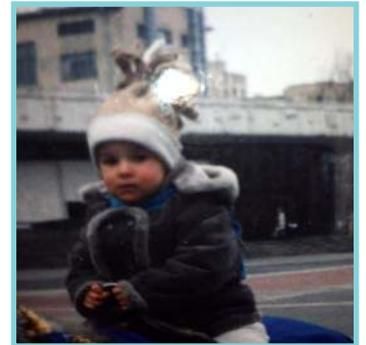


From Despair to a Dream: Sasha's Story

You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people. Genesis 50:20 NLT

Note from Jeff – *One of our missionaries in Ukraine contracted Covid-19 and was hospitalized quite a long time. We do ask for your prayers as she is still recovering. Thank you for your love and faithful support. In the midst of lockdowns and face masks, we hope you enjoy Sasha's encouraging story.*



Sasha as a small child.

Sasha Suffers as a Child

As a six-year-old child, Sasha's father was killed in an auto accident. Her life at home went from bad to worse. The beatings she received from her alcoholic mother intensified. Abused and constantly hungry, she and her older brother Vitya barely survived on rotten food her grandmother salvaged from the garbage.

By the age of 12 she was placed into social care. Her mother's parental rights were removed. She and her siblings were moved to an orphanage/shelter.

"The next 9 months I spent in a closed social shelter. It was like a prison: we had no rights to go outside, only to walk in the yard. But the yard was tiny with high walls, like a prison cell without ceiling," Sasha recalls.

A Dream Becomes Reality

Somewhere outside the horror of those high walls lived a Christian couple named Olexsiy and Yulia Satenko. They felt that God was calling them to become a foster family.

They went to the local social services office and were immediately offered four kids from one family. (Sasha and her three siblings) They agreed on the spot. Without getting to know the kids or even looking at their photos, the Satenkos brought them into their family. And that's how Sasha found a new family a week before her 13th birthday.

It hasn't always been easy for her or for her new parents. The Satenkos, however, took a huge step of faith and believed God for a miracle in the lives of Sasha and her siblings. Today, it appears that miracle is happening. Sasha has grown to love her family and she knows that she wants to live a different life.

"Sasha was never very talkative. She kept everything inside," remembers her foster father Olexsiy.



The Satenkos took in Sasha, Vitya and two other siblings to raise as their own children.



Sasha meets for the Daniel School bible study and training at the MP Kyiv office.

Oleksiy continues, “I respected her thoughtful nature but I’m also glad that she came out of her shell. We love her as our own daughter. She is very loyal and responsible and we can always count on her. I enjoy watching her plan her future, studying and growing into a beautiful and confident God’s daughter.”

When the Satenko family received sponsorship support, Sasha was invited to attend her first Mercy Projects camp.

“When I came to my first camp I was scared at first because I didn’t know anyone,” recalls Sasha.

“But I loved my counselors who taught me how to experience Jesus in my life. I noticed how they were always cheerful and smiling and serving us even when they were tired. I couldn’t wait to come to the next camp! That is when I accepted Jesus in my life. I realized that these people could not be so loving and wise on their own, so I surrendered my heart to Jesus!

“At first I found it hard to accept God’s forgiveness. I was still blaming myself for what had happened to me. If I had been better, maybe my parents would have loved me. But now, I know that Jesus loves and forgives me. My favorite time at camp is when we get to worship. I have also grown closer to my sister Margot who is also a counselor and a worship leader.”

18-Year Old Sasha Dreams of Becoming A Lawyer

Now aged 18, Sasha has built many strong Christian friendships, especially with camp counselors Natasha and Alex Gaiduchenko. They disciple Sasha to walk with Christ and live out her Christian faith.

Sasha’s face beams as she talks about the impact they’ve had on her life: “They always teach us to live on this earth the way Jesus lived. Let Him live through you. So every time I have a decision, I truly ask myself: Is this from Jesus or my flesh? And I try hard to choose what Jesus wants for me.”

Before the COVID lockdown Sasha was a student at our Daniel School leaders training for active youth who want to become camp leaders. Last year she became an official “helper” to the counselors.

“I miss the kids and really want to be with them,” Sasha said.

Like in Genesis with Joseph, what the enemy desired for evil, today, we see God working it out for good. Not just for Sasha, however, but also through her desire to become a lawyer. She is now a third year law student and her dream is to help kids like her. God has raised her up to make a difference.

“Even though I am still very shy, my desire to bring justice to this world is bigger than my fear of people,” Sasha said.

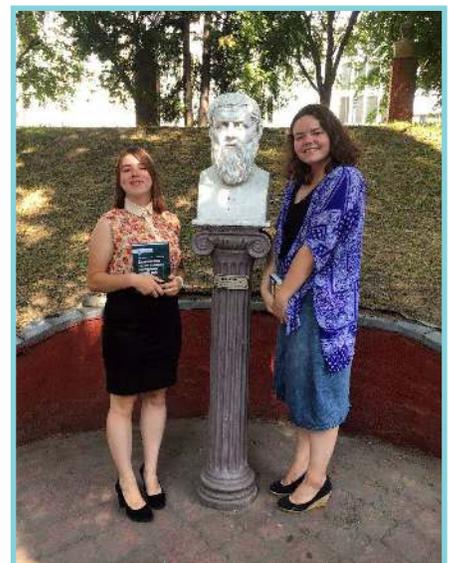
Amen Sasha. We are with you all the way!



Oleksiy with Sasha (L) and their daughter Margot at the Mercy Projects summer camp last year.



Natasha and Alex, part of the MP team, disciple Sasha, Margot, and other teens on how to live for Christ.



Sasha and Margot at college. They look forward to all that God has for them.