



Alliance News

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HAPPY NEW YEAR

May all the joys of this time of the year fill your heart and home. Your caring for the Chernobyl children is gratefully appreciated by us, as well as those connected with whom you serve. Thanks very much for all you do and the support you give to CofCUSA.

A Message from the President!

Approaching the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant accident, the world community underwent a thorough self-assessment of how it addresses the issues of the Chernobyl aftermath. Likewise, in 2006, the CofCUSA Board decided to take a scrupulous look inward at how we are fulfilling the organization's mission. Since 1998, a small group of volunteer board members have been working tirelessly to be a resource to all, whether it has been connecting individual to individual, individual to institution, establishing new organizations and program materials, or providing current information on the issues surrounding the needs of those in the Chernobyl region via a national conference.

The world has changed dramatically in the past 20 years, as have the global politics, scientific and humanitarian views on the needs of post-Chernobyl communities, as well as international priorities in relief efforts. Like many Chernobyl-related charities, CofCUSA has found itself at a crucial point of its organizational existence, as it has to respond to the shifting external environment to ensure the most effective response to the needs of the Chernobyl children.

Striving to do our best in supporting all organizations as they provide for the needs of the very special children in the Chernobyl region, we at CofCUSA undertook a rigorous strategic planning process. This process involved in-depth research on the Chernobyl organizations' current issues and needs as well as an analysis of how CofCUSA's existing programs and services are addressing those needs. Also, we reviewed national best-practices as applicable to CofCUSA, creating short-term and long-term strategies and goals, as well as designing new programs and crafting implementation methods and timelines.

As result of these strategic development initiatives, CofCUSA's previous mission statement has been revised to better reflect its purpose and direction, i.e., who we are, what we do, how it is done, and for whom:

Children of Chernobyl United States Alliance is a non-profit tax exempt national organization that offers care, compassion, relief and hope to the people of the Chernobyl region, especially the children. This is accomplished by providing education, consulting, organizational development and other support services to organizations with a similar mission, and by contributing to humanitarian aid efforts in the affected region.

Strategic Plan Research and Outcomes document
Details of implementing the new plans.



Woodrow Wilson International Center Chernobyl Conference
Summary of each presentation delivered at the Commemoration of the Chernobyl Disaster . . . Conference

Congressional Ukrainian Caucus "Briefing on Chernobyl"
Copies of each speaker's presentation. Lots of great information!

With this inaugural issue of *Alliance News*, we would like to publicly launch the implementation of the CofCUSA Strategic Plan as an indication to our continuous commitment to assist organizations and individuals in their dedication to serve those affected by the Chernobyl disaster. This is a work in progress! As we mature as a national organization, it is imperative that we regularly undergo a thorough self-assessment so that we can better serve our constituents. We are very eager to work on these new ideas and initiatives in our dedication to support the children we are all collectively serving in the Chernobyl region.

A big thank you to [Svetlana Krasynska](#) for her guidance in taking us through the strategic planning process. Her professional nonprofit management skills are a valuable asset to the CofCUSA Board.

We have made a number of strategic decisions, including reassessing and redesigning CofCUSA's programs and services to better meet the needs of all CofC organizations and the children they serve. Click [here](#) for more detailed information and feel free to contact cofcusa@elltel.net.

Best regards,

Cec Calhoun, President

CofCUSA Receives Congressional Recognition

This past April, CofCUSA President Cec Calhoun was invited to attend two events commemorating the 20th Anniversary of Chernobyl in Washington, DC.

On April 26, the Woodrow Wilson International Center held an all day meeting titled "**Commemoration of the Chernobyl Disaster: The Human Experience Twenty Years Later.**" The Chernobyl Forum report, issued in the fall of 2005 by the International Atomic Energy Association, was discussed at the meeting with as many diverse viewpoints as when the report was first released. A brief summary of all the presentations can be found by clicking [here](#).



The next day, the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus sponsored a **Briefing on Chornobyl**. Rep. Marcy Kaptur, OH, who co-chairs the Caucus, also spoke during the event. She later recognized a few charities that are doing significant work on behalf of those in the Chernobyl region. CofCUSA was one such charitable organization receiving recognition.

