

Ministry stories 2019

Mykola Shagarov, "Children's Paths" Foundation, Velyki Mosty, Lviv Region, Ukraine (151)

Greetings!

In December 2017, a teenage boy named Josef, was placed in the social rehabilitation center for child care called "Children's Paths", located in the city of Velyki Mosty, Lviv region, Ukraine. The boy has a status of a child deprived of parental care. Joseph was abandoned by his mother immediately after his birth. Growing up, he had to go through extremely difficult times. From the hospital Joseph was transferred to the state house for child care, where he stayed until he was three years old. After that, the boy lived in other state institutions and boarding schools, simultaneously studying there by the time he was fourteen. The boarding school boosted Joseph's feeling of loneliness, needlessness, and, most unfortunately, disbelief in people and God. We would like to share his story with you, our dear sponsors. It is also a fruit of your support and care for which we are so deeply thankful!



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In the early December, I met with Joseph at the state orphanage, where he had been living after moving out from the boarding school. He looked like a little lonely wolf. His eyes were full of disbelief and suspicion. When I asked the boy if he believed in God, he responded: "I do not believe in anyone, nor do I believe in God." I tried to explain to him where exactly I wanted to take him and that our children's center was not anything like a boarding school. I told him that



we have the best possible living conditions for the family, to which he replied: "I do not know what a family is." After getting acquainted with Joseph, I went home. Sadness overwhelmed my heart. My soul shouted, "Lord, how can I help this child?" For several days I hesitated, prayed, consulted with my wife and the staff of the children's center as to how to do the right thing and not harm the other twenty

children we were raising. After thinking it all over and praying, I made the decision to pick up the boy.

For the first month of living with us, Joseph was very locked up. He was studying the situation, the other children, me, my wife and employees at the center. After another month, Joseph gave up. At about midnight, one of the caregivers called me and said that Joseph had left the house without permission. Anxious and afraid I went looking for him. Where could he possibly be? Where would I find him and why? For about three hours I searched for the boy, but was unsuccessful finding him. On my way back to the children's center, tired and desperate, I prayed: "Lord, where is he? Help him, wherever he is now, find him and bring him back home! Why did he do that? " When I approached the children's center, I did not believe my own eyes - Joseph stood at the gate. My heart was full of joy and gratitude to God. Parking my car in the garage, I went with Joseph inside the house. Then we had a long father-and-son conversation. I was saddened by his life story but glad that Joseph had finally opened up. He said: "Nobody loved me, I wasn't interested in anyone, nobody ever went looking for me when I ran away from the boarding school!" With a fatherly love, I explained to Joseph that our children's center was not a boarding school, it was a family, where he was always wanted and loved, that I did care where he was, because for me he was a son, not an orphan. After a long and frank conversation I hugged him and prayed for him. Joseph forcibly restrained himself from crying. He was broken by love he had never felt, "wounded", in the good sense of the word, by attitude he had never seen before. I thank God for helping me reach Joseph's heart. The boy began to pray, read the Bible, became eager to help us with household chores. Now the expression on his face is always joyful. About forty times it is mentioned in the Bible that God is the father of the orphans. The enemy of God, the devil, has actively stepped up to destroy the family and its values. Every child who has been placed in a social rehabilitation center had previously experienced physical or moral abuse in his or her family. We are doing our best to ensure that the child can forgive his parents. It is definitely not easy, but thank God, the good results are already evident.



PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Please, pray for Josef to walk this way of healing to the end and so that God never ever again let him think that nobody loves him;
- Also pray for other kids in our rehabilitation center to find here restoration and true family which is based only on the love of God.



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