



INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD AID

Fall 2017 *Update*

IBA endeavors to draw people to Christ, and teach good stewardship and sustainable living

## New Project Serves Troubled Men in Ukraine

With a heart for missions and a desire to share the love of God with the needy, Jeff and Joanna Graber and their family of five boys and two girls will move to Ukraine this fall to work with IBA. They will live in Kryvoshyntsi Ukraine and attend Berezyanka Mennonite Church, a church plant of Masters International Ministries (MIM). Their main focus will

be on working with men and boys from rehab programs by providing them with a job assembling and repairing farm machinery and teaching them life skills.

The Grabers will go with the blessings of their home congregation, Darbun Mennonite Church of Kokomo Mississippi, which is part of the Pilgrim Mennonite Conference. Joanna Graber is a sister to Connie Hursh, the wife of Wayne Hursh, who is the pastor of Berezyanka Mennonite Church. With this family connection the Grabers are familiar with the challenges and opportunities that serving in Ukraine offers. They are excited about being part of this ministry.

To briefly put this ministry in context, Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union for over 60 years until its collapse in 1991, when Ukraine became an independent country. A country of rich soil, good climate, educated populace and abundant resources, Ukraine began the difficult journey from its communist past to a free market economy. Having lost most of their savings when the Soviet ruble collapsed, the situation repeated itself in a financial crisis on the late 1990s, and since the war in southeast Ukraine the currency has lost about 2/3 of its value compared to the dollar. Credit is hard to get and interest rates are well over 10%. Endemic corruption in the government discourages investors. All of this has led to high unemployment, which only worsened existing



*Recovering addicts and emotionally troubled men, including this group from the Brother's Home, will receive counseling and vocational training at the IBA repair and assembly shop.*



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problems with drug and alcohol abuse. Many men have engaged in addictive and self-destructive behaviors for so long that they are unemployable even when jobs become available. The state operates orphanages for orphaned and abandoned children. At age 17 the children have to move out on their own. Without family support many end up in addictions and crime. Numerous programs have been started to help these people, including the nearby Brothers Home of the Christian Life Baptist Church of Bila Tserkva. As compared to American Baptists, Ukrainian Baptists have beliefs much closer to Anabaptism. These programs offer spiritual counseling and guidance, but due to the poor economy, have able bodied men languishing without productive work.

IBA has been in Ukraine since 2013, and has worked to help farmers become profitable enough to support their families.



*The Graber family, from left to right; Lanae 13, Jarell 11, Rosalie 14, Glendon 9, Karlin 16, Randall 6 (front), Joanna, Jeff, and Lyndell 3.*

The need of Christian guidance for men with addictions and for young adults fresh out of orphanages has become increasingly apparent, but for several reasons, including the language barrier and lack of experience with such endeavors, IBA has decided it is unwise to start such a project from scratch. Wayne Hursh has a business of importing farm machinery from the US. Reassembling that equipment is the type of work that many men can do with the guidance of an experienced mechanic, and teaches valuable job skills. After much prayer and discussion, IBA has decided to assemble equipment for Wayne employing men from the Brothers Home to give them a job and teach them vocational skills. The men will receive live at the Brothers Home while working and learning at the IBA shop during the day. IBA is renting a shop in the city of Skvira for this purpose. Once the men learn necessary skills they will be assisted in finding jobs of their own. The long term goal is to have our own facility for the counseling of troubled men.

Having experience as a mechanic and with a heart for helping people, Jeff is well suited for overseeing this effort. He will work with Larry Miller, who lives in Skvira and manages IBA's animal project, and will likely assist in the grain drying project.

This is a new area of ministry for us, and we request prayers for the men struggling to follow God and overcome their addictions and for the Grabers as they adjust to life in Ukraine and minister to these hurting souls.

We are requesting donations for this ministry. Startup costs include improvements to the shop and vehicles for transportation, and are estimated at about \$30,000. Please note "Men's Home" with your remittance. Any extra funds will be used where needed most. Thank you for your help.

Board members are Luke Coblenz, NJ, (606) 748-6049. Homer Kinsinger, MD, (301) 616-4381, Laverne Mast, KS, (620) 960-6597, Matt Colblentz, OH, (740) 485-6448, Phillip Martin, PA, (717) 354-7497, Jason Zook, PA, (717) 439-9294, and Leon Troyer, ID, (937) 515-2833



Please fill out the appropriate areas below and include with your remittance. Thank You!

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Men's Home ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$500 ☐ \_\_\_\_\_ other

Grain Dryer Project ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$500 ☐ \_\_\_\_\_ other

Where Needed Most ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$500 ☐ \_\_\_\_\_ other

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