Cec accepted the certificate and was able to briefly talk on the breadth of work of US charitable organizations, empha-

sizing their commitment and diligence in supporting those that live in the contaminated region. The certificate states: **"In recognition of outstanding humanitarian work to aid children affected by the Chornobyl catastrophe."**



Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition

Presented on April 27, 2006 to

Children of Chernobyl U.S. Alliance

In recognition of outstanding humanitarian work to aid children affected by the Chornobyl catastrophe.


MARCY KAPTUR, M.C.

SANDER LEVIN, M.C.


CURT WELDON, M.C.

ROB COE BARTLETT, M.C.



Direct links for event proceedings or summaries:

Friends of Chernobyl Centers, US (FOCCUS)
Audio recordings of presentations.

Kennan Institute, Woodrow Wilson International Center
Presentation summaries.

Congressional Briefing
Presentation proceedings.

International Chernobyl Conference, Austria
Chernobyl Forum Report presented here.

GreenFacts, Chernobyl: 20 Years later
Chernobyl Forum Report from another perspective

UNICEF photo display
Photos of the Chernobyl region

During the Briefings, the speakers focused their comments on the continuing effects on human health and agriculture, U.S. government and international assistance, securing the sarcophagus, among other relevant topics.

Significant 20th Anniversary Events

The 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant accident was commemorated by numerous events worldwide, including conferences, rallies, media releases, as well as various photographic and art exhibits. The following are the highlights of international conferences and discussions dedicated to the anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster. Where proceedings or summaries are available, the web links are included to the left of the conference/event description in the 'blue' column.

- On March 23-25, a conference titled *Chernobyl Here and Now: Global Engagement, Local Encounters* was held at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI and co-sponsored by Center for Russia, East Europe, and Central Asia (CREECA) and Friends of Chernobyl Centers, US (FOCCUS). At the conference, the Chernobyl catastrophe was brought up as an issue of importance to the present day world rather than a historical phenomenon.
- On April 25, another conference, titled *Commemoration of the Chernobyl Disaster: The Human Experience Twenty Years Later*, took place at the Harriman Institute, Columbia University, New York. The primary presentation topics centered on the diplomatic, scientific, humanitarian and academic perspectives on the Chernobyl catastrophe.
- On April 26, *Commemoration of the Chernobyl Disaster: The Human Experience Twenty Years Later*, a conference sponsored by the Kennan Institute of Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, took place in Washington D.C. A number of speakers presented at the conference, and the main topics discussed were the history of the Chernobyl disaster, the effects on health and environment, and the human experience.
- Another significant event took place in Washington D.C. on April 27, titled *Congressional Briefing on Chornobyl*. It was sponsored by the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus represented by Rep. Mary Kaptur, OH. A number of speakers discussed the human dimension of the disaster; the health, agricultural, and environmental consequences; and the US Government and international response to the Chernobyl disaster.
- Another commemorative event, *Chornobyl: The Next Generation*, a conference at University of Illinois in Chicago, took place on April 29. The main topics discussed were the health/social effects of the disaster on Ukraine and Belarus.
- On September 6-7, 2005, an international conference, titled *Chernobyl – Looking Back to Go Forwards*, was held in Vienna, Austria. The main objectives of the conference were to inform governments and the public on the new findings on the consequences of the accident, and to present recommendations on further remediation of the consequences. The Chernobyl Forum Report – *Chernobyl's Legacy: Health, Environmental and Socio-Economic Impacts* – which has been received with very mixed emotions, was presented at his conf.
- GreenFacts summarizes and interprets the *Chernobyl Forum Report*.

The 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl tragedy was also remembered through the arts. There were photo exhibitions during this timeframe to call attention to the Chernobyl accident. One such example has been put into a photo essay as described below.

- UNICEF marked the 20th anniversary of Chernobyl by putting cameras into the hands of children in Ukraine, Russia and Belarus who are affected by the disaster; an exhibition of the photographs was organized on March 19, 2006 in the Art Gallery of the Palace of the Republic in Minsk.

Chernobyl + 20, Ukraine
Presentation proceedings.

