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Mykolaivka Internat

“GAP” SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Graduate Assistance Program

[An Orphan Smiles, Inc.](#) is very pleased to be able to provide an avenue of hope and relief for many older orphaned children who are soon to “age-out” of the orphanage system.

Mykolaivka Internat is a “boarding school for orphans”, ages 7 through 18 years. The majority of these children have been orphaned due to circumstances of economic poverty and/or the death of their parents. There are approximately 135 children who live and are educated at this institution.

The location of this orphanage is in Nikolaevka, Donetsk, which is in Eastern rural Ukraine near the Russian border. It is approximately ten hours away from Kiev, Ukraine’s capital city, by train. The nearest town is “Kramatorsk”, a 45 minute drive away. There are no restaurants, convenience stores, hotels, or large stores in Nikolaevka. The roads are often well-worn asphalt, dirt and gravel.

Mykolaivka Internat is considered a special needs orphanage. Many children who become a part of Mykolaivka, typically score lower than average on placement tests, and therefore may struggle academically.

Upon completion of 9th Class, the children (at the average age of 16 years old) will complete their studies and their term of residence at Mykolaivka Internat will end. The children will then face the reality of living within an impoverished society and will begin to fend for themselves.

The statistics are staggering:

- Due to a child’s “special needs” orphaned status, the opportunity to attend a college or university is very slim, even if finances are available for them.
- Upon aging out of the orphanage, many children have no choice but to turn to the streets if they do not choose to receive vocational training (to learn a basic working trade).
- Out of despair 60% of the girls will turn to prostitution, 70% of the boys will enter a life of crime, 27% of these youth will find work, and very sadly 10% will commit suicide before their 18th birthday.

Ukrainian government supported vocational programs are available to all children who age-out of the orphanage system. The government provides dormitory style housing, food, and \$5.00 per month toward a student’s living expenses. However, the monthly stipend is not enough to pay for essential items, such as hygiene items, school supplies, and clothing. Many children are unable to cope and sadly do not complete their training and will turn to crime, prostitution, and other means to get by.

An Orphan Smiles has developed the **GAP program** for children aging out of the orphanage system. GAP stands for Graduate Assistance Program. An Orphan Smiles is operating this program in conjunction with Mykolaivka Internat.

Program Description and Objectives:

- Find a sponsor for each child, generally by May of their graduating year.
- Maintain sponsorship for grads for two years after leaving the Internat. Government operated vocational programs run for two years.
- Provide an allowance of \$25 a month for living expenses.
- Provide ongoing support for the grad from both Internat personnel and An Orphan Smiles in-country helpers. This assistance may include helping with medical or vocational issues or having an adult available to provide guidance.
- Keep the grad enrolled in school for the duration of the program.
- Keep the grad safe, off the streets and away from a life of crime.
- Provide the feeling that someone cares about them and their future.

Program Details:

Cost:

Sponsorship consists of \$30.00 per month (\$41.50 via paypal) over a period of two years.

\$30.00 Monthly Breakdown

- \$25.00 Student Expenses
- \$5.00 Mykolaivka Internat Assistance & In-Country Expenses

Check Payments can be mailed to: An Orphan Smiles, Inc., PO Box 175, Kimberton, PA 19442

Paypal payments can be sent to: Paypal@AnOrphanSmiles.org

Expectations:

An Orphan Smiles has several in-country representatives who assist with our GAP program. Valentina and Andrei are two volunteers who work at the Internat and Aloysha is a former orphan who works with the Graduate Support Center in Kiev. Valentina manages the financial records for the program, distributes letters and interacts with students on a regular basis, Andrei handles communication with AOS coordinators and manages photo transfers and Aloysha provides visitation support, as needed.

The two vocational schools that Mykolaivka grads are assigned to are not close to the Internat and transportation back and forth to the Internat is extremely difficult. It is not realistic for the students to be seen or photographed on every visit.

Information about the grads will be provided as received by Valentina and Andrei or as provided through letters from the students themselves. Sponsors need to be aware that these children are not well educated and letter writing does not come easily nor will contain a great deal of information. Some letters are extremely difficult to be translated as a result of poor handwriting or grammar. And in some cases, very little information will be available for certain students. Sponsors need to be aware that feedback is not a guarantee of the program. However, the students will sign a receipt when they receive their funding.

Correspondence:

Letter writing is such an integral part of this program. The students yearn for this type of interaction with their sponsors who provide them with a tremendous amount of needed encouragement and friendship. We encourage our sponsors to write as often as they wish. An Orphan Smiles has a Translation Team who will translate sponsor's letters. If students write to sponsors, we will gladly translate their letters which will be emailed directly to the sponsor after translation.

