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Christian
Youth
in the former
Camps
Soviet Union

Promotional

"Teach the wise, and they will be wiser. Teach the righteous, and they will learn more."
~ Proverbs 9:9 NLT

NEVER, NEVER STOP STW!

CCI-Ukraine, as KVI's ministry is known in the Former Soviet Union (FSU), ran its largest Staff Training Workshop (STW) ever, near Kiev, May 6-10. 420 camping leaders, zealous for the Lord and in love with Christian camping, attended. Most of them were second generation camp leaders. They had been campers in the 1990s and into the 2000s, had life-changing experiences, and are passionate camp leaders today.

STW is structured like a camp. Attendees are organized into groups of seven with a leader, just like campers and counselor. This makes it possible to get to know the leaders personally and to influence them. The program consisted of eleven tracks so students could study in the area of their roles in their own summer camps. It is learning by seeing, listening, experiencing, and exchanging experiences. Following are testimonials of participants.

- Staff Training Workshop was a great opportunity to become immersed into camp life and to be like a camper. Operating STW like a camp and having the attendees be the campers makes for fast track

understanding and learning. I soon realized that I did not know much about camping before coming here. Our team is taking home stacks of materials that we will be analyzing and applying in our camp. STW is a huge storehouse of knowledge, new ideas, new contacts and new opportunities. Irina G.

- Dasha, a CCI Certified Instructor who taught counseling at the STW, was the leader in a group of seven ladies ages 28-30. She told our staff: **"Never, never stop doing STWs!!** I pray that my children will someday participate in STW and learn how to run a Christian camp. I have been in camp every summer since I was born. Camp is the biggest part of my life. I cannot imagine my life without camping."



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Group Leaders at the CCI-Ukraine STW in May 2018

The ladies in Dasha's group are married, have large families and jobs, but still take time to serve the Lord at camp. These ladies were at STW to learn how to make their camps better. They were a great inspiration to one another. The Prayer Summit was very special. They became one in spirit and empowered to go and do God's work. They saw how great and powerful God is. All the ladies left STW with hearts full of love for the camp ministry.

- Alina attended the Staff Training Workshop for the first time. Her husband has worked in Christian camps many summers and she couldn't understand why. She told us: The STW atmosphere, the professional instructors, the new friends, God's presence... inspired me so much, I decided to become the crafts instructor in my husband's camp and help him run a good camp.

- I am a mother of two and convinced that my children cannot possibly grow up without a Christian camp experience. Six team members from our camp representing different departments are with me to interact with 400 people with burning hearts. We love doing camps so we need tools, new ideas and fresh inspiration and we found it here at STW among the professionals. Camp is the most effective way to help teenagers and youth make good friends and right connections. If they are not connected with Christians, they will be connected with the world.

Lena G. – Program Leader

- STW is a place and event for me to get to know other camp leaders. It is also an opportunity for our camp team to grow together. We are here to learn. Society is changing and we need to be informed of everything that is going on in camping. I will be directing our camp for the first time. I need to be confident that I have done my best to prepare for this ministry. I am thankful for CCI/Ukraine and the professional training it offers.

- I realized I did not have enough knowledge or ideas to be a good camp director. Three years ago, I got infected with camping and youth work at the CCI STW. I began to pay attention to youth and realized they were trying to earn significance by watching the

right TV series and dressing in fad clothing. I soon learned that the most effective strategy to influence them to embrace Christianity is through camping. Taking youth out of their daily setting full of vanity, and immersing them into a camp atmosphere for ten days changes their lives. In my three years of attending STW I have become acquainted with many camping people whose camps are much better developed than my camp. So I am going to serve at Camp Mountain Pass for one session this summer to learn from a more experienced camp.



Alexander_K
Director of Camp Endless Opportunities

- I need new knowledge and new acquaintances and CCI-Ukraine provides my needs. I have been a camp director for 16 years and have found this STW very helpful. I am committed to Christian camping because it is a very effective way to introduce teenagers and youth to our Lord Jesus Christ and to Christianity. Our camp serves children from needy families. Some are from the war zone. We bless them with love and care.



Alexander U
Director of Camp
Bridge of Hope



Elena D.
Director of Forest
Camp



CAMP AND CHURCH GROWTH

Comments from Camp Leaders



Alexander K.

• When our church realized that lives are changed at camp, it began to look at camp differently. Camp was no longer just a place for children to have fun but a place for them to develop and to be influenced. Church businessmen got interested. Every time I returned from a CCI training event with new ideas, the senior leaders of our church listened to me and found the information I was sharing exciting and helpful. And talking about our church, when it was clearly seen that the children and youth who go through camp change and that their influence at home changes their parents, the church began to give money to develop the camp. Young adults became involved and now we have a great camp team.

- Our church prays fervently for the staff and campers. The pastor personally prays for the camp. The church pays part of the campers' registration fee.

