

Helping Hands Bulgaria

Helping Hands Bulgaria is a Lutheran aid organization that assists 3 nursing homes and 4 orphanages in western Bulgaria. Although we are LCMS-approved, we receive no funds from the Synod. Although we help provide for the physical needs of those at these institutions, our primary goal is spiritual support. Physical needs are provided through periodic shipments from Orphan Grain Train with clothing, medical supplies, toys and other needed items. Funds are also used for food, medications and vaccines, as well as heat for the institutions we help.

The Babas for Babies program of Helping Hands is centered at Vidin orphanage in the northwest corner of Bulgaria. The 5 babas each care for 2 children for 2-3 years. The babas are Christian ladies and they take turns reading children's Bible stories to the other children at the orphanage (about 100 children total).



4 of the 5 Babas with some of their little children



Nursing home workers at Kula Nursing Home had the Gospel explained to them when they were given a nativity set. They'd never seen one before

Helping Hands Bulgaria started in 2003 as a project of Christ Lutheran Church in Abbotsford, Wisconsin. It is now based at Hope Lutheran Church in DePere, Wisconsin. The co-founder of Helping Hands, Linda Phillips, is a nurse who lived in Bulgaria for 3 ½ years, working with many institutions. In this position, she worked closely with Mrs. Svetla Boeva. Mrs. Boeva is the Bulgarian Administrator for Helping Hands, and has been from the start.



Svetla is on the right with some of the Shipment contents for a nursing home



Gomatartse orphanage for disabled children using walkers from a shipment

Our small staff in Bulgaria includes Svetla, Penka who works at one of the nursing homes, a translator, accountant and the 5 Babas (grannies) that work at the Vidin orphanage.



A room at Kula nursing home with walkers, clothing and quilts from a shipment



Rene from Radomir Nursing Home thanking us for shipment materials

Bridges to Babas is another Helping Hands Bulgaria program. Its goal is to help provide spiritual and emotional care to the elderly at the 3 nursing homes. Penka works at the Kula nursing home for one hour Monday through Friday, reading to the group members devotions, catechism materials and leading discussions among a group of residents. Another woman does this for one hour a week at a nursing home in Radomir in southwestern Bulgaria. Dobrinka, a nurse at Kucherinovo nursing home in west central Bulgaria, also gets the residents our precious spiritual food. Calendar pictures and cards are used for posters for the nursing home rooms and for those living in the cities near the nursing homes. The pictures are glued to poster board and labels with Bible verses in Bulgarian are attached.

Funds contributed to Helping Hands Bulgaria would be used for food, medicines, heat, and vaccines for those in the institutions, for the salaries of Svetla, the accountant, Rene at Kula nursing home and the 5 babas at Vidin orphanage. We have also been translating many LCMS materials and would like to have more translated. Our current needs include translation of materials from Bethesda Lutheran Home for use at the 2 orphanages for physically and mentally disabled, additional devotion materials, and devotions for children from CPH. Translation costs include pay for the translator, buying the Bulgarian rights for various materials, and printing costs. We also would like to start translating materials for hospitalized and home-bound individuals. Donations can be sent to Hope Lutheran Church at 700 S. Superior Street, DePere, WI 54115, with a note that it's for Helping Hands Bulgaria. Thank you!