

Good Morning!

My name is Susan Straus and I'm here this morning to give you an update on our Circle of Love program (and to introduce some special guests).

Our Circle of Love program is celebrating its 12<sup>th</sup> year and has welcomed 82 different people in that time. The children come for respite from ongoing radiation contamination due to the Chernobyl accident and receive medical and dental care while they are here. As our program has evolved we've seen the need for ongoing dental care in Ukraine and have welcomed a young dentist, Dr. Ivan Bovsunovski, to train here in the U.S. Dr. Ivan's sister, Nataliya, is working as international staff at Bethel Horizons and was hosted several years ago through our program. We have equipped the community our children originate from with a new x-ray machine to aid in the diagnosis and treatment of dental problems. We're looking forward to seeing an increase in preventative care in Borodyanka, Ukraine, which will result in a decrease in heart disease, diabetes and cancers over the course of these children's lifetimes.

The core, however, of our program is to welcome a child into a Bethel home for 6 weeks during the summer. While here they get to eat food and drink water and milk that is not contaminated and they go home stronger and better able to fight off common infections like cold and flu viruses. We are in need of Bethel members willing to open their hearts and their homes to these children for the summer of 2012. And there is no typical host family. Our host families have been single retirees, young families, older couples, working couples....whatever type of family yours is, we've had one like yours as a host family.

This summer, due to a shortage of host families we welcome only 5 children and 3 of these children are part of the satellite Circle of Love program at St. Paul's Liberty Lutheran church in Deerfield.

Bogdan Boroday is 14 and is returning to Deerfield for his 4<sup>th</sup> summer. Bogdan's first visit was in 2008, and last year, his sister Anastasia was also hosted by our St. Paul's group.

13 yo Andriy Rakoyid and 10 yo Pavlo Vorobey are also spending their first summer in Deerfield.

Dima Borko is 13 and is spending his 2<sup>nd</sup> summer here at Bethel with Linda and Jim Welch and their two boys, James and David.

Masha Musiyenko is 10 and is spending her first summer with Bethel family, Angie and Danton Walthers and their 5 kids, Joren, Hailey, Lauren, Noah and Nicholas. Last summer was the first

hosting experience for the Walther family when they welcomed 10 year old Rostik into their home.

Our interpreter, Sveta, is returning for her 5<sup>th</sup> summer as interpreter and was part of the very first summer of Circle of Love kids in 2000. She was hosted then, and continues to be hosted by Kathy and Phil Pielage and their 3 girls, Nicole, Lindsey and Madeline. Sveta was 12 when she first came and is a shining example of the success of the Circle of Love program. The children who participate in our program share what they learn here when they return home and mentor the other children in their community.

We are also pleased to welcome Nataliya Levchenko, our group's chaperone. This is Nataliya's first visit to Madison and she is staying with Mary Lou Tyne, who was also a host to 12year old Tanya in 2009. Nataliya works at the Community Center in Borodyanka that we partner with.

The Circle of Love program is pleased to have Lizzy Dies, Bethel intern and lifelong Bethel member, working with the program this summer. Lizzy's organizational skills are a wonderful addition to the summer workload!

Please take a moment, when you see them, to welcome our guests to Bethel, consider your role in our program's ongoing success and stop by the Emmaus room display to ask questions and get more information.

We also ask that you put September 26<sup>th</sup> on your calendars and plan to golf with us, sponsor a hole or golfer or bid on silent auction items. Our annual golf outing is our main fundraising event but your generous year round donations continue to expand our Circle of Love program in new ways and we are blessed by your support.

Thank you.