

## Ministry stories 2019

**Yuliana Kusmyna, Medical care  
ministry, Lviv, Ukraine  
(77)****Greetings!**

We are carrying out a very difficult however blessed ministry - medical assistance. Thank you for being faithfully involved in it and for helping us help others in their needs. This year we had two trips to camps for people with special needs taking place in Rivne oblast aiming at children with cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, intellectual disorders, autism spectrum disorders, attention deficit disorders, hyperactivity. It was so special to see such children with special needs serve the Lord and other children through their singing (among them was also my daughter). This is the first time I have decided to take my children to the event. My daughter Liliana Elizabeth is eight and son Mark Kristian is seven. Let me tell you in more details about our trip.

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This trip was difficult both psychologically and physically, but was also a blessing from God. My children and I had a chance to meet and serve wonderful people in their needs and problems, which however are not stopping them from having big hearts and radiate love. Each of us benefited from the event. People with needs are very kind, sincere, open, shy, they need - but at the same time also give love to everyone around. These are special people, yet who are not given the same rights in Ukraine as others. Society rejects them and treats them with despise, even relatives and friends often treat them in the same way. But still, they enjoy life, try to live as the others do, seek communication and try to participate in any events, where such people (with certain disabilities) are allowed. Turned out some even borrow money just to be able to visit, limit themselves in spending money for basic needs only to have this ability to participate in this camp, if even for 10 days.



During the two days we stayed there I have been able to see anyone willing to be helped. I have provided medical consultations, did ultrasound diagnosis to the children and adults accompanying them. One of the attached photos shows the first aid training (in this case in situation of hypertension) to the participants. One of the participants (mother of children with disabilities) already has a child with "hypertension" diagnosis. The youngest woman there (in the wheelchair) is 36 and she brought her son, who is suffering from multiple sclerosis. The oldest woman there was 47. Yet most of them look as they were 55-70 years old, for every day of their life is a fight for a better future for their children. Nothing is given to them freely, and many things are restricted for them. They fight for any assistance or support from the government, seek help in state and private clinics, borrow funds, in order to purchase the necessities for such children (crutches, wheelchairs), which are in Ukraine often even more expensive than elsewhere in Europe.



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Almost all these mothers are living alone, taking care of their children by themselves, as they were left by their husbands after they learned their children's diagnoses. Their justifications for such actions were usually "it is a shame to be a parent of a child with disability", "what will people say that I have a handicapped child", "people will think I am somehow sick if I have a child with a disability", "it is the woman's fault the child was born sick", "I can find another woman who will bear me a healthy child". These and similar stories were told by these mothers of special children, and if we were to describe in details all they said, it could be a material for at least one book. Most of these women don't get their alimony, as many in Ukraine still work unofficially, therefore there's no legal way to trace the income of their husbands, besides no court or official would make an effort to do that. These mothers rarely have possibility to work, as taking care of their children is a full-time job itself. They try to work part-time, often unofficially. Such mothers don't have a chance to make a career, build or develop their personal life.



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But how do these mothers appreciate what they have! They have patience for their children, they are excited about the smallest achievements, such as if the child has chewed the food, started eating solid food, smiled, said a word, asked for something, made a step, asked to go to the toilet - this list could be extended more and more. These are the things most people don't pay as much attention to, for their children learn them quickly. With the special needs children everything is different, as they require attention 24/7, they need so much effort to learn every small thing, each and every progress in their development. And without constant moral and physical support it is



very difficult, such mothers are exhausted, often with untreated conditions themselves, as they don't pay enough attention to themselves and their needs. So often they have hypertension, diabetes, varicose veins to name a few, which make their struggle even harder, yet they keep investing all their time and efforts in their children and try to stay happy each day and rejoice for each achievement of their child.

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### PRAYER REQUESTS:

- We ask you to pray that God may give us all the understanding, mercy and ability to support;
- Please pray so that the society learns to accept such children. Our mission is also to inform people and the society that children with special needs are just children and there is no need to isolate them, isolate yourselves from them, despise them, limit communication with them and their parents. On the contrary, if a person doesn't know how to help, a smile, a kind word, a word of encouragement to these children and parents is a help already;
- Also, pray for the mothers of these children so that God may give them strength and energy to bear this responsibility and never lose hope.



### OUR MISSION

HART is dedicated to alleviating poverty and injustice in Eastern Europe. We work alongside local churches and ministries and give them the tools to build a better world for themselves, their communities, and their countries.

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