

Dear friends,

The four weeks I spent in Ukraine seem like a distant dream now, with lots of intricate aspects but I will try yet again to keep it as short and sweet as possible, sharing some highlights for you and letting the pictures do most of the talking.



The first Camp in a little village outside of Lutsk went very well, despite getting sick midway (no hospitals required though, yay!). The facilities were great, and the property seemed to go on for miles and miles; a great space for games, running around and hiding from the kids occasionally.



TEAM ALBATROSS

The theme of the camps was 'Time Line', going through history from BC and looking at famous and inspirational people and their stories. In the mornings we had team time and then activities - I was responsible for music. "Free" time followed, which meant all the girls wanting their nails painted, and then we had games and an evening program. I had the youngest kids with an awesome co-leader,

Marfa.

A few things I learned in Dubechne:

- Children have a very unique way of making you feel special
- Language is only a secondary form of communication
- Kids from social care can be amazingly grounded, kind and free of burden
- Sleep is wonderful and essential to life
- Everyone* reaches a breaking point
- very conservative Deacons can be super cool
- Apparently I'm very good at making children fall asleep (obviously in an ethical way)
- I **adore** Ukrainians





A week in Lutsk:

The core team stayed with Anna during the week in Lutsk, which consisted of English lessons at Be Smart, sight-seeing, preparing for the second camp and visiting a police station, nothing unusual.



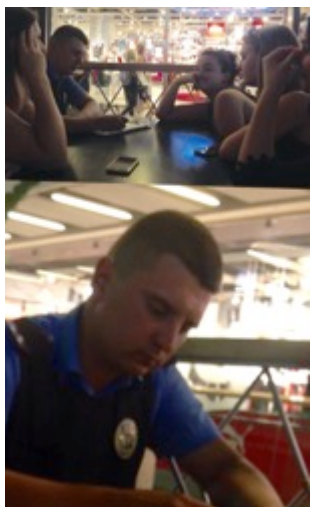
at the English school, Be Smart



Ok. I guess getting caught up with the police isn't that usual, but we're talking about Ukraine, where the potential for an exciting adventure is very high. Long story short, my friend Amy thought her

wallet was stolen at a shopping centre so we involved the police. Soon we came to the conclusion that she had simply left it in the toilet and the person after her took the wallet (which was discovered upon watching the CCTV footage). At that point it was clear that the wallet, which had more sentimental value than anything else, thank God, would not reappear. That didn't stop the two policemen from taking all 6 of us in a car that sat 5 people to the station and writing up a statement. They even put the siren on for a laugh.

And trust me it turned out to be the funniest thing that happened in 2017. Bless Amy, who choose to laugh instead of cry about it. I partially feel responsible, as last year when I was in hospital, I said jokingly 'maybe next year I'll end up at the police station!' God definitely has a sense of humour.



The brave Ukrainian, Irish, Polish, Hungarian-Canadian, German, British (Later joined by Scottish) team 2



A sweet reunion with Dr. Natalia (a gift painted by her daughter, Anna)



Late night chats and pamper sessions with Anna, our Ukrainian mom who adopted us and took care of us as if we were her own.

Teens camp in the Carpathians

We entered the second camp feeling tired, but being surrounded by God's miraculous creation gave us new strength for the week ahead. Perhaps these 8 days in the mountains were the most challenging and rewarding at the same time. We felt the effects of the lack of sleep and spending lots of time with people in tight spaces. All of us faced unique struggles and felt the limits of our humanity but we overcame them by supporting each other through prayer and love.





My team, the *Carpathian Lions*, became my family, even though they were the most challenging group. We had team building exercises, played lots of games and did an excessive amount of dancing. Each day we had an English workshop led by a Native speaker. I led a workshop on the 5 love languages and how to love each other well. I was

pleasantly surprised at how the kids responded to the topic with interest and engagement. Overall, I was incredibly impressed by the teenagers I was hesitant to spend a week with: they showed maturity, (for the most part) kindness and were always ready to help. It was amazing to see how some kids opened up spiritually towards the end of the camp, kids who were self-proclaimed atheists started asking questions about God. It was a true testament of how effective it is to live out the gospel instead of just preaching it. I was able to share about my own experiences of living out the gospel when I was asked to share my testimony. It was a bit nerve-racking for me, as I didn't know how much to share to such a young audience but God gave me the words to say and I could see the shift from skepticism to curiosity in some kids.



Crazy 80's party with my co-leaders Anna and Melissa



A few things I learned in the Carpathians:

- Teenagers have important things to say
- Being silly as an adult gives kids permission to be kids
- The power of joy and laughter overcomes fatigue and frustration
- Being intentional about spending time with God and seeking his presence
- I actually like teenagers
- The power of being in nature
- I'm an incredibly high-functioning introvert
- I **adore** Ukrainians

Overall, my time in Ukraine was unforgettable and saying goodbye to everyone was one of the hardest things I've had to do. I see the potential and the vision the Ukrainians have and I will continue my involvement with Territory 2:2 for hopefully, a long time to come.



Thank you for all of your love and support over the past year and for allowing me to be enriched with these experiences.

Much love,
Julia