International Chernobyl
Conference, Belarus
*Click on 'Chernobyl' button,
and then Summary of Int'l.
Conference.*



Direct web links

**Board Member
Description and
Application**
*Document detailing
responsibilities and an
application for service.*

**Program Committee
Member Description
and Application**
*Document detailing
responsibilities and an
application for service*

- In April-May 2006, the Ukrainian Museum in New York hosted a multi-media exhibition, *Chornobyl + 20: This Is Our Land ... We Still Live Here*, which chronicled life in areas affected by the accident.
- Throughout the month of April an exhibition titled "*Chernobyl, 20 Years – 20 Lives*," traveled around the globe and was featured in London, UK; Kyiv, Ukraine; Basel, Switzerland; Melbourne, Australia; and Madison, WI, USA.
- On April 19, a photographic exhibition by Yuriy Kossin, *Transgression – The Consequences of Chernobyl*, took place in New York, NY. The exhibition displayed photographs of life in the areas affected by the Chernobyl Disaster.

Some significant, international commemorative events were also held in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia.

- Two international conferences were held in Kyiv, Ukraine. *Chernobyl+20 – Remembrance for the Future* examined the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, while *Twenty years after the Chernobyl accident* focused on minimizing the consequences of the accident.
- In Minsk, Belarus, *20 Years After Chernobyl: Strategy for Recovery and Sustainable Development of the Affected Regions*, took place on April 19-21, 2006, analyzing the possible Chernobyl disaster relief strategies for the next decade.
- International Scientific Conference *20 Years After Chernobyl Catastrophe: Ecological and Social Lessons* took place on July 5 in Moscow, Russia. The conference was dedicated to the scientific, social and political aspects of the consequences of the tragedy.

The events that took place during 2006 brought back the much deserved attention to the Chernobyl-related issues. The international community was once again reminded of the history and complex consequences of the world's worst industrial catastrophe. And while the subject matter continues to raise varying views in the scientific, medical and humanitarian circles almost as much as it had twenty years ago, CofCUSA supports the opinion that much work still remains to be done in mending the aftermath of Chernobyl and commends those who continue to work tirelessly to help the people affected by the disaster.

Join our National Efforts!!

The newly adopted Strategic Plan calls for expansion of the CofCUSA Board of Directors and Program Committees. If you are a compassionate well-informed professional and would like to join our national efforts, you are invited to submit a [Board Member](#) or a [Program Committee Member](#) Application. CofCUSA offers an open application process to ensure that our strategic needs are met by maintaining a balanced Board.

CofCUSA's Board of Directors was previously comprised mainly of CofC organization leaders. Today, in order to attain our strategic goals, we would like to solicit persons with CofC experience and/or professionals who are compassionate about the mission of supporting the Chernobyl children. To find out more about the eligibility requirements and to download an application, please click on the respective link in the 'blue' column on the left. You can also email inquires to Svetlana Krasynska at npconsult@gmail.com.

Please feel free to share this with individuals who you think may be interested.



Wonderful Lives (with apologies to Frank Capra)

Back in 1988, in dire need of gainful employment, I answered an ad for parts help at a place called Belarus Machinery. I only vaguely knew that the company was owned by the Soviet Union and that they sold tractors and I thought working there might be "cool". I started the next day, April Fools Day and while the company has sadly, pretty much disappeared since then, the adventures and friendships it fostered continue to this day.



Over Thanksgiving this past November, I was able to join with friends from Minsk who along with myself, were guests of my friend Priscilla at her home in Virginia. While we don't see each other often, the visits on both sides of the world have fostered the kind of easy friendship that renews itself as soon as greetings are exchanged. We quickly catch up on news of families and life events then get down to the serious business of giggling, story telling and visiting friends. A highlight of the visit for me was the expression on their faces upon attending a Baptist Church with a predominantly African American

congregation. The ladies were astonished at the music, singing and affection shown them by the church members. Quite different from the more reserved Russian Orthodox tradition they come from.

One of the visitors was Dr. Tamara who runs an orphanage in the city of Minsk. We have become very close to her, the staff and her tiny charges. Several of her children have been adopted in the U.S. despite some serious health issues.

One young man in particular has been a special friend along with his mom. Dr. Tamara has not seen them in about 5 years. He had left her orphanage and moved to another in Ivenets before the adoption was actually completed. When he and his mom arrived at Priscilla's early Sunday morning after the Thanksgiving Holiday, she ran out to greet them, anxious to see how one of "her children" was doing in his new homeland. He left Belarus with a condition that contracted his limbs, preventing him from sitting properly, severely clubbed his feet and prevented him from extending his arms.