Alexander U.

- 90% of our church is involved in camp as prayer support teams, transportation and food service teams. Our young adults are engaged as program staff and are learning how to be good camp leaders. We are planning our camp based on the knowledge we have received at the STW. **Elena D.**

- I am part of a Messianic Jewish congregation. Our counselors are parents. After serving in camp they begin to serve more in the church. Campers stay with the church. New campers bring their families. Campers grow up to become camp workers. Our church prays for our camp, provides the finances and the best workers. **Lena G.**

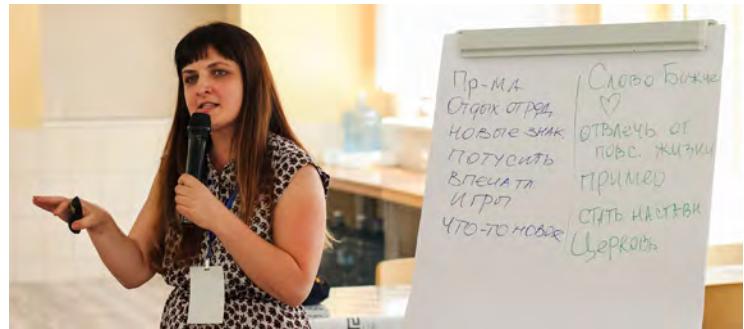
- Our church purchased a campsite and someone had to be put in charge. I responded to the invitation and became the director. Being near the war zone, our camp was filled with refugees the first 18 months. The children were wounded physically and emotionally. They were afraid of everything. God helped us to love and serve these children and their mothers. **Irina G.**

CAMP LEVEL UP

Tatiana Levchuk, Director of Camp Level Up and a CCI - Ukraine Certified Instructor

She recently wrote:

We move up at our camp. The goal of Level Up Camp is to influence teenagers to apply the biblical Truth in their daily lives. Each truth applied is like reaching the top of a mountain. There are always "mountains" to climb in life. Each mountain climbed deepens our relationship with Christ.



Tatiana L

When we opened our first camp 16 years ago, we knew very little about how a camp should operate. After our first camp session, I realized that our desire to help children and youth to know and experience God was not enough to operate a Christian camp. I learned about CCI-Ukraine's STW. I attended it, met instructors who answered my questions, and Level Up Camp became a fruitful ministry. I have experienced and know the value of good training.

I consider it a great honor to be a camping instructor and feel a great sense of responsibility to prepare my teaching assignments well. I know why leaders come to our seminars and conferences and I do my best to meet their needs. Often, after discussions in class, I make changes to my materials to be more relevant. I love the process!

CCI-Ukraine offers three levels of training for Instructor Certification. Instructors are taught how to teach interactively, how to do research, how to structure their teaching materials, the psychology of learning, etc. The goal is to create a culture of learning in the camping community.

My university degree is English Philology. Camping is my calling. As a CCI staff member, I teach Camp Counseling. I do all the written translation for Dave and Elfrieda Loewen. When I think about how God has led me to this stage in life, I am truly amazed. I am happy to be part of an organization which develops leaders.

MY JOB IS TO CREATE GOOD CONDITIONS FOR STAFF

Angelina, widowed mother of four children, three of them teenagers, is the director of Camp Shalom in Krivoy Rog, Ukraine.

As a camp director, my job is to create good conditions for the staff to run the camp successfully. I raise funds, purchase food, organize recruiting and training of staff, create conditions for staff to develop and conduct the camp program.

The STW is the place where I refresh my energy and inspiration that I need for camp ministry. Here I rub shoulders with colleagues who walk the same road I walk. We share our experiences, discuss our mistakes, and learn from our victories.

Our lifestyle is intense. The pace of youth culture is intense and developing rapidly. The inner church culture is far behind developments in society. So camp leaders are caught between church stereotypes and the values and behaviors of the youth we work with. There is an impression that camp leaders are doing something that breaks church rules. In my opinion, Christian camping is an instrument to reconcile these two polarities. We reach out to youth to change their thinking and open a whole new world called Christianity.



Angelina D.
Director of Camp
Shalom

"IT IS BETTER TO BUILD CHARACTER IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH THAN TO REPAIR THE BROKEN LIVES OF ADULTS."

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE TO GIVE

After reading the pages of this newsletter, you must feel rewarded knowing how much camp leaders benefit from the many training events your donations have made possible. Twenty-two workshops, seminars and conferences have already happened in 2018. Thank you for your part in making all this possible through prayer and donations.

Most of the leaders you read about in this Newsletter began their journey with Jesus at camp. That is why they are passionate to improve their camps to attract today's complex children and youth. They can help untangle their lives by experiencing the peace of God that surpasses worldly pleasures. With God's help, our hope is to be an engine of change for all camps, to spread the Good News of the Kingdom of God.



