



Mother Care blessing in Albania

Honouring Mothers this Mother's Day

May is a wonderful time when we honour the Mothers in our lives. Children make treasured handmade cards for their Mums and Nanans and treat Mums to breakfast in bed. Flowers abound and for some, our mothers are no longer present in our lives, but present in our hearts. My children have a wonderful saying, whether expressed on Mother's Day, or throughout the year, which never fails to melt my heart. Encouraged by a story favourite, the handmade cards say, "Mummy I love you to the moon and back a million times!"

Being a Mum is such a blessing; but there is so much we take granted in Australia. We can demand the privilege of a safe delivery of our babies in a hospital, and medical care for our newborns and children is not far away. We have complete access to the best care. We are now even rewarded for producing and raising our children through comprehensive financial support.

This care for Mums, their babies and children is not a given around the world. We have all heard the stories surrounding this worldwide crisis. Inadequate care has disastrous consequences. Unless the poor can afford to pay for their medical care, they simply miss out and must suffer the consequences. Eastern Europe has not escaped this crisis. All families Mission Without Borders assists are currently suffering the consequences of this lack of health care provision and they need our help!

Whether your home holds many rooms and is filled with flat screen televisions, or you live in a shack without adequate heating, running water, electricity and food, a child is a blessing, a treasured member of the family you pray for and dearly love. The poor families we serve do not live

in palaces, but often inhabit dwellings we would not dare call acceptable/safe homes. And yet, their children are just as precious. They love and treasure their children and certainly do not enjoy the riches we have come to expect and demand in Australia. I remember counting down the days to the arrival of my children. I fussed around home, getting everything ready, dreamt and prayed for them. Our hearts nearly burst with love for our children as we brought them home and we delight in each and every milestone they achieve. I cannot imagine not being able to raise my children without access to what we call the necessities. I have seen for myself the state of disrepair and lack of minimal conditions for Mums and their children throughout Eastern Europe. This has resulted in infant mortality rates up to five times higher than Australia.

Despite this critical need, success stories can now be reported. The results are literally life saving!

Albania is a country crippled by widespread poverty. The existence of health care, particularly for the poor, is extremely limited or non-existent. The care provided is often of such a poor quality it can do more

harm than good. Mission Without Borders responded to this need and desperate situation by establishing our successful Mother Care and Baby Care programs in Albania. The Maminas Health Clinic is one place that has seen its infant mortality rate dramatically reduce to 0%, thanks to Mother Care and Baby Care, and its success is now well-known throughout the area. Despite its regional locality, it is now well known that you are far safer to deliver your babies in this small clinic rather than brave the facilities in the larger cities. ►

The Mother Care Program in Maminas, Albania has reduced the infant mortality rate to 0%





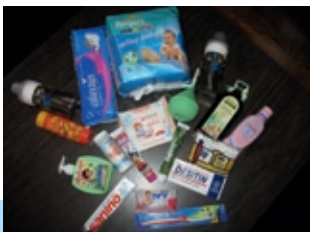
Maminas is a village forgotten by the Albanian government. It has not enjoyed any government support or financial investment for years. With unemployment at critical levels, most of its citizens have left the area in search of employment elsewhere. The remaining villagers try and eek out an existence from what they can grow on their small plots of land. Power outages and limited running water further cripple the area. Before MWB stepped in to assist, the situation was critical and the infant mortality rate was disastrously high. News has spread of the great care and attention now shown to the mothers and their children through Mother Care and Baby Care. Mothers travel far and wide to benefit from the care at Maminas Clinic. For those requiring assistance in emergency deliveries or complicated cases, they are transported to the hospital in Durres by the ambulance Mission Without Borders donated.

Mimoza Lala has just delivered her second child. After delivering her first in Durres, with multiple complications, she was thrilled with the care she received, prior to, during and following the birth of her second daughter in the clinic in Maminas. "We are often under great stress before, during and after the delivery of our children because we can not afford the necessities. I want to express my gratitude to all the people who made it possible for my baby girl to have what she needed when she came into the world." Not only did her new baby girl have the necessities for the first days of her life, Mimoza also had the equipment for a safe delivery, as well as prenatal care and education in caring for herself and her children.

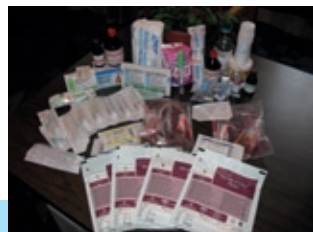
For mothers in Chernobyl-affected Sarny, Ukraine, MWB's Mother Care project provides essential medical items, necessary for the safe delivery of their babies. This assistance is enjoyed by over one thousand women. These impoverished mothers, living in Sarny and the surrounding villages, accept this assistance from MWB as a gift from God.

