

# Chernobyl Children's Lifeline

## *Wirral Link End of Visit Report*



Our visitors arrived at Manchester airport after leaving home in Stolin the evening before. It was lovely to meet the children and to welcome back our Leaders, Maryia and Sviatlana.



We hosted 9 girls : Alesya, Aryna, Dasha, Elvira, Ksusha, Masha, Nastya, Nastya and Vika and 7 boys : Dima, Dima, Dima, Oleg, Styopa, Vlad and Zhenia. The children stayed with 8 host families.

As always, we are very grateful to Holmeswood Coaches of Ormskirk for providing the transport to and from Manchester Airport.

## CLOTHES SHOW

We met up at The Heart of Egremont Centre for the annual Clothes Show. The children had the opportunity to select clothes and shoes both for themselves and their siblings. A big thank you for all the donations.



## The Important Stuff

All of our visits start with a trip to the Dentists. None of the children look forward to it, but it is a necessary part of their stay. This year one boy had to have 6 teeth out and 6 children required fillings. Dental care is kindly provided by Steve Wright at Thornhedge Dental Practice, Moreton and Andrew Morton at Hamilton Square Dental Practice, Birkenhead.

## Happy Birthday Wishes

To add to the fun, we were lucky enough to celebrate 2 birthdays this year. Dima and Elvira both celebrated their 10th birthdays while they were with us.



3 children also benefited from new glasses courtesy of Specsavers in Birkenhead.. Oleg had a stigmatism and was short and long sighted. His new glasses have helped him to see properly for the first time.



..... and now for the good bits. We enjoyed lots of good times and the weather was sunny and warm for some of the time.



### West Kirby Disabled Sailing Association

Unfortunately, high winds meant that we couldn't go sailing, but we enjoyed bowling at Bromborough and a fabulous lunch at West Kirby Sailing Club courtesy of West Kirby Disabled Sailing Association.

### UTS Foundation Gym, Hoylake

What better way to work off the lovely lunch – trying out the equipment at the UTS Foundation Gym.



Swimming is one of the favourite activities. Wirral Council provided free swimming passes for the duration of the visit and, as always, they were well used.



Tuesday evenings were spent learning to street dance with Chloe Salusbury, the dance was performed at the farewell party.

Lacrosse training and tea at Oxton Cricket Club and an evening with St Stephens Brownies were thoroughly enjoyed. Christine and Sarah Gibson were very welcoming.



## Fun days out at local attractions

Knowsley Safari Park. Ice creams bought by Wendy Parrish

Liverpool World Museum and the Big Wheel, via The Ferry.



Blackpool is always a special day out, the children don't want to leave they are having so much fun!

Josh Hynd raised money to take the children to the Ice Cream Farm by being sponsored to score goals. We had a fab day there!



We spent some unforgettable times in New Brighton

As well as hosting 3 boys, Simon and Laura Hynd welcomed us to Bubbles World of Play and provided free passes for the duration of the visit.



Free fair rides for the month at Adventureland and great fun crab fishing

A visit to the Light Cinema with Popcorn and drinks



.... And a wonderful afternoon with the Pirates



The children also enjoyed.....

A day at South Wirral High School, where they made photo frames, baked cookies, played rounders and football and were entertained by the Signing Choir. They made many new friends



Ice skating and lunch at Little Sutton Methodist Church



Lunch at Wirral Hundred Pub, Great Sutton followed by bowling courtesy of Whitby Methodist Church



## And our regular favourites

The children spent a number of fun filled days with the staff and children at Wirral Metropolitan College. They had fun doing sports at The Oval and Birkenhead Park, enjoyed afternoon tea and party games at Conway Park Campus and Beauty Students kindly prepared the girls hair, nails and make-up ready for their farewell party.



We were well fed at the Johnny Pye Pub in Heswall and were entertained by Magician John Harding.



Fun, food and games at Community Soul Cafe in Wallasey and Harrison Park



## Farewell and Thank you

We had a lovely farewell party, the children put on a fabulous show full of singing and dancing.

Each child received a Certificate of Achievement and the children presented their host families with a love heart expressing their love and thanks for all they have done.



So it is time to say goodbye to our visitors. The month has flown by and we all have wonderful memories to treasure.

