

Q mily Aid Projec SOV σ

Dearest Family, Friends & Fellow-Laborers,

Christmas Hello & Greetings from all of us here at the F.A.P.! We hope and pray that this newsletter finds you happy, healthy and wise--or at least heading in that direction!

Before going any further, we want to send a hearty "THANK YOU" to all of you that participated in any way, large or small, with our recent shipment of Humanitarian Aid to Kosovo. We couldn't have done it without you! Like the threads

in a giant tapestry, each of you was so vital

and important. Although the F.A.P. has been active

for the last 5 years in the Houston area through our SW Houston Outreach Center and assisted in other humanitarian efforts to Haiti, Rwanda, and Guatemala, this relief effort to Kosovo was our first <u>big</u> international project. It was much too big for <u>us</u>, without a <u>lot</u> of "help from our friends

Since we 'threw our hat into the ring' for the Kosovar refugees just over 6 months ago, so much has happened that we felt it would be easiest to tell the story in pictures rather than words. So,

in this newsletter, there are lots of pictures but only a small part of the story. Our staff is very small (most of us are pictured top right) so it was really all the Valories, Ricks, Angels, etc. that helped to make it happen. God Bless you all! You know who you are, and so does He!

The way **we** got involved in Kosovo and the need there reminds me of a story that I heard about a gentleman that lived in the city of Rochester, NY. Now, through Rochester runs the Genessee River, between steep & crooked banks. On one occasion, this gentleman, had just arrived by train from a journey. Anxious to go home & meet his wife & children he was hurrying along the streets, with a bright vision of home in his mind when he saw on the bank of the river a lot of excited men. "What's the matter?" he shouted. They replied, "A boy's in the water!" "Why don't you save him?" he asked.

Isn't that most of our 'initial reaction' to disaster, need and misfortune? "That's just terrible! Why doesn't 'someone' do something to help them? Isn't there some 'governmental agency for that??" Often, there is genuine concern, but we are so busy and overwhelmed by our own 'situation' (job, family, friends, etc.) and its pressing



needs that we can't bear the thought ot having to take on what we 'perceive' as someone else's burden, especially when it is 'on the other side of the world'.



A gift of **Love**, for the lonely; **hope**, for those in despair; a ray of **light** for those that sit in darkness; by simply reaching out to show you care... Nina at a Puppet show for Kosovar Refugees... in Bosnia

B Е A picture of the Kosovo disaster as seen R through the eyes of an Elementary '99 school student here in Houston

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MISSIONARIES AND VOLUNTEERS IN ALBANIAN CAMPS.WITH KOSOVAR REFUGEES







(Pic1,2)ALBANIA..the "land of tents" (Pic.3-6) FAP

Networking' Missionaries visiting and aiding the destitute and 'homeless' Kosovar Refugees in Albania. .. 'little things' and smiles become very 'important'!!-like a toy (Pic.6 & 8) or pair of shoes. (Pic.7) "A merry heart doeth good, like a medicine "





An orphanage in Tirana, Albania

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Although my family and I served as Volunteer Missionaries in foreign countries for over 20 years, The Family Aid Project was and is principally an outreach to help the 'needy' in our own backyard. When news of the mass exodus of refugees from Kosovo began to appear in the media, our hearts were touched but, as many others, we felt, "What can we do? Our resources are so small, how can we help?" Just as with the young man in this story, initially, we wanted to ask someone else to do it, but the urgency of the situation drove us into action.

In our story, the man, without hesitation, cast his suitcase aside & (Continued on page 3)





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(Pic.8) and 'after the show' a toy for each one





oute to Albania God Bless Angi!! (Pic.12&13) Jeff Wells and Kathy Fearn (with her two kids) and one of the 7 area schools that helped to raise food and materials for the Kosovar Refugees -

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FAP STAFF, HELPERS AND DONORS...A 'TEAM EFFORT' - HOUSTON, TEXAS... 1999

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MISSIONARIES AND VOLUNTEERS IN KOSOVO WITH THE KOSOVAR SURVIVORS





(Pics.14 & 16)-Comforting the broken-hearted. (Pic.15) Refugees return Home to Kosovo, many have 'no where else to go (17 & 20) Our men in Kosovo, Norman Cochran-

'at the Albania/Kosovo border' and Nehemiah Berg surveying the destruction (**Pic.18**) Fresh graves (**Pic 19**) Kids-the 'real victims' waiting for someone that cares

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pulled off his coat. He jumped into the stream, grasped the boy in his arms, and struggled with him to the shore. As he wiped the water from the child's dripping face & brushed back his hair, the man exclaimed, "Heaven, it is my boy!" He had plunged into the water to save the boy of somebody else & saved his own son instead. Isn't that the way life really is? In saving others, we oftentimes save ourselves and those we love. Whereas, when we try to put ourselves, personal desires and needs first, we lose ourselves, those closest to us and miss the chance to do something meaningful in the world for someone else. What a shame!

