



Dear Partners in Ministry,

This month I want to highlight again our activity in the former Soviet Union and the camping that is taking place there from Moscow to the borders of China in Central Asia.

## FORMER SOVIET UNION/RUSSIA UPDATE FROM GARY PARSONS

I went to Armenia on June 28, where I was warmly greeted by Arman and Lilit and our wonderful group of leaders in Yerevan. News here includes our objective to merge Young Life Armenia with another youth movement that we have been working alongside for many months. Both groups have talented leaders and directors so our purpose is to utilize all the talent equally. This process has been tedious and presents many challenges. I sense that each group has a strong desire to work together to reach more young people but needs our support and guidance in their efforts. Please pray for their structure to solidify as we continue to configure leadership roles and maximize the gifts of the many great Armenian leaders. While in Yerevan, I was continually amazed at the talent of our staff and their enthusiastic love for Christ, which was thrilling to see and very contagious. The club rooms were always packed with kids, who obviously felt very cared for by these leaders. I traveled on to see ministry in Gumri, Ararat, Egvarat and Arevshat where we have new start-ups and growth. My trip ended as I accompanied 50 leaders to Sevan for their time of preparation of three back-to-back weeks of summer camp. I was able to spend their first day with them and shared different principles of leadership and camping ideas, for which they were grateful. I also explored potential locations for a Young Life camp in this beautiful mountainous region.

It was especially wonderful to see the healing our valuable leader, Aram, has undergone since he was injured in a fall some months ago. I am happy to say he is doing well and has almost recovered the use of his arms and hands and is finally gaining weight! He is grateful for your prayers.

We are in the middle of 30-plus weeks of camping across the Former Soviet Union – camps conducted from Russia's Black Sea to the mountains of Kyrgyzstan. Here is an excerpt of a report on a camp from Stass in Kyrgyzstan and one experience from a camp in Osh, a remote and predominately Muslim region:

"The camp in Osh was good. There were 34 non-believers and most of them Muslim. There was a deep connection with the kids on the last night club talk. They were overwhelmed when I spoke about the life of Jesus. There was one guy named Slava (the name means Glory) who is a Gypsy. He was kind of 'leader of kids' in the camp. All the time he joked, sang and did funny things to distract from the camp programs. But God taught him. In last evening he stood up and said he wanted to change his life, he accepted Christ and other kids followed him. And he asked us to pray for him. I learned something too, because when I first met him, I thought that he would never follow Christ, but God is amazing and He teaches us both."

We have many more stories like this from camps across these difficult and remote areas where our brave leaders lead kids to Christ. We will include them in our next newsletter and hope you will contact us with your address if you do not receive it in August.



Gary and Jeanne Parsons  
Young Life  
Russia/Former Soviet Union  
Region

Trust this will bless you as we consider the wonderful activity in which we can take part for the sake of Jesus.

Lee and Paula Corder  
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