Everything went very smoothly at Manchester Airport and the children were through security in good time to catch their flight home.



It would not have been possible to organise such a busy 4 week holiday for our Chernobyl Children without donations from many organisations and individuals, free access to many of the activities and hard work by a whole range of individuals.

Our heartfelt thanks to you all and we hope to see you again next year.

Thank you so much

Lynne, Garth and Maria

## News from Belarus

Maryia, Sviata and the children all arrived home safely—all of the bags arrived at Minsk — A special thank you to Helen McCracken for managing to secure more than 25 suit cases for the children to take home their many gifts, clothes and presents for their families.

### Message from our Leaders, Maryia and Sviatlana

"I wish there were a better way to express my appreciation to all of the Wirral Link volunteers. Everyone was just fantastic and we had a great time, feeling so welcome. Thank you all very much. All good things must come to an end. After a very long trip, we made it home safe and sound, desperately happy to see our nearest and dearest. Thanks again to the many, many people who made this trip so unforgettable.

All 16 children returned home gaining weight, with rosy cheeks, sparkling eyes, happy confidence and sweet memories. They will treasure these memories forever.

All of the parents express their enormous gratitude to the host families, the sponsors, the chairperson and to all who donated clothes, raised money, organised activities, supervised the children, encouraged them and simply loved and respected them. Now the children talk and talk about the things they experienced and look through the photos again and again. For all of them it is a life changing holiday. This trip gave them the motivation they need to stay focussed and, most importantly, positive about life!

One girl said, "it was the first time I've been on a plane. I thought it would take a long time but it seemed to go quite quick".

And it is amazing how quickly time flies on the Wirral. All of the children admitted this fact as it was a brilliant month, it went very well.

At the airport we were looking at our kids chatting happily, eating their snacks and agreed on the fact—if they had the chance, the children would choose to stay, if it were not for missing their families."

With much love Maryia and Sviata

Comments from Parents :

**Dima and Vlad Kviatko's Mum** : "It is a pleasure to look at the boys. They are all kind and friendly and they share everything with one another"

**Dima Dzerachtys's Mum** feels guilty as she thinks she doesn't spend much time with Dima as she has a toddler and has to work to support the family "You taught Dima so much—how to take turns, be patient, talk about feelings, wash hands, chew with your mouth closed, be polite—the list goes on. Are these little things? Individually, yes, they are. But in sum, what you did was contribute to my son becoming the capable, independent, open-minded boy. It's the sum of the little things that makes childcare so meaningful".

**Alesya Ralava's Mum** : "Alesya came back like a breath of fresh air into our home, full of enthusiasm. She brought so many presents, clothes, footwear not only for herself but for every child. There are seven of them in our family. It is a real help. Thanks a lot".

**Nastya Vabishchevich's Headmaster**—"Nastya hasn't had much parental input and she has been a little bit more withdrawn than the other children because things have been difficult at home. A trip like this helps in lifting her spirits and making her see that life can be better and that there is always hope." Maryia and Sviatlana also noticed the difference in Nastya. "She is a spirited lovely girl, a girl with a friendly smile and beautiful sparkling blue eyes."

The families of **Masha Sen, Dima Nazdryn-Platnitski, Oleg Hadunka, Dima Kviatko** and **Ksusha Pashkevich** thank everyone for providing their kids with personal medical treatment. Everyone feels perfect now, thank goodness.

**Elvira Yurchuk's** and **Dima Dzerachtys's** mums are very thankful for the birthday parties for their children, the best they ever had, very treasured and always remembered. Elvira's mum added that her daughter became more beautiful. Her complexion has changed, and she became more relaxed.

**Aryna Haradnik's** mum was so impressed by all of the stories of Aryna's adventures and the people she met during this fantastic month. "Aryna is very underweight and weak, but after staying in England she started eating well. She has a good appetite now. She says it has been the best holiday of her life and she will keep the memories of it every moment. Aryna has changed greatly. She has become more concentrated, sociable and responsible."

For the children, the important thing is the memories and friends they made, and for some there will be a new-found desire to study languages, or it might change their attitude to school. But the parents set great store on the health benefits. They all say "Thank you for doing this, it means so much ..."