The unprecedented increase in KVI's activities in the past 18 months has drained our bank account.

Your generous gift at this time will help us continue without interruption.



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The KVI Newsletter is written and edited by Dave & Elfrieda Loewen. We distribute it by email and post mail and on our website www.kvicanada.org If you would like to change method by which you are receiving the Newsletter, email kingdomventures@msn.com or call **204-224-4175** or post mail:

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FOR THOSE WHO LOVE TO PRAY

INSTRUCTORS

Thank God for providing instructors who don't just pass on information but teach what has become part of their lives. All are experienced, seasoned, gifted leaders who love what they do. Their satisfaction comes from seeing their students' eyes light up when they encounter a new idea and enthusiastically participate in the learning process. They put much thought and creative work into preparing their visuals, texts and practical examples for their lessons. The personal sacrifices they make are many. Ask God to equip them with joy, health, wisdom, love and grace to carry on. Ask God to bless them and to make them a blessing in their own camps this summer.

RECEPTIVE HEARTS

Tens of thousands of children and youth will be attending Christian camps this summer in the former Soviet Union. They will be from all walks of life – rich, poor, happy, abused, orphans, physically or mentally challenged, lovable, unlovable. All are made in God's image for the praise of His glory. God has a plan for each one of them. Thank God for working in them to "will and to act according to his good purpose." Philippians 2:13. Pray that they will accept His forgiveness and become faithful followers of Jesus.



CHURCH GROWTH

KVI began its camping ministry in the former Soviet Union in cooperation with the local churches. Christian youth camps were a new concept and the church leaders' initial response was "it won't work!" Well, 28 years later most churches across the FSU have camps. They discovered that camps bring un-churched youth and their families into church. Camps are a great outreach tool and play a significant role in keeping their own youth in their churches. Operating a camp draws many congregation members into voluntary service. This has revitalized many churches. Camps have developed leaders for their Sunday schools and youth work. And many new churches are a direct outgrowth of camps. Thank God for strengthening His church through the camping ministry.



VOLUNTEER SUMMER STAFF

More than 45,000 young adults serve as volunteer staff in the Christian youth camps in the FSU. They use their annual work holidays or take a leave-of-absence from work. They take time off to attend training seminars and in many cases, pay their own registration fees. They love children and youth and are committed to fulfilling the Great Commission. Praise God for these wonderful people and ask Him to bless them with grace, wisdom, health, and love and make them a blessing in their camp.

Many camps are short of staff, especially male staff. Ask the Lord of the harvest daily to call and send workers to the camps.

The need is huge.

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE TO PRAY CONT'D



PROTECTION

Praise God for the opportunity to have Christian camps in the former Soviet Union. More than 1500 camps will be in operation, serving over 200,000 campers. Five of the countries have forbidden Christian gatherings outside of church buildings. Thank God for giving churches and their people courage and faith to operate camps even though they are forbidden. Thank God for giving parents peace beyond understanding to send their children to camp under such conditions. Ask God to give staff wisdom to deal with the many difficulties they encounter rising out of the constant fear of being arrested. Pray God's protection upon every campsite, camper, and staff and that all will experience His presence and blessing.



CAMPSITE FOR VERTICAL

The time has come, after seven year of operating our Vertical boys camp to own its campsite. The present location is no longer suitable. Much more space is needed for the 200-bed tent camp. More natural endowment is needed for the program. Ukraine has many scenic areas with hills, valleys, lakes, rivers, forests and mountains. A location where the camp will be safe and the people living in the area will provide protection and necessary services is also important. God knows where this suitable campsite is. Help us locate it. Pray. Ask God to lead us to this beautiful site which He has selected for us to influence teenage boys to become godly men. Pray God's blessing upon Camp Vertical this summer.



FUNDS NEEDED

KVI's camping ministry in the FSU is expanding. Camps are increasing which means there is more staff to be trained. Our mission is to train staff so camps continue to be places with atmosphere that draw campers to Christ. We must pursue this goal intentionally to prevent camps from becoming simply holiday recreational centers.

God has given us a mature, well educated, spiritually sound national staff with years of experience. They are developing camp leaders to operate camps in which God is honored and the Kingdom of Heaven is planted into the lives of campers. However KVI ran out of money in May; we need funds to continue the ministry. Please help us. Please ask God to motivate people to supply our needs.



CCI'S CHALLENGING FUTURE

CCI-Ukraine has experienced unprecedented growth in the past 20 months. Campers of the 1990's to the recent past are becoming the new camp leaders. They are the fruits of Christian camping and they are passionate about reaching the youth that don't yet have a relationship with Jesus. They are aware of today's complex culture and their need for professional training to evangelize and disciple today's youth. Its work is not done. Our staff has repeatedly told us they have only scratched the surface. Please ask God to give our staff in Ukraine wisdom and insight to chart the future.