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I'm writing to ask if you'd pay for my friends' holiday. A bold request, but I'm sure you'll understand why I'm asking and even why I believe you might like to contribute something.

Blythswood's partners in Europe and Asia work with poor and disadvantaged people all year round. Then in the summer, they say, 'can we take you on holiday?' and away they go to camps in the countryside or by the sea. Why do they do that? To give people a break from hard circumstances, certainly. More than that, camp often leads to spiritual breakthroughs and healing for young people who face huge challenges in their lives. Let me tell you about four of the friends I haven't met but whom Blythswood helped in this way last year.

In Pakistan, Jani went to camp. He's 19 now, but at 14 he lost his parents and was placed in an orphanage. He is passionate about football. At a camp run by Life Through Sports, he learned about fitness, sports psychology, nutrition and technique. He also learned that he was created by God who made him for a purpose, but that like everyone else, he's committed a foul – many, in fact. He has made mistakes called sin. Then he's shown how he can re-enter the field. There is a way back. At camp, Jani put his trust in Jesus, who paid for his fouls. Sport and salvation, they do go together. Jani has returned to the orphanage. Today he's telling other boys at the orphanage what he learned at camp.

Last year your support helped pay for holiday camps for Madalina and Adina. Aged 7 and 9, the sisters are cared for by their grandmother. Moldova has many children who don't see their parents often. It's expensive to come back from central Europe where many of the mums and dads have gone to work, leaving children with grandparents. The effect of this separation is sad to see. I wish that Moldovans, Romanians, Serbians, Bulgarians and others could earn a living at home,



Blythswood supports Christian camps for young people in Europe and Asia



At camp, Jani put his trust in Jesus

but many struggle. The girls' mum has gone to France. Dad has a drinking problem and Grandmother has to look after them.

At camp, the girls enjoy company of their own age, participate in the fun and learn about Jesus. Sometimes there's a maternal figure among the leaders, someone who's maybe not the "wakey, wakey, campers" get up and get going' person, but the 'come here, sit beside me, talk to me' person. Madalina and Adina needed that and they found it. I'm glad they did.

Another person whose holiday your support paid for last year was Misha. Aged 7, he is an Internally Displaced Person from a part of Kherson occupied by the Russians. Now he lives close to Odesa, still under the shadow of war. His mother has been volunteering, helping other refugees to distract themselves from the fact that they're far from home and facing an uncertain future.

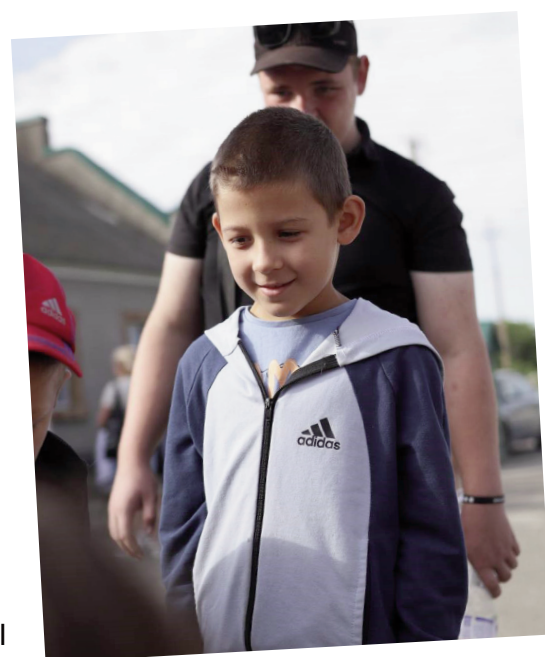
But her own son showed signs of anxiety and isolation. He was in a new city with no friends. She was glad when he was able to attend camp. It's not often you'd want to see a psychologist on your holiday, but Misha had access to one and that helped him. Now he's calmer and less anxious. Heritage Ukraine, our partners in the Odesa region, had a parents' day at camp. Mum could come and see that after just a few days at camp, Misha was getting better.

Let me rephrase my question: will you pay for your friends' holiday? Young people such as Misha, Madalina and Adina, and Jani, really need it more than they realise. After they come back, others can see the difference. Sometimes we're able to change lives for good. When sporting skills are learned, new activities are embraced, grandparents get a rest and anxiety decreases, that's good. At camp, we do see lives changed forever as people learn about Jesus and become one of the great number of 'whoever' people: 'whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life.'

You can be a friend to young people like these by sending a gift for camps today.



At camp, Madalina and Adina found someone they could talk to



Camp helped Misha to overcome anxiety



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Jeremy