I was still inside the house looking for my camera when the initial meeting transpired. A few minutes later, Dr. Tamara came in, threw her arms around me and was sobbing. I was at a loss since my Russian is bad. One of the other English speaking ladies came in and I asked why she was sobbing on my shoulder. Was she unhappy? They quickly reassured me that the tears were happy ones since in spite of ongoing medical procedures; the changes in the young man are profound. She knew that his future in Belarus would have been challenging with most families unwilling to adopt a child with severe disabilities. It was unlikely that he would have been able to have the multiple surgeries he has undergone because of the costs involved. Here he participates and excels in multiple sports for physically challenged youths, attends teen dances where he is an enthusiastic dance partner and in general is negotiating his teenage years. He aspires to doing police work, perhaps in a research capacity using computers.

At this time of year, it is important to remember that even the smallest steps you take to reach out to people in friendship, can really change the world. I am a huge, sappy fan of "It's a Wonderful Life" and you really don't know what an impact you make on the world or someone's life by these simple acts. Belarus was part of a world that I was told was a "bad place". It's impossible for me now to hear the name "Belarus" without a silly smile on my face and all the adventures I've had because of that long ago offer of a job at Belarus Tractor. – Debby Tewes, deby@sbglobal.net

"She knew that his future in Belarus would have been challenging with most families unwilling to adopt a child with severe disabilities." Debby is on the left.



"At this time of year, it is important to remember that even the smallest steps you take to reach out to people in friendship, can really change the world."



"There is a story yet to be told..."

This is an opportunity to share your human interest story in working with the Chernobyl children.

2005 CofCUSA Data Report

Reports on more than the number of children who visited in the US. For this report, we took a very basic set of services with standard costs and averaged them across the number of children visiting.

Wiring funds to Belarus

What you need to know before going to the bank!

There is a story yet to be told

Now, we would like to hear from you relevant to something unique about your program. While hosting children is the core of what we all do, we are looking for that special something. To help you get started thinking about what your contribution to this newsletter might be, here are some suggestions:

- how the hosting experience has impacted you
- providing special care to a seriously ill and/or health challenged child
- unique programs offered to the children during their stay
- community involvement in supporting your program (outside of hosting)
- school involvement with supporting the Chernobyl children
- providing humanitarian aid to an orphanage and furnishing/refurbishing their facility
- facilitating medical professional's short-term stays
- adoption of special needs children
- etc., etc., etc. Don't limit yourself to these suggestions!



Debbie Miller would like to hear from you with a unique story for use in a future newsletter. Please email her at pokeydeb1@juno.com. Sharing what you do can be a springboard for another organization to reach out and broaden their program as well. Thanks!

More than Just Statistics!

It is very difficult to quantify all that is given to the Chernobyl children during their summer health respites in the U.S. The compassion and generosity of your charitable efforts is indeed significant, especially when looking at the big picture of all organizations contributing their part.

However, each year the Belarus Embassy asks for a statistical report on the number of children hosted and volunteers assisting, as well as financial support provided through these programs. Every year we do our best to provide an accurate picture of your kindness. In order for these figures to reflect an accurate estimate of the services provided to the Chernobyl children through your programs, this year the Board felt it was important to give an estimate on the amount of pro bono care that the children receive through the very basic, minimal medical/dental/vision services. We know that organization leaders get these services donated; hence, the actual cost of such services is often unknown to you because you never see a bill. Since it is a significant dollar amount when you look at the big picture across the country, we felt it was time to quantify it.

For this report, we took a very basic set of services with standard costs and averaged them across the number of children visiting which amounted to \$977 per child. We feel this average pro bono figure per child is low, but it is quite significant on a national scale and should be recognized. And although not all children receive the same services, we know that some receive a whole lot more than what is included in this average dollar amount. The figure also does not reflect the care and/or treatment for health issues that were discovered while in the U.S.

You can view the 2005 Data Report by clicking [here](#). We will be asking you for assistance with the 2006 figures after the first of the year 2007. The Belarus Embassy has just contacted me about this!! We will appreciate your help on gathering the data!

Before you wire funds. . .

CofCUSA has been informed that a CofC organization leader tried to wire money for a charitable purpose and her bank officials told her that it can not be done pursuant to an Executive Order of President Bush. So, in doing further checking on this issue, we are including a link to this Order that is posted on the U.S. Department of the Treasury Office of Foreign Asset Control's web site. Click [here](#) to read more about it.

