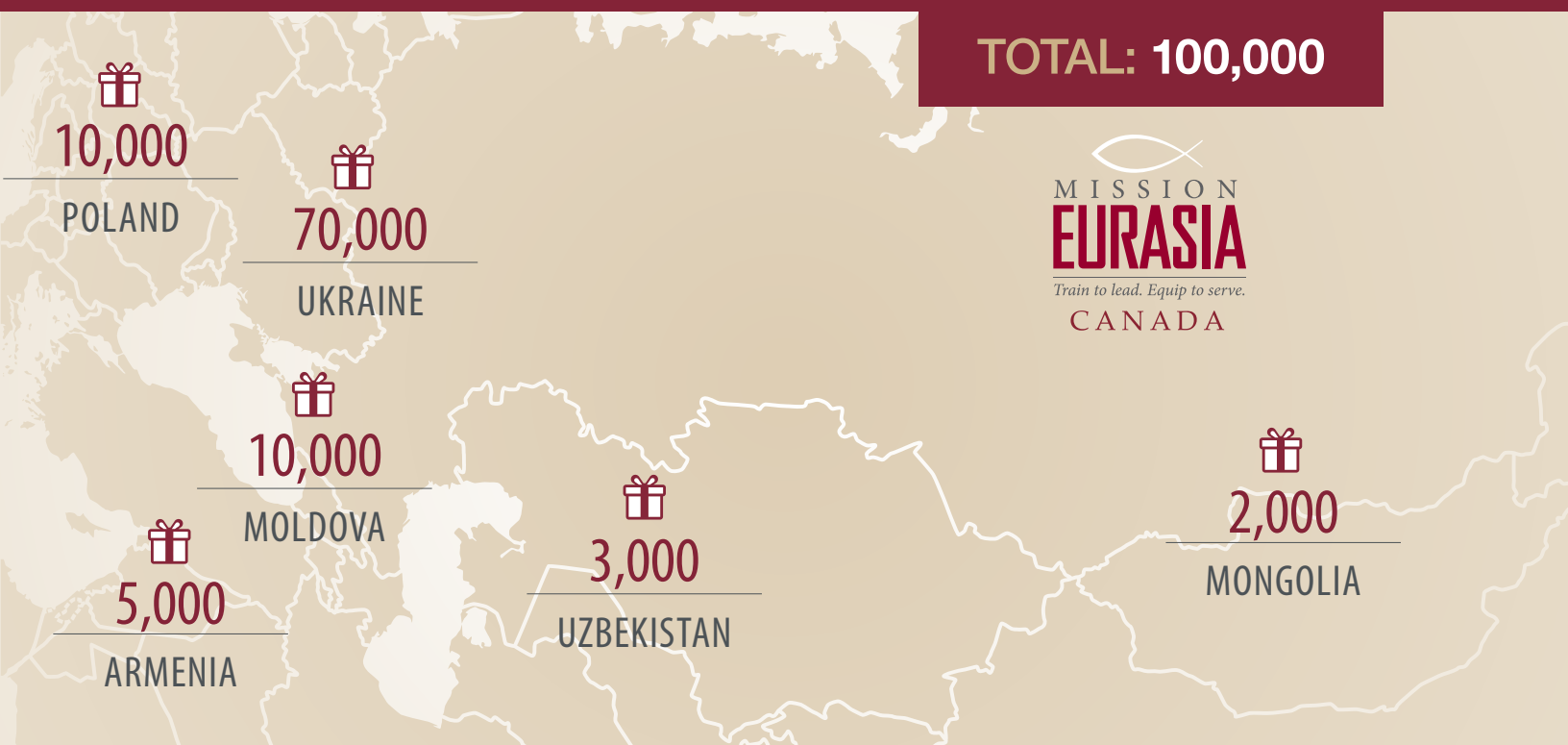
This report tells the story of God's wonderful grace that is reaching thousands of children through your generosity.