Please send your letters that need translation to Rachael, our GAP MYKO program contact, at RachaelD@AnOrphanSmiles.org

Rachael will coordinate with the Translation Team. Typically letters take approximately 7 -10 days to complete the translation cycle.

Care Packages:

Sending parcels are not a requirement of the Graduate Assistance Program.

However, if sponsors would like to send their student a care package, here are some recommended items:

Keep it simple, standard, and affordable: school supplies, shampoo, soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, bath towel, washcloth, 6 pk underwear, 6 pk dark socks, lip balm, bottle lotion, brush, roll of toilet paper, box of Kleenex, Stridex acne pads, deodorant, "bars" of laundry soap (Fels-Naptha or equivalent)

*Please make sure that shampoo and lotion bottle lids are tightly in place, and tape caps shut. Please also place shampoo and lotion in zip lock bags, and double-bag them to help eliminate possible leakage while in route.

Special Note - for female students: due to tremendous need, please consider including in each package a pack of 24-32 feminine napkins (no tampons please). Wal-Mart Equate brand offers great prices for "regular" maxi-pads.

Clothing

Although it is not required, please feel free to send New / Like New (no stains, rips, tears, missing buttons, etc) items to your student. Every student is in great need of everything. Please remember the upcoming season and anticipated temperature changes if you desire to send your student clothing.

Please also note, that although the need is great for most clothing items, it is not necessary to provide your child with a complete new wardrobe. The children are known to wear frequently the same clothing item and do not change their clothes often. They also tend to "save" many clothing items for

special occasions and then grow out of them. We recommend sending one nice shirt, one sweater, one pair of jeans or pants, etc., at a time.

Suggested clothing ideas based on known student needs:

- Coats
- Gloves, scarf, mittens
- Jeans, pants, athletic pants / sweat suits
- Sweaters, hoodies, thermals
- Sturdy shoes, snow boots
- 1-piece swimsuits for girls, swim trunks for boys, beach towel, shorts, t-shirts

Items to Avoid Sending

- Chocolate and caramels
- Anything that has the ability to melt
- War toys, toy guns, or related games
- Gum
- Poker/gambling games
- Hair conditioner
- Perishable snack foods (no yogurt covered nuts, chocolate, pudding cups, meat / dairy products).
- *Pre-packaged Trail mix, nuts, and hard candies are OK to send.

Shipping A Package

Please refer to the An Orphan Smiles, Inc. website (<http://www.AnOrphanSmiles.org>) for shipping instructions. You may choose whichever shipping method is best for you to ship your package to Mykolaivka Internat. Be sure to obtain a tracking number from the shipping company when you ship your package. This tracking number will keep you informed of when your package is received by Mykolaivka.

For your convenience, we have already prepared a package shipping label (below). Please print and affix to your box with clear packaging tape.

Please contact shipping@AnOrphanSmiles.org for an “internal box number”. At your request, a specific box number can be assigned to your package and returned to you (in label format) so that you can print and affix it to your box. At the time when your package has been received, the orphanage director will account for the boxes that have arrived, by reporting back to An Orphan Smiles the special assigned box numbers.

****Important:** Please note that the shipping label for Mykolaivka does not bear your sponsored student’s name. It is addressed directly to the orphanage director. This is due to the fact that their post office will contact the orphanage director (only) to come and pick up all packages that have arrived.

It will be important to place your student’s first and last name (translated in Russian and printed on an 8”x11” sheet of paper, in large size font) on top of your package prior to closing it. An Orphan Smiles will help you with this translation.

Additional Monetary Donations:

An Orphan Smiles does not encourage sponsors to regularly send additional funding beyond the \$30 monthly assistance. Part of the intent of the program is for the students to learn to budget their money. However, small monetary gifts for special occasions like Birthdays, Christmas, Graduation, or possibly a pair of shoes or school supplies are reasonable and are acceptable for sponsors to

consider. A general donation to the Myko GAP program for Valentina to react to emergency needs is also another way to help these children.

Thank You...

We wish to sincerely thank you very for your interest and support in sponsoring a student in their vocational studies through ***GAP-Mykolaivka!***

If you have not already joined our An Orphan Smiles Yahoo Group List please send an email to:

An_Orphan_Smiles-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

If there are any questions about this program, please feel free to contact us at:

Program Contact: Rachael Davidson

RachaelD@AnOrphanSmiles.org

GAP – Mykolaivka Package Mailing Label



Boarding School for Orphans

Street. Sinetskogo, 15
Nikolaevka, 84180
Donetsk Oblast

UKRAINE

Школы-Интернат

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Украина

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