Thirty-year old Oksana Prymak lives in Vyry village, 30 kilometres from Sarny. She is the mother of five children. Her husband is unemployed, but limited in what work he can find due to the Chernobyl-region they live in, as well as the fact he sustained a work injury, limiting his capacity. Despite his tireless efforts, their only constant/reliable income is \$60/month - the children's allowances from the government.

Baby Care parcel



Pre-natal medical kit



The family lives in a little one-room house without a bathroom or inside toilet. They use a wood stove to heat their humble home and cook what they can. When MWB discovered the critical needs of this poor family, they were enrolled into our Family-to-Family (F2F) program. The F2F program has been such a blessing and the Mother Care assistance has ensured improved health for Oksana, and assisted in the safe delivery of her baby.

Almost all of the family members suffer from multiple health problems. Oksana struggles the most with poor health. She endures frequent headaches, anemia, hernias (on both sides) and chronic fatigue. When she discovered she was pregnant she applied to receive assistance from the Mother Care program. Knowing the prenatal kit was vital, for her nutrition and equipment it supplied for the safe delivery of her baby, this was her number one priority. Due to Oksana's frail health and their distance from Sarny, the MWB staff visited her family and delivered the prenatal kit. Both Oksana and her husband were incredibly happy and thankful for the support, "We greatly appreciate this assistance. It is a wonderful support for our family. We pray for God's blessing on those who care about us and help us."

This priceless assistance is a blessing for families just like yours and mine. It is an expression of God's love for parents less fortunate than ourselves.

We would greatly appreciate your support this month. Your gifts to Mission Without Borders will ensure many more mothers can care for themselves and their children, as they deserve. ■



Oksana was thrilled when the Mother Care parcel was delivered

"You saw my bones being formed as I took shape in my mother's body. When I was put together there, you saw my body as it was formed. All the days planned for me were written in your book before I was one day old. God, your thoughts are precious to me".

Psalm 139:15-17 (NCV).

Two Miracles for the Bunechko family

As we are bombarded with constant ads for the next best appliance or gadget for the home, and we know these will be popular around Mother's Day, spare a thought for the poor of Eastern Europe...



The Bunechko family with their miracles

Tamara is 34, and with husband Ivan, is trying to raise their five children, Dmytro (13), Vita (9), Ivanna (6), Ganna (3), and Zoryanya (1); despite crippling poverty. Their poverty is demoralising, but this is coupled with the fact that Tamara is a long term sufferer of Tuberculosis. She has completed some treatment, but still suffers from incredible fatigue. She is hopeful that she will regain more strength in the future. All of the children suffer from bronchitis, and colds and flu are par for the course with their weak immune systems, and the long freezing winter. Ivan works on a local farm as a general labourer. Tamara cares for the children and is also unable to work because of her poor health. Ivan's income and the children's allowances are never enough for their needs and most of the family's income has always gone toward Tamara's medical treatment.

They live in an old house, with one room, a kitchen, no bathroom; poorly heated by wood. Their home looks like a barn and its wooden walls are very fragile. Cooking was only possible using a very old furnace. When this started to fall apart, they were distressed, as they had no other way of cooking or heating their humble home. When the temperatures hover around and plummet below 0 degrees for more than half the year, having heating for your home is not a luxury, but a necessity. They discovered that repairing the old furnace was going to be very expensive and there was no guarantee that this would suffice, leaving them with only one other solution: to buy an electric stove.

them (the family's words), because the time taken by Tamara to prepare a simple meal for her family was completely unreasonable and used up what little strength she had.

But the miracle did not stop there...

God also took care of another critical need of the family. The family badly needed a refrigerator, but their meager income meant this was completely out of the question. Many of you reading this Focus News are regular supporters of our ministry. You would be well aware of the assistance Mission Without Borders is often able to give- supplying families with livestock to help them on their way to self-sufficiency. The Bunechko family has been blessed with livestock, but without a refrigerator, they were unable to save the meat, their one and only source of good nutrition. But God is a God of miracles!

The Bunechkos were over the moon and extremely thankful for the two miracles given to them by MWB, a stove and a fridge... A grateful Tamara says, "I am so thankful to God for His love for us. I prayed and He has brought His people to us in this remote village. I'm very thankful to God for the supporters of Mission Without Borders, who made these gifts possible. I can't describe to you what a blessing they are to our family. May God bless them for their generosity!"