*In the midst of tragedy, your gifts are at work—
bringing smiles to children all across Eurasia.*

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

—Romans 12:21, ESV

GIFT OF HOPE DISTRIBUTION 2023–2024



With your support, Mission Eurasia distributed **100,000 Gifts of Hope** to displaced children in 2023–2024.

With your help, the Gift of Hope program is reaching children in many lands, complementing our other ministry programs, such as School Without Walls, iCare food and Scripture distributions, and summer Bible camps.

We are eternally grateful for your support and for the many churches and volunteers that have helped to make it all possible.



Ukraine is still engulfed in a brutal war that is devastating lives, families, and communities. By some estimates, 10 million Ukrainians have been displaced, with 6 million fleeing to countries such as Poland and Moldova.¹ Sadly, 90 percent of the refugees are women and children.²

Caring for the Fatherless and Widows

Gifts of Hope bring joy to children wherever they are given. But they have special meaning for those who have lost their fathers in war. As the conflict in Ukraine drags on, more and more of our ministry efforts are devoted to these fatherless children—and the widows that accompany them.

Mission Eurasia held a Gift of Hope event at St. Michael's Cathedral specifically for the widows and fatherless children from the Ukraine war. **Oleksander**, an evangelical chaplain, invited 8-year-old **Katia** to the event. She had lost both her father and mother in the war. Oleksander had served in the same military unit as her father, so he felt a special responsibility to care for the daughter of his fallen friend.

Katia, who now had no other family left, came to the event with her grandmother. Oleksander gave her a Gift of Hope and they opened it together. As she



Fatherless children received God's comfort and love along with their Gifts of Hope.

clutched her new children's Bible, Katia promised to read it and pray every day. Later, Oleksander found a local church to take care of Katia and her grandmother.

This is how the Gift of Hope program is creating a lasting legacy of love and care for God's precious little ones.

"For Natalia's family in Vynnyky, near Lviv, this Christmas marks the first one without their father and husband. To offer support to Natalia and her children, I visited them and brought them Gift of Hope packages. Oleksandr recently lost his life on the front lines, and the family is still recovering from the shock—and are grieving him deeply. Yet, Natalia warmly responded to my call and welcomed me into their home.

Upon entering their tidy apartment, I saw a portrait of their fallen warrior and a framed written out prayer. It says, 'Lord, bless everyone who enters this house, and protect everyone who leaves it.' Right by the prayer there is also a Letter of Appreciation that was given to Veronica, the oldest daughter, for her hard work and academic achievements from her school. She put it by her dad's portrait so that he could look down from heaven and be proud of her.

Veronica is 10, Tadei is 3, and the youngest, Maria, is 18 months old. Natalia does her best to bring joy to the children and tries to keep the memory of him alive. She is worried that her younger kids won't remember their father.

As Veronica and Tadei eagerly unwrapped the gifts, Veronica's face lit up at the sight of the Bible. The family is profoundly thankful for the exceptionally beautiful children's Bible and the accompanying sweets.

Natalia prays that Oleksandr's sacrifice was not in vain, and that Ukraine would stay strong against a much stronger enemy."

– Tetyana Zavadovska, Mission Eurasia staff member, Lviv, Ukraine

“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction...”
— James 1:27

At camp, Elya received a Gift of Hope—and learned about the God of love.

“My son Daniil, 8, was at your Christmas event. I want to extend a heartfelt thank you for the wonderful celebration and the thoughtful gifts! What you’re doing means a lot to our children. May the Lord bless you! Merry Christmas! We genuinely appreciate the fantastic Christmas celebration you organized for our children. It was an unforgettable event that brought them a lot of joy and excitement. Your gifts, games, contests, and all the fun, had them over the moon. They felt genuinely happy and loved. Thank you for your help, support, kindness, and generosity—your care and attention made this holiday truly special for us and our kids.” – Yulia Zhenchenko, Odessa, Ukraine



At camp, Elya received a Gift of Hope—and learned about the God of love.

Conquering Hatred with Love

Traumatized children often experience deep anger because of their experiences. This was true for **Elya**, a 13-year-old, who had seen her family torn apart by the war in Ukraine. When she came to Mission Eurasia’s winter camp at Yelyki Luchky in western Ukraine, she began attending the Bible studies. But the lessons challenged her in ways she didn’t expect: “Jesus was calling me to get rid of hatred and anger in my heart,” she recalls.