Well, from April through August of this year, our FAP volunteers, friends and staff collected, sorted, packed and

(Pic.23)Jeff Wells, Albert (Kosovar), and 'Jack'-our Albanian translator & friend..(Pic.24) Claire Wells, and Henry Graham, (Billy Graham's cousin) (Pic.25) The Family Singers, Kathy Fearn, and Mike Fischer, (former Dir. of Project Aid Siberia) sing for the Local news media at our 'send off' press conference.. (Pic.26)Valorie Davenport (Our lawyer, and friend.. talks on 'commitment'!!





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shipped (with the capable help and direction of McLean Cargo in Houston) a total of nine 40 foot containers with the shipping generously donated by Lykes Lines. Approximately 300,000-400,000 lbs. of materials were donated by individuals, schools, ministries and religious institutions. Local businesses (employers and employees) also pitched in through their combined giving to make it a real COMMUNITY EFFORT! - **God knows** who you are--and He <u>will</u> repay the care, concern and kindness you showed to those in dire need! God Bless You!

In our 'story', the man pulled his son from the water and it seems that all ended well! I wish I could report that "We got them all 'out of the water' (in Kosovo) and they are safely on dry land!" but such isn't the casethere is STILL SO MUCH TO DO! The containers DID arrive safely to Italy in August. As you can see in the pictures, our missionaries are doing all they can to reach, rescue and comfort the 'drowning' Kosovar in every way possible. However, as of now, much of the aid shipped to Kosovo is still waiting to go in.

Due to the turmoil and violence in Kosovo after the 'Peace Agreement', Italian relief agencies with whom we were working felt it was too dangerous to go in and insisted we wait to give the Peace Keeping Force time to stabilize the region, de-mine as much as possible, and let the situation cool off a bit. During this waiting period many containers of aid have been backed up and some of the aid, (not ours, thankfully) has even filtered out into the "markets" (and dumpsters) of Italy. We have been forced to choose an alternate but costly route into Kosovo. There will be an additional cost of from \$700 to \$1000 per container to get the goods to their destination. In addition to the much needed medical supplies and camping equipment, much of the clothing we have sent is warm children's winter clothing, blankets, etc. We are committed to getting as much as we can into Kosovo by the end of the year, by God's grace! However, we need your help!

We won't rest until the aid is distributed and, if we can get tickets, we're ready to go and escort it in ourselves! Our second daughter, Maya, her husband Tim, and our two grandchildren left on Dec. 7th to serve as missionaries in Croatia and to help on that end with meeting the needs there in whatever way possible—but we need your financial contributions in order to complete our mission. Any donations, small and big, are welcome and needed, and all are tax-deductible. Thanks!

In addition to our International Disaster Relief projects, FAP volunteers assist the Houston Area Chapter of the American Red Cross in local disaster response and help to distribute food, used furniture, clothing, etc. to needy families and missions in the Greater Houston Area. In aid of that effort, we have been given the use of a 2000 sq. ft. office park space in west Houston, (rent free until June 2000), for <u>local</u> family assistance and aid distribution. This facility will help us to be much more accessible to Houston's disadvantaged but, in exchange for its use, we must make 'improvements' to the building, including electrical installation, air-conditioning, etc. The materials have already been donated by local businesses, but we are still in need of approximately \$3000.00 to finish the job, and, as our next 'call' might be someone <u>you know</u> (or "your boy!"-as in the story), will you help us better serve Houston's needy?? Benjamin Franklin once wrote that, "God helps those that help themselves!" but, I have found that God often uses men and women to do it—like you and me!! He has no hands but <u>our</u>'s! Will You??

Thanks for listening! May God Bless you and yours this Christmas and make you a blessing to many. Merry Christmas and Happy New Millennium from us all!



Jeff and Claire Wells for the Family Aid Project Team

Please write us at:

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or phone at: (713) 781-2334 / (713) 781-3525

Please make all checks payable to the *Family Aid Project* but you can designate it to "FAP-Kosovo" or the "FAP-Outreach Center"