I know this Mother's Day I will be incredibly thankful for my children and also express my thanks to my own Mum. But if the media gets me thinking maybe my life will be happier with the next best thing for my home, I will try and remember families like the Bunechkos and Prymaks; who love their children just as dearly, but struggle with desperate poverty... ►



Tamara with her new stove

In their despair, Tamara and Ivan appealed to MWB for urgent assistance. Through the Urgent Needs Fund, MWB was able to purchase a 'miracle' for the Bunechkos, an electric stove. It was honestly a 'miracle' for

A few years ago the parents were far away from God and the church. But in 1999, Tamara came to the Lord and was baptised. Ivan does not have a personal faith yet, but attends the weekly services. This new faith and church involvement changed this family for the better. Ivan no longer drinks or struggles with alcoholism, and instead keeps busy caring for the animals - their family's source of meat, with the surplus sold for income for the family.

Look at this! It's a miracle!



If you can, would you consider helping us this month? You can not only help families by doing Special Projects for your sponsored family, but your gifts will help supply funds for the Urgent Needs Fund, making dreams come true for families throughout our field countries. Our field countries have the best, most up to date, needs of those in their

care. With adequate, available resources, they are therefore in the best position to respond immediately to the most urgent needs, regardless of whether they are enrolled in our Family-to-Family Program, or not.

Thank you for taking the time to consider some mothers and families less fortunate than your own. Give what you can this month, but we would also love your prayers for these families. They say financial pressure is one of the worst pressures on a family, and this is very much the case with these families in need... ■



What a blessing this ministry continues to be! Your donations keep rolling in and the field countries are giving us the feedback that they loves your donations, now being enjoyed by children, families and the elderly in all 6 field countries: Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine!

'Gift in Kind' and Operation Cover-Up Update

Our next container is due to be sent in May, but as it is very close to full, praise God! we will continue receiving your donations and begin packing for the next container immediately after this one is sent. God is blessing this ministry and we are continually thankful for the generosity of people right around Australia –from companies, churches, groups and individuals who are generously donating items to bless the poor of Eastern Europe. Thank you everyone!

What we need:

For our passionate individual supporters:

We would love your donations of NEW hand knitted items:

- large and small blankets
- jumpers (adults and teenagers are in greatest need)
- scarves, beanies and bedsocks.

All items for knitting, sewing and embroidery – for the Vocational Training Courses, in operation in the 213 Children's Homes we work with; the Community Centres, where Vocational Training Courses in sewing are proving invaluable for young women committed to working toward self-sufficiency; as well as for the families and elderly who would love to make their own garments, but cannot afford the materials:

- Wool + knitting needles
- Material
- sewing needs
- embroidery materials

We have a wonderful, dedicated group of volunteers who pack your donations on a weekly basis on Sydney's North Shore! This is a huge, growing task! There are important needs that we need fulfilled to make this crucial job more efficient:

- We urgently need the assistance of a man who can help pack our Gift in Kind each Wednesday. Lifting of reasonably heavy boxes is involved. We have one dedicated gentleman doing an amazing job, but he needs someone to help shoulder the burden. If you can help, please contact our office.

- It would also be a tremendous blessing to have someone who has a van/truck who can collect our GIK throughout Sydney. All costs would be reimbursed. As this ministry grows our current volunteers are stretched and unable to collect the items. Anyone who can offer assistance, even once per month, would be a tremendous asset to our ministry. If you are willing, but the vehicle is the issue, contact Michelle Dorey and we will see what we can work out.

If you are a company and can offer large quantities of excess stock, we would love to hear from you! We are constantly receiving updated lists from our international headquarters and field countries, about their biggest needs. Companies are playing a very strategic role in meeting many of these needs.

For further information on this area of our ministry, please contact our office **(02) 9793-8100** or **Australia@mwbi.org** for information. Alternatively our two great volunteers doing an amazing job coordinating this area of our ministry, will be happy to answer your questions:

Sheryl Rumball in Sydney

– our Australia-wide coordinator of our GIK

Email: sherylrumball@hotmail.com

Phone: 0432 952 762

If you have large quantities of Gift In Kind you are planning to deliver to our storage facility in Sydney, please contact Sheryl to make the best arrangements.

Jenny Grainger in Melbourne

Email: jenn.mwbvic@internode.on.net

Phone (03) 9795-6141

Thanks for your Partnership!

Michelle Dorey
National Director