Vera is the Mission Eurasia worker who led the camp’s Bible classes. “For many teenagers, anger is the only way to express their feelings and release energy,” she explains. “This often leads to teenagers damaging relationships with their friends and family, and isolating themselves even further.”

Yet through this camp, seeds of love and comfort are sown. When camp was over, Elya and each of the other teenagers received a Gift of Hope. Elya was thrilled to receive this gift—this tangible expression of God’s love—and was eager to take her new Bible home and learn more about Jesus.

A Welcome Surprise

Lera is a 12-year-old girl from Kharkiv, Ukraine, who lost her father in the war. She caught the attention of “Sokol,” who is the chaplain of the armed forces there as well as an Orthodox priest. He invited Lera and her mother to a special celebration at St. Michael’s Cathedral in Kyiv. There, Lera was surprised to receive a Gift of Hope from Metropolitan Epiphanius, the leader of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine.

Lera’s mother, Iryna, was stunned. “We never expected Metropolitan Epiphanius himself to present a gift to Lera!” she said. “And finding a children’s Bible there was unexpected too.”

At Sokol’s urging, Lera and her mother began reading the Bible. “For a month now, my daughter and I have been reading the Word of God together and praying to the Lord,” Iryna says.

“The celebration was wonderful, thanks to everyone who helped organize it for us, but what delights us the most is that there are believers who care. This is very important, so I want to express gratitude to everyone who contributed to the gift for my daughter and asked these people to pray for us. We are going through a very hard time, but I believe in the power of prayer, and it gives me strength.”



“The gospel... is bearing fruit and growing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and truly understood the grace of God in truth.”

— Colossians 1:6

Denis described the experience of gazing at the photo Inna had sent:

“Here we are, Bohdan and I, standing next to those roaring trucks as the soldiers are climbing in. It’s a scene we’ve witnessed countless times, so we’re in no rush to turn off our phones. Instead, we keep looking at the picture of the girl with the Bible in her hands. Bohdan is so happy to look at his daughter. And I am happy that, despite it all, God hasn’t left me alone, and continues working through me.”



Iryna loves her Gift of Hope children's Bible best of all.



Denis and his fellow soldiers take time to share Gifts of Hope.

Joy in the Midst of War

Denis works in a job near Kyiv that keeps him close to the heat of battle. But amidst the chaos and strife, he found the time to pass on a Gift of Hope to his coworker, **Bohdan**.

Sometime later Bohdan approached him, brimming with gratitude: “Thank you for your gift!” he said. “I passed it on to my wife, Inna, and she gave it to our daughter Iryna. My wife took a picture for you, just so you could see that Iryna got the gift. She immediately spread everything out on the bed, but that children's Bible stayed in Iryna's hands all evening. She's determined to read it to the end.”

As this story shows, the Gift of Hope is reaching more people than we could imagine.

Learning About God for the First Time

Living in Zaporizhzhia in southeastern Ukraine, 10-year-old **Alisa** became accustomed to the sounds of war. “At first, it was really scary, and my parents were nervous,” she says. “But now I'm used to the air raid sirens and explosions. It doesn't bother me anymore.”

Like so many children traumatized by war, Alisa had become jaded. But when her mother told her about an upcoming Gift of Hope Christmas celebration being organized by Mission Eurasia's School Without Walls team, Alisa was eager to attend. There, she heard the Christmas story for the first time, depicted in a play, and she heard the beautiful carols associated with Christmas. She received her Gift of Hope, which included a hat that she put on right away. And suddenly, a spark of faith ignited in her heart.

Alisa believed there was a God but didn't know anything about Him. “I don't know how to talk to someone I can't see,” she confessed. Now, she's excited to participate in the Sunday school near her home. And because she has her children's Bible, she can learn more about this God of love she's heard about.



