

Dear friends,

This is our monthly newsletter. I hope the information we write here will help you better to understand what we are doing and how you can better help us by your prayers, financial support or even by visiting us and helping with some projects.

Children's team in Rivne

We are thankful to God for bringing kids to our team. Now we have 18 ten-eleven year-old boys who constantly come to our practices. Thankful to our partner we have time in the gym where during the winter we have coaching process. We had also one meeting with parents of kids where were able to speak about our club, our values and principles. It is very encouraging to see the parent's involvement, as it is unusual for Ukraine.

Some of our coaches

During last 16 years we had lots of players in our adult team. Some played for us few years, some played many years. I could see one pattern in this. We have certain rules and principles that players should follow. Sometimes some players, especially young, test us how we are serious about the principles. And sometimes we must say "Good Bye" to them if they continue to break the rules. But usually, most of those players come back to our club after a while, because finally, they start to understand that our club has a unique atmosphere and great relationships between players.

One of such player is Sergey Gerasimchuk. When he came to us he was 19 years old, he left our club in 1 year. He was a great player but with no understanding about respect for others. He loved alcohol and marijuana. Two years ago he came back to our club. During the last period of time he played in some Christian football league where he found out more about faith and also his attitude changed. He got education as PE teacher, and he was interested to become one of our coaches for children. It is great to see how God's grace is working, and it is great to understand that we should give people another chance as God constantly gives us a second chance when we stumble.

The situation with the Football Federation of Rivne Province

As you know I have good relationship with the Executive director of Rivne region FA. The president of Rivne FA was a politician who was from the same party as our former corrupt president of Ukraine. So after the Revolution of Dignity, many people started to say that all corrupt people should leave their position. As the president of the FA was one of the corrupt people, complaints arose against him. Unfortunately, the campaign against him was started by another corrupt person who was 1st vice-president. He started to put pressure on my friend who is the executive director; lots of bad articles appeared in newspaper etc.

For me it was tough time, because I have good relationship with the Executive Director, but also had normal relations with the 1st vice-president. But I understood that they are corrupt and if I want to start to defend my friend I will break my relationship with them. But I had to decide. For me it

was obvious that current president should leave his position, but the new people are even worse. A quote from Martin Luther King helped me: "Cowardice asks the question - is it safe? Expediency asks the question - is it politic? Vanity asks the question - is it popular? But conscience asks the question - is it right? And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular; but one must take it because it is right".

I don't want to talk about the process, but I see the God's hand during the whole process. First the president of the FA proposed me to be his vice-president and later even to become the president of FA instead of him. I rejected the opportunity to be in his team. Later God allowed me to meet with another person, who was activist during the Revolution of Dignity and helped a lot to protesters during that time. Together with him we won the election to Rivne Region FA. He was elected as president, I was elected as one of his vice-president. The former 1st vice-president secured his position as it was agreed. For me it is new challenge, God gave more the opportunity to change Rivne region football and fight against corruption, unfairness etc and bring it to God's standard. That job is not paid, so it is our Standard Sport's influence and ministry in the world of football in our region.

Christian mini-football league

During the last 7 years one church in Rivne has run that league. Usually they have 16-17 teams that play indoor during October-April. Many players find out more about the Gospel and Christianity through this league and the team meetings that organizers organized. But this year that church decided not to do the league. It was for several reasons that they stopped. One of the reasons was that they had not many helpers and they were exhausted running it. Another important reason was that they thought if they do sports ministry so many people will come to their church, and when it not happened they gave up. I had a meeting with them and convinced them that what they were doing was a great thing. I told them that not many churches in Rivne can gather weekly 180 people and shared with them piece by piece God's Word. I also tried to help them understand that success is not in numbers and that this is long-term project. Finally I proposed to them to run this league this year together. And we started this league together. Now we have 12 teams, and it is great that we can continue to build relationship with those players.

Not indifferent country

As you know our country has a not good time in its history. We have war with Russia, our economics almost destroyed, lots of tears, fears and despair. But among those bad things God's work is visible and apparant. First now you can easily hear about prayer, about the importance of faith from famous Ukrainian TV stars, politicians, showbiz stars etc. People became more serious about who they are, what their faith is and how they should live as a result. Also there is big volunteering movement when people start to feel their responsibility for things around them. Just recently I read the story when one hospital in Kiev, for wounded soldiers, which needed to repair their buildings. They asked for a price from one company and the

company gave prices. And that was too much. The hospital posted it on facebook and in few days lots of people from the neighborhood came with their tools, they bought all needed materials and did the repairs free of charge for the hospital just because they feel responsibility for the country and respect for the soldiers who fight for them. That is a real encouragement.

Our financial situation

We are thankful to everybody who supported us before. But also I would like to say that we still continue our work and need constantly your financial support and involvement. The current financial situation in Ukraine is catastrophic, our currency is getting lower. One year ago the rate was 1 euro = 13 uah, 2 weeks ago rate was 1 euro – 39 uah. This week is a bit better only 30 uah). Also with increasing prices for everything (products, heating, fuel etc) people have become poorer and are not able to support ministries as before. So we are thankful to our partners and friends from outside of Ukraine who continue to support our ministry and encourage you to continue to do it in future. Together with you step by step can do what we were called to.

How you can financially support us:

Here is bank details of ministry Verite Sport which helps us during many years and kindly agreed to help us collect support from EU.

For people in UK

Account name Verite Sport
Sort Code 30-99 93
Account number 03961323

For people not in UK

Account name Verite Sport
BIC: LOYDGB21132
SWIFT: LOYDGB2L
IBAN: GB44 LOYD 3099 9303 9613 23
Bank Address:
Lloyds TSB
41-43 South Street
Worthing
BN11 3AU
UK

What is our needs and how you can help us?

By prayers. Please pray for:

- ℞• Our financial situation. Now we can't do a lot because of lack of resources
- ℞• New volunteer coaches
- ℞• Children and adults who are in our teams. That God will open their hearts for Him.

℞• The possibility to change the culture of corruption and bad approach to children and sport in our region.

By donations.

We face a really hard financial situation and lack of support hinders our development. We see lots of challenges. We need to be there but because of lack of resources we can't influence people and meet needs. We are looking for 30-50 people who can give a commitment to support us by 25-50 pounds/ Euros/ dollars per month. If you have a desire to support us please contact me and we will discuss all necessary information for this (dontsozh@yahoo.com).

Come and help us.

℞• We are looking for short-term people who can help us with camps and tournaments (usually during the summer). We are also looking for people who can teach children English, computer skills, and anything else that can help children in future.

℞• We are looking for long term volunteers who can be a coach in some villages we work in. There are many requests from churches from villages that want to set up children's football teams but lack people who can be coaches.

℞• We are looking for people who can help us with PR, fundraising, running the website and facebook page of our ministry.

Zhenya Dontsov
Executive director of Standard Sport.

P.S. Thank you very much for your attention and help. If you would like to get more information or pictures about our ministry please feel free to ask us about that and we will send it to you.

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