

Update 5, written Feb.16, 2016

**English Club** - She looked at me like I had a bow on my head. About 2 weeks after I arrived in Ukraine, she couldn't hold in her excitement anymore. Smiling as if heaven had dropped a gift just for her, she asked me if I would consider being a part of English Club? While I've never done anything like this before and have refused many requests for private English tutoring, something inside me wanted to say yes.

Tanya S. leads the evangelistic outreach through English at our church. A translator in her early 30's, with a fun personality and passion for her ministry, I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know her better these past 3 months. Here in the capital of Ukraine there are many people who want to learn English so using this as an outreach tool makes sense. What I was surprised about is how they do it.

The church I work with has a 20 year relationship with a church in Ohio. How that crosses my path is that in the last 4 years they have been directly involved with the special needs camps as well as English Club. A team from this church visits 2 times a year and in the summer after camp a portion of team stays longer and does a English Camp. But, until this year participant interest waned after the Americans left.

Since their last visit this past summer the folks from Ohio have continued to be involved in the English Club outreach via skype. That means that every other Saturday morning they have committed to spending 2 hours on skype with the folks here (our Saturday night) and lead the lesson for 2 groups via the internet. I was impressed! Impressed at the commitment on the side of the Americans and, impressed at the ingenuity on the side of the Ukrainians. Jamie (the American gal I share a house with) has been working with the beginner level students. So, Tanya asked me if I would consider working with the advanced group?

To get a feel for things the first week I sat in on a class. The second time I led a game. The third time I was ready with another game but ended up filling in for a class when the internet went down for the American. After the first month, since they had not met as a team since summer, I invited everyone over to my house. Tanya & I had a loaded agenda - for us to get to know each other better (the 7 member team & myself); to brain storm how to do the ministry better and

for them to make some American food....ok so mainly they wanted to know how to make brownies! Well we had brownies with our baked chicken; I got to know a neat group people much better and it was fun to hear the ideas being worked through.

One of the ideas was starting a another new class for the advance students and offering them the chance to read through the Bible in English with a native speaker...that being me. Teaching English as an aspect of ministry has never ever been on my radar. I have heard of others doing it and always thought, "Good for them." but it never interested me. And then, wham-o everything changes and I've been leading my class for a month now and really enjoying it! I have 5 students, 3 of whom do not yet have a personal relationship with God.

Three days ago the leadership team again met at my house. This time I introduced them to tacos. We made homemade tortilla chips for dipping in a variety of sauces plus a fruit salad. For dessert, thanks to my mom, we had the makings for S'mores. They loved everything and roasting the marshmallows over the natural gas burner only added to the fun of it. Then, again we started talking about how to try and improve the ministry and I'm starting to get it that these meetings are dangerous!

Long meeting made short, as of March we are expanding the outreach to every Saturday. Two Saturdays a month will continue as they have been with classes meeting via skype, Jamie with the beginners and I with an advanced group reading the Bible. Now, in addition, the alternate Saturdays we will have conversational English. The leadership team will come up with topics as well as participate in the class while I will be leading the class.

Perhaps I've spent too much time trying to explain this all. Sorry for my long windedness. But, since it is a unexpected and very new aspect of my ministry, I wanted to share about it. Maybe it confuses you like it did me. This wasn't a part of my plan. Yet the peace & joy that I have, how naturally this has all come together and that it doesn't conflict with the other aspects of my work....well, all that to say that, I think this was God's plan and I've committed to it at least until summer.

**Rainbow** - One of the dad's of the special needs kids, approached Tanya K. in early fall last year to ask about a speech therapist to work with his son. That conversation sent her brain spinning and she shared her thoughts with me one of

those first times we met after I arrived in Ukraine. It seemed like only a few weeks later, she was telling me what was coming together. One of her special needs moms was a professional speech therapist and a Christian who was very willing to hold sessions on Saturdays; they would have three 1 hour sessions with 5 kids each; and while the kids were busy she and Jamie would engage the moms as a group on various topics; all for free. The word was out and the response was positive.

After my moment of-

OhmyLordyouareamazing!

OnlyYoucouldbringthistogether.

WhoisthisthatIgettoworkwithforwhomeversituationturnsintoachancet  
oshareYourlove?!!

I had the presence of mind to ask - 'How can I help?'

Three weeks ago this new aspect of the special needs ministry was launched and there has indeed been a good response to what Tanya has called - Rainbow. It was hoped that the 3 groups of kids would be matched by ability but because of schedule conflicts due to other things going on in their lives we have needed to just accept the group that gathers each time. Of course with a mixture of autism, Downs, cerebral palsy and others, Era, our speech therapist needed help. So that is where I am.

In reality, it is kinda comical. Me not always understanding the kids. The kids not always understanding me. Era teaching in Ukrainian which I don't understand but the kids do. I sure don't add a lot of clinical to the situation but I can hold someone close so they don't slide off the seat, help loosen curled fingers so they can pick up a pencil, wipe up drool in time, turn the task into a game, give a hug, smile, and say good job.

Jamie and Tanya K. use the hour to meet with the moms. All of the moms in some way have an established relationship with Tanya K.. They know who she is, what she does, why and they trust her. And Tanya knows that nearly all of these moms do not yet have a relationship with Christ. God gave these two ladies the wisdom to start interacting in a purposeful way by using book, "Unstoppable" written by Nick Vujicic. Nick is an amazing Christian from Australia who was born with no arms and no legs. What he can do, who he is and his attitude has proven to be a great platform to interact from. Tanya shared with me, "Just everything he says points to God in a very natural way." If you have never seen one of his videos, I would

recommend watching this one. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ciYk-UwqFKA>

So we are off and running. I don't know where it will lead, what will happen or how long it will last. But, I know for sure it is of God. Would the world look in on us on Saturday, they would see a bunch of misfits and messed up lives. But, I am confident that when God looks in on us on Saturday somehow in His eyes this bunch of broken crayons makes a Rainbow.

**Snow** - We had snow on the ground for the whole month of January with our highest total accumulation being about 11 inches. In the town's central park there are 2 hills that were well worn with sleds and ice skaters of all ages enjoyed the frozen lake. Now the past week of warmer temps has worked away at the black ice still forming from the melting snow. I learned the hard way that you need to factor navigating around the muddy ice puddles into your travel time. But not everyone... When mom isn't looking the little ones charge right through the middle of these knee high ice berg lakes! Some things are the same the world around : )

**Days ahead....**

We are about to throw a birthday party for 30 special needs kids. The big event is Friday the 26th and I would appreciate your prayers. Why? Because like everything we do, it is an opportunity to share and show the love of Christ and we want that to happen really well!

Blessings, June

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**A spot of joy in my window sill; 4 yr old A-ree-sha at Saturday Rainbow Club; ..and 4th grade Anton; Teacher/Speech therapist Era English Club - American dinner & leadership meeting We made tacos, homemade tortilla chips, fruit salad...and perfected the art of making S'mores!**