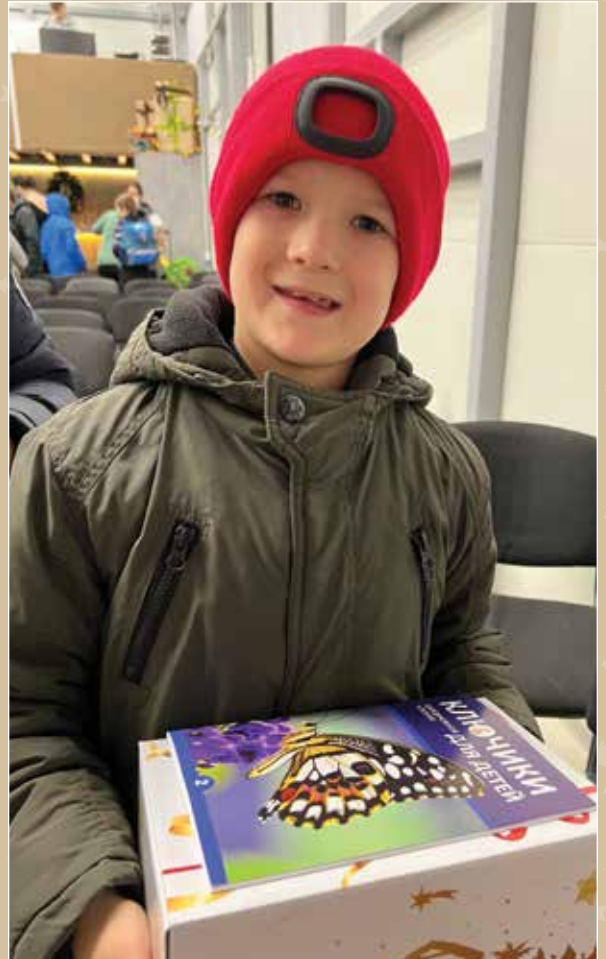
At the Gift of Hope celebration, Alisa heard the Christmas story for the first time.

THE GIFT OF *Hope* CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

Children cherish the Gifts of Hope they receive at the Christmas celebrations.

With their children's Bibles, young people learn about God—often for the first time.

Dramatic presentations highlight the gospel story in ways children can understand.



Since the war in Ukraine began, this mostly Catholic Eastern European country has become a haven for countless refugees and a critical staging area for humanitarian aid going into Ukraine. In our efforts to serve the flood of refugees, Mission Eurasia has formed invaluable relationships with evangelical Christian groups near the Ukrainian border. And God's work of compassion continues amidst the horrors of war.

Bringing Hope to War-Weary Children

"Thank you for what you are doing for us and our children, so they can feel the spirit of Christmas, and for parents who are still in shattered emotional states. Your support helps us not to lose hope and helps us find joy in life. We really enjoyed the play and the gifts that you gave to the children, as well as the children's Bibles. We felt the Christmas spirit and will take it home through the children's Bible that you gave us which we will read together with Sasha."

– **Anya**, who came with her daughter Sasha to a Mission Eurasia camp in Poland from Oleshky, Ukraine



Anya was delighted when her daughter Sasha received a Gift of Hope—and so much more.



The stories in Eva's new Bible gave her hope for a world without war.

Eva is only 12, but she has already endured horrors no child should experience. When her home in Kyiv came under attack, she fled to Warsaw, Poland, with her mother and brother. There, she participated in a course at the Christian iCare center and attended a Christmas performance. After the event, along with the other children, she received a Gift of Hope with a children's Bible.

Eva's new Bible made a deep impression on her. *"I was impressed with one illustration where a lion, a lamb, and a little boy are depicted," she says. "The lion doesn't harm the lamb or the boy. We will live like that, without sickness and tears. It's all in the future. I believe that all evil will end in the world, and we will live, helping each other. Thank you for giving me such a beautiful Bible."*

Finding a Refuge Far from Home

"My name is Svyatoslav, and I came from Kharkiv. I really liked the play, the gifts, and the children's Bible that I'll read at home. Thank you for the celebration; I learned more about Christmas than I had ever read before. I would love it if there were more events like this because I would also like to participate in the program, different contests for children, and watch plays."



