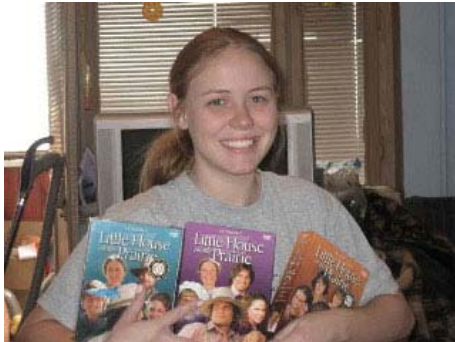




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Greetings from Mariupol

by: Amanda Duggin



Greetings from Mariupol. The summer heat has ended and we are enjoying the crisp, cool weather. Winter is steadily approaching and unfortunately we are still without hot water. We are optimistic that the water will be turned on soon, since the city runs the hot water through the radiators that heat our apartments and the heat will be turned on October 15th. I am greatly anticipating the hot showers soon to come.

Matt's Bible classes have been going well, especially the class on Exodus. Matt assigned memory work for them and they are doing exceptionally well at it. Valentine is a shining star. He has a great big smile as he rattles off the ten plagues and the Ten Commandments. The other Christians seem to be picking them up as well. I am very excited about this. We will be finishing this study next week and will begin again in Leviticus. Our study on the Harmony of the Gospels should finish sometime in February.

Also, since my last update, I had my 21st birthday. Thanks to Amazon.com I was able to get presents from home that I did not expect would be financially feasible to ship here. Matt enjoyed wrapping and hiding my presents around the apartment. It was kind of sad because I didn't find any of my presents when I first searched the apartment. It was fun though and my gifts were certainly worth the wait. Matt also baked me a spice cake and we had a small party that evening. Valentine and Galina came over from church as well as two of our translators. We enjoyed cake and ice cream and played games together. Lots of fun. I also got several cards from friends and family, which I enjoyed. Overall I had a wonderful birthday.



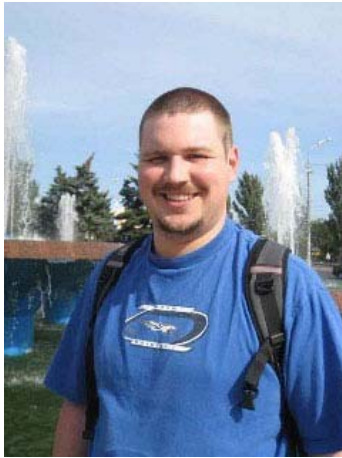
As part of my birthday, Matt took me to Donetsk for dinner. I bet you can't guess where? Yes, good ol' McDonald's. I didn't appreciate McDonald's while I was in the States, but now that I'm here I'm very happy to get a taste of home whenever I can. We knew that it would be our last chance to go before the weather gets bad. We also checked the store that used to have Oreos and, to our disappointment, it still doesn't have any. We've found a place in Kiev where we can buy them, but the only time we get to go there is when we go there to pick up visitors.

Now that I have your attention, I also want to acquaint you with Ukrainian playgrounds. Here almost everyone lives in apartments and every apartment has a playground for the children in the complex. Of course all of these playgrounds were made during Soviet times. Some of them look fun with seesaws and

merry-go-rounds, but most of them just look dangerous. Here's a picture to show you what I mean.

As you can see from the picture, this thing is huge! I'm not sure of its purpose or how it could be safe for any child. I know I wouldn't climb on it and I'm extremely adventurous. Thankfully, I haven't seen any children on it either.

As far as food goes, things are improving. Now that I am feeling better I am able to cook everyday like I used to do. I've also gotten organized. I have a calendar that I write the meals on two or three weeks ahead of time. It saves a lot of last minute confusion and makes grocery shopping easier because I can figure out exactly what I need before going to the store. Of course, you have to be especially flexible here. For example, I was making pizza last week...I probably worked on it for at least an hour and a half (making the dough, sauce, cutting up the toppings etc.) and after the allotted time my dough didn't rise. (We had some old yeast.) I started cooking around 2, so that we could eat before church (around 4:30),



but we didn't get to eat until 8 or so because of the mishap. The good news is that Matt understood my cooking frustration and took me out to dinner after church instead of me having to make something else. The other good news is that we bought new yeast and when I tried to make pizza again everything worked out perfectly.

Cooking here takes up a significant amount of my time since one can buy very few things already prepped, especially things that Americans like. What I like about it is that I'm learning how to make things that I never would have tried at home. I just would have taken it out of a box or can and heated it up. It's also an excellent opportunity to learn the metric system. One of the new things that I've tried lately is hushpuppies and fried shrimp. In the next week or so I'm trying at least three new dishes.--roast (new to me), a spicy chicken and rice bake, and honey glazed chicken stir fry. I'll let you know how they go.

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