

“I Just Want My Dad to See Me”

A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. Ps. 68:5

A Little Background

Yana Glushko is our youth ministries director in Kyiv, Ukraine and her husband Igor is a missionary with Teen Challenge and Mercy Projects. I asked them to share their story with us. (J.T.)

Igor: “I grew up in a large family of six kids. My late father was a very violent man, a drunkard and a former KGB officer. I don’t know about his relationship with God, I think he had some but it’s up to God to decide. He read the Bible but his life didn’t reflect any godliness. Father caused us many troubles and a lot of pain. While intoxicated he would regularly beat his wife (our mom) and us so severely that I seriously many times offered my mom to kill him to stop the beatings.

“My parents got divorced but father still lived with us. That’s why we, children, spent our time outside. And there, on the streets of Kyiv we found smoking and drugs very soon.

“Funny fact: When I went to the 1st grade, my mom asked me to quit smoking because it was not allowed at school. “

How did you become a Christian?

“Growing up, we pretty much stayed away from the apartment. We were doing bad things out on the street, but our mom was praying! She always made us to come to church with her. I would take my unbelieving friends and we would sit on the last row, eating sunflower seeds and giggling loudly. When the pastor called for people to repent, my mom would turn and look at me with a piercing gaze. I always saw tears in her eyes.

One time when I was 15, I was very drunk at my friend’s house. My younger brother found me, and said; ‘It’s Sunday and mom wants you to come to church.’ I don’t remember the sermon, and I don’t remember going to the front, but there I was, at the stage, and all my brothers and sisters had followed me. I invited Jesus to be my Savior. And that very second I was stone sober!”

“I understand people on the street”

“My brother Sergey is director of Teen Challenge Ukraine, and I love working in their Coffee House ministry. People from the street, addicts and others, come have conversations and support. I also work in the methadone clinics with addicted men who are trying to stop using drugs. Every week we go there and build relationships



Yana and Igor with their three kids at camp.
From L to R: Karolina, Lev, and Rosa



Igor shares at the coffee house and visits methadone clinics to talk to addicts about the love of Jesus.

with guys, counsel them and tell them that there is hope in Christ. At least 1-2 people die there every week! Their wives turn into widows, and their children into orphans... It is terrible. I guess I understand people on the street. I struggled a long time and my brother never gave up on me.”

Yana dreams of starting a teen ministry center

Yana: “I have been working with teenagers all my Christian life. Our first child Rosa was born in 2004. I was on maternity leave and my mother-in-law, who worked as a family coordinator at EEO, told me they needed a person for their teen ministries. They hired me and ever since I’ve been a happy member of the team.

“My passion is to help teenagers grow in Christ. This is why I started the Daniel School, to help disciple them to stand up strong in their faith. We hold these classes at the office and everyone jams into our small space. We drink tea and coffee, but there is no room for games. I dream of starting a Teen Center for the kids to drop by on a regular basis. The Lord moves in their lives at camp, but a few weeks later, they are back into their difficult daily lives. We really need this I think.”

“I just want my dad to see me”

“After a recent meeting, I ended up walking to the metro station with one of our young girls named Nana. Nana hasn’t seen her father in four years. ‘You know Yana, she said, I want to see my father. I am sure everything would be better if I could see him.’

“Why do you want to see him after these years? ‘Because I am 16 now, she said. I just want him to see me. I think I will be happy if I can see him and he can see me.’

“Nana, I said, it is good to have a relationship with your father. I hope you can do that and see him. But I also hope you can learn to grow strong in a relationship to your Heavenly Father. I am sorry your father left your family. But Jesus will never leave you nor forsake you. He will always be there for you. And I am always here for you to talk to.

“I gave her a hug, we said goodbye, and I started my hour long trek back to my husband and kids. But I couldn’t stop thinking about Nana and how she just wants her father to see her. I know she is thinking; ‘maybe he will love me now if he just sees me? I have grown up. And I want to see him.’

“I can’t imagine my kids could not see their father. For them to understand the love of a Heavenly Father, they must experience this first from their earthly father. Please pray for our kids. They need miracles in their lives and we want to be part of that miracle.”



Igor shares God’s love on the streets in Ukraine.



Daniel school classes in the MP Kyiv office.



Yana and Igor make a dynamic team. Thank you for making it happen through your prayers and support.