Svyatoslav came to Poland from his home in Kharkiv, Ukraine. Here he is with his grandmother.

Thousands of Ukrainian refugees have fled to the neighboring country of Moldova, where they can find peace and relative safety. By God's providence, Moldova is also home to Mission Eurasia's ministry headquarters, from which all our activities in Eurasia are coordinated and implemented. This gives us a wonderful opportunity to serve the many needy women, children, and men who have come to Moldova seeking refuge. Our Gift of Hope program has been a welcome blessing for thousands of these distraught souls.

Finding Solace in a Desperate Time

Nikol, six years old, began hearing explosions when the Russians attacked her hometown in Ukraine. Her father stayed to defend their homeland, but Nikol and the rest of her family fled. After many hardships they found a place to live in Edinet, Moldova. Their living conditions there are harsh—but at least they can live in peace.

Nikol attended a Gift of Hope Christmas event that wonderfully impacted her: *"This was a real celebration for us!"* she says. *"I didn't expect to receive such a nice gift. I am so happy! I will read your book. I can already read a little bit, but I'll ask my mom to read it to me. We really enjoy reading together in the evenings."*

When our iCare team asked what she dreamed about, Nikol replied, *"To see my dad who can't come here. My mom recently visited him for two weeks but had to come back because there were more explosions, and she was scared."*



Nikol misses her father, but the Gift of Hope brought her real joy.



Vera, 8, and her sister Mascha are grateful for their Gifts of Hope.

A Child's Gratitude

"Thank you for your visit to our home and for these wonderful gifts. We looked through everything in there and were so happy with everything you gave us! I had a doll in my box, and I gave it a name, Natasha. We also loved your Christmas songs; I never heard them before... We've been here for more than a year, and I miss my home in Ukraine very much, my toys, and my friends there... My mom was also happy with your visit, and she told us we'll read the stories in these books that you brought us."

— **Vera**, from Ukraine, now living in Brătușenii Noi, Moldova

Although it is less reported than the war in Ukraine, the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan is still raging. After Azerbaijani forces attacked the ethnically Armenian region of Nagorno-Karabakh in September, nearly all its residents were forced to leave their ancestral home and relocate to Armenia. Since 2020, the number of refugees in Armenia has reached at least 150,000. This Christmas season, Mission Eurasia was there, distributing 5,000 Gifts of Hope to refugee children, including 90 to children at the oncological hospital in Yerevan.

How a Gift of Hope Touched Both A Mother and Daughter

"Hello, my name is **Kariné**, and I live with my parents in the village of Zangakatun, Armenia. I am eight years old. I am so happy that you came to this village and gave us these beautiful Christmas boxes. I love Jesus very much, who healed me and gave me life. My younger sister and I will always pray that you come to our village again next year, tell my friends and other village children about Jesus, and give them gifts."

"I am Mariam Kirakosyan, Karine's mom. We moved to the village of Zangakatun from Nagorno-Karabakh; we are refugees. I am very glad that there are kind people who try to bring joy to our children, especially on this wonderful Christmas holiday. By making children happy, you made us parents happy, because after facing so many difficulties and losses, it is a tremendous joy for me to see my child's happiness now."

"Like all Armenians, I consider myself a Christian, but when I heard the gospel, I felt ashamed because, until now, I had never read it. Thanks to God, besides sweets and toys, you gave us a children's Bible and the Gospel of John."



The Gift of Hope brought comfort and encouragement to Kariné and her mother.

Finding Joy in the Midst of Sorrow

"My name is **Karén**. I am 12 years old, and my brother Samvel is 13 years old. We are refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh and now we live in the village of Zangakatun, Armenia. We were very happy when we heard that you would visit our village with gifts. We eagerly awaited this day. When we received the boxes, we didn't wait and opened them right away! Thank you so much for the useful and beautiful gifts and Christian books given to each one of us; this way we won't argue over them."

