"The events in our lives happen in a sequence in time, but in their significance to ourselves they find their own order the continuous thread of revelation." Eudora Welty

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NASHI – The Short Story

WE SAW, WE TALKED, WE ACTIONED

We take you quickly through our ten years…..

In the Beginning – During trips to Ukraine early in the 2000's, it was common to see men being serviced by young girls at truck stops. It was shocking and unbelievable to observe.

2004 - Victor Malarek published the book "The Natashas", a heart wrenching exposition of girls taken into bondage to service men. Savelia and Betti read the book and attended a conference in Edmonton to hear him present the hard truth of human trafficking. Upon returning to Saskatoon, thoughts and ideas were swirling as to "What could we do? How could we make a difference? If we could change one person's life, we could change their world! Wouldn't it be great if we could do this?" They knew people who would be interested and so the kitchen table talks began. Savelia, Betti, Terri, Eugene & Nancy, Stan & Pat all said, "**Yes, we can!"** and became the founding board members. The second time around the table was a brainstorming session for a name. NASHI was chosen, meaning 'OUR' in Ukrainian. This name captured the essence of why the group was forming. We all knew the children needed "OUR" assistance and so it became "OUR" responsibility and "OUR" commitment to do something for them. The logo also illustrates this message as it depicts the loving security of being under the wings of a dove embedded on a rushnyk (embroidered scarf) to symbolize comfort.

Savelia traveled to Ukraine. While there she talked to the director of an orphanage about the NASHI vision. She also sought out children to participate in the production of a fundraising Christmas CD "The Bells of Hope." The then Christian Child Care International (CCCI) provided the voices for the CD. With a donation of a sewing machine we saw the beginning of a trade school; soon additional machines were purchased. The need for computers was identified and became the next focus of our efforts.

October 2004 - The first money-raising event for the trade school in Ukraine took place in at the Odeon Event Centre where we released "The Bells of Hope" CD. The first newsletter was created for the event to tell the story; invite encouragement and support; and, most importantly, to inform people of the atrocities of human trafficking. It was then we realized our purpose was two fold: 1) to change the realities of these young people and 2) to provide education to a broad range of people about the horrors of human slavery. Was this attainable? Those at the table thought it was. We would have two yearly events – a fundraiser event and an educational event.

2005 – At our partnered trade school, youth were acquiring new skills. In Ukraine, a video was produced which captured the reality of human trafficking, girls at a truck stop, as well as our solution of learning skills at the trade school. The first major event was held and called the "Lenten Project" where breads and soup were served. Tickets prices varied and represented items to be purchased for the children. The Director of the Ukrainian Orphanage was in attendance-she was overwhelmed especially by everyone's generosity. Alongside this, SHAW TV produced a 30-minute program about what NASHI was about and what was being done. This interview was aired for 3-4 years and provided media attention drawing people to our events. We developed our own web site. In September 2005, we presented an educational movie entitled *"Lilya 4 Ever"* at the Broadway theatre. This marked the first year of our two undertakings. Brochures and pamphlets were developed. **The ugly truth was being told.**

2006 – Savelia and Betti received the Governor General's People of Courage medal from the then Governor General Michaëlle Jean, recognizing their founding work for NASHI. This was momentous, as it gave acknowledgement and creditability to the work that was being done. Committed volunteers, who purchased their own tickets, traveled to Ukraine to see the trade school. While there awareness workshops were conducted; volunteers also went to a truck stop to see the reality of human trafficking first hand. Commitment was the operative word, our resolve deepened and we all agreed we MUST do more to make a difference in their lives! This Volunteer Tour groups' commitment ultimately led to the development of a stand alone NASHI trade school/safe house which would be known as the Maple Leaf Centre. This indeed was a big year in our development. The first Perogy Paradise was held and the first NASHI DVD, NASHI: In Action was created. The constitution and by-laws were passed at the Annual General Meeting. Victor Malarek had been kept informed of our activities and now actively supported all of our undertakings by giving us his full endorsement.

2007 - The first conference, "Bells of Hope - Reality of Human Trafficking" took place with Victor Malarek as keynote speaker. This was a well-attended two-day gathering with numerous guest speakers. Community awareness campaigns began at the Doukhobor Dugout and Ukrainian Day in the Park (which still continues today) and the UCPB (Ukrainian Canadian Professional Business) golf tournament. All were major fund raising efforts to facilitate our "Raising the Roof" campaign for the construction of an additional floor and all other modifications required to make this a live-in, educational facility. The year ended by having Rev. Bohdan Bilas come from Ukraine to speak at a fundraiser held at the Ukrainian Museum of Canada. He was our connection to the project, which was named The Maple Leaf Centre Project – "Klenovi Lyst".

2008 - A building and property were purchased in Ukraine for our standalone safe house and trade school. Charitable status was registered in Ukraine under Klenovi Lyst (aka Maple Leaf Centre Project). NASHI was listed in the Saskatoon phone book, board roles were defined, and lifetime memberships were introduced. NASHI was invited to make presentations at the Human Trafficking Seminar in Edmonton and to HART (Humanitarian Aid Response Team) in Calgary. In addition, within the RCMP a new branch was formed to deal with human trafficking issues. Hearing of the work undertaken by NASHI, they reached out for assistance. Cst. Elsen Sutherland, Immigration & Passport Section - Human Trafficking Division, was our contact within the RCMP. He accepted our invitation to be our guest speaker at the Fall Harvest Brunch. It was at this time when we decided to focus our efforts on prevention versus treatment as a result of being trafficked. NASHI made it to YouTube with its DVD "Raising the Roof".

2009 - Due to successful fund-raising activities, ground breaking occurred at the Maple Leaf Centre Project. The second Volunteer Tour witnessed this event and actively participated in demolition activities as well as the planting of a Maple tree during the dedication service. Victor Malarek was speaker at the fall conference in Saskatoon.

2010 – The Malarek's, Victor with daughter Larissa, were successful when OMNI, an International television production company, agreed to the production of a full-length documentary about NASHI. The documentary required travel to Ukraine; the film crew also attended Perogy Paradise interviewing volunteers and attendees. "One Perogy at a Time" is still being viewed worldwide including Mexico & India on the OMNI television station and has been released to other television networks as well. It can be viewed on YouTube. Additional fundraising events were held and requests for speaking engagements increased.

2011 - We became part of a national awareness campaign on Human Trafficking by being the Saskatchewan host for Freedom Relay Canada. NASHI continues to host this event as a way of providing education on human trafficking. The "Raise the Roof" campaign ended; donors names are embedded on wooden maple leaves displayed within the Maple Leaf Centre. The Volunteer Tour witnessed this dedication at the Maple Leaf Centre. A second fundraising campaign is launched –"We are Family."

2012 – Hosted "Youth Unchained". This forum on human trafficking, with guest speaker Craig Kielburger founder of Free the Children, saw an amazingly 1100 students from across the province attend this two day event. This sparked the attention of the young people in attendance. Victor Malarek was back in November as guest speaker at "Hot Chilli, Hot Topic". It was also the year we started promoting 'Fair Trade' purchasing. Victims of human trafficking, who are primarily children, are used in the production of items that we use in our day-to-day purchases.

2013 - Denise Heppner, resident of Waldheim SK, took part in *Freedom Climb 2013* to Mt. Everest base camp. Denise took the NASHI flag that she proudly displayed on her arrival at the base camp. NASHI is invited by FBI-NAA Foundation to participate in an international law enforcement summit, "Together Let's Stop Traffick". The objective is to develop a framework and implementation of a borderless resource centre for the benefit of all nations. At an October Saskatchewan Roughrider game Savelia was recognized for demonstrating leadership with NASHI making it to the final stage of the Scotiabank 'Game Changers' competition. At the Maple Leaf Centre, inside renovations were completed, landscaping was done and the garage and power house were built. It is done—ready to make a difference in the lives of unfortunate girls.

2014 – We have GIRLS LIVING AT OUR SAFE HOUSE! -- Their lives will be changed forever, *one at a time, one perogy at a time*! This started as a dream, was realized through the hard work of volunteers, members, and supporters. Continued fund raising efforts for sustainability of the safe house and awareness campaigns will be on going. An example of this will be our involvement in a conference hosted by the FBI-NAA Foundation later this year. The bricks & mortar phase is completed at the Maple Leaf Centre; now the nourishment of education and the security of a family within a safe environment will be our focus. This year marks NASHI's 10th anniversary; some of the events taking place will be Perogy Paradise 9, **The Ugly Truth Forum,** 'Meet at the Peak' Mt. Blackstrap Climb, and a Gala celebration.

Future With your support through the "We are Family" campaign, we change their lives and OURS.

Become a member NOW.

www.nashi.ca

NASHI – OUR Story

We take you through our second ten years 2014-2024…..

WE SAW, WE TALKED, WE ACTIONED

"Everyone on this fragile planet has the capacity to reach out and touch the soul of someone less fortunate. If everyone did this, what an amazing world it would be. NASHI, and its devoted coterie of volunteers, have taken on a daunting task with a deep sense of mission and driving spirit. From Saskatoon, all the way across the Atlantic Ocean to Lviv, Ukraine, NASHI makes an incredible difference in the lives of so many abandoned orphans in Ukraine. They are to be commended for their work and their selfless dedication."
Victor Malarek

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2015 - Official opening of safehouse with six girls. A glorious day indeed!-For many, this is their first experience of a family environment where they will be nourished emotionally and physically. Volunteer Tour attended the grand opening, emotions were high for everyone. Back in Canada volunteers continued with activities as numerous events were happening. Perogy Paradise 10, second Meet at the Peak, assisted with UCPBA's annual golf tournament, produced and published handbook 'NASHIS SOLUTION TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING'. 100% proceeds from the publication of Marion Mutula's chapbook "A Time of Peace" was welcomed. We were successful in finding an office location gathering documents etc into one location was very welcomed.

2016 - Our girls have settled in well to their new world says Director Maria. They are attending school in the village; also received tutoring when needed. We continued to undertake projects that creates awareness of the atrocities of human trafficking by involving NASHI in events such as: the Ruslana Concert, that we hosted- she is a Ukrainian superstar who acknowledged this issue. Awareness at: UCPBA King of Kovbasa event, Lobsterfest via the Rotary Club, Wakaw SK Lion's club bingos. We participated in Ukrainian Day in the Park & Folkfest both in Saskatoon; with our annual Perogy Paradise, we ensured many were becoming more conscious of this very real problem. This year it was decided to begin the development of 'One Perogy at a Time, the Sequel'

2017 - The number of girls in our safehouse continued to increased. When they arrive, each bring a different set of conditions from malnutrition, educational challenges, unable to read, hearing and vision issues. A Volunteer Tour delighted both the girls as well as those on the tour. We continued to create awareness by hosting a Human Trafficking workshop