"My name is Garnui, I am the mother of Karen and Samvel. We are deeply grateful to you for giving our children a wonderful holiday. Since we moved from Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia, we have never had such a reason for joy because every day we face various challenges and problems. But when we saw how happy the children were when they opened their gifts, we momentarily forgot all the sorrows we experienced. We lost our homes, our comfort, in a material sense, everything that could be lost... But when you visited us, we felt so at ease, we felt your care and attention. Inspired by the words from the gospel, we forgot those sorrows because, seeing the smiles of our children, we were happy and realized how little is needed for children to be happy. Thank you, and may God give you strength to continue doing such a meaningful deed!"



Karén and his brother cherish their Gifts of Hope and children's Bibles.

Nearly half of the people in this landlocked country are Buddhist, while another 23 to 40 percent identify as “non-religious.” Islam accounts for three percent, and Christianity just two percent. Many of the rest practice various types of folk religion. But the Christian presence is growing, with an estimated 40,000 believers now meeting in 600 churches. Mongolia’s people are ready for the gospel. And Mission Eurasia is there, demonstrating the love of God through words and action.

Discovering the Wonder of Christ’s Birth

*“My name is **Iherzaya**. I was invited to the church by my friend Itgel for the Christmas celebration. Upon entering the church for the first time, I was immersed in the atmosphere of a true Christmas wonder—there was a tree, Christmas decorations, and stars.*

“During the event, I discovered that Christmas marks the birth of Jesus Christ, and our calendar starts with His birthday. This means that 2023 years have passed since the birth of Jesus. Until that moment, I had never really thought about that.

“Towards the end of the event, the church pastor talked about the importance of talking to Jesus in prayer. And I sincerely wanted to have that connection with Him. At the end, everyone received a gift. I was so overjoyed! It contained all my favorite sweets and drinks. I am grateful to the people who organized this event. The church turned out to be an interesting place, and I don’t want to miss similar events in the future.”



Iherzaya enjoyed the Christmas celebration, immersed in a true Christmas wonder.

UZBEKISTAN

Sadly, the government of Uzbekistan actively controls all religion in this Central Asian country, and life for converts from Islam to Christianity can be especially difficult. Yet, many people, including children, whose stories are shared below, hunger for God’s Word and are finding new life in Christ.

Reaching Children with God’s Love

*“My name is **Ilyas**. I am in first grade. I love gathering with other kids at our church for Sunday school where we play, draw, sing songs, and listen to stories about Jesus and other people from the Bible. This year we gathered for a special time together to celebrate Jesus’ birthday. We all enjoyed playing together and hearing the story of Jesus’ birth. At the very end, all of the children received special gifts. I was so happy and so surprised, because I thought that only the person whose birthday we celebrate receives the gift. But this year, we received a special gift from Jesus, and it was the best gift of all!”*



Ilyas loves gathering with other kids at our church for Sunday school.

Thank you

FOR PARTNERING WITH US!

Thank you for partnering with us!

Your support has made all the difference in this year's Gift of Hope outreach.

"This was a real celebration for us! I didn't expect to receive such a nice gift. I am so happy! I will read your book. I can already read a little bit, but I'll ask my mom to read it to me. We really enjoy reading together in the evenings."

– Nikol, 6, from Boryspil, Ukraine, now in Moldova

"Thank you for your visit to our home and for these wonderful gifts. We looked through everything in there and were so happy with everything you gave us! I had a doll in my box, and I gave it a name, Natasha. We also loved your Christmas songs; I never heard them before... We've been here for more than a year, and I miss my home in Ukraine very much, my toys, and my friends there... My mom was also happy with your visit, and she told us we'll read the stories in these books that you brought us."

– Vera, 8, Brătușenii Noi, Moldova

"This is exactly what I wanted—a Bible that I can understand. I will definitely enjoy it. It looks interesting and clear to understand. I will absolutely read it, and then let my friend Svitlana read it so that she could know what it talks about too."

– Sergey, 10, Trostyanets, Ukraine

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1. <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukrainian-refugee-crisis-current-situation-encs>

2. <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/humanitarian-action-children-2023-ukraine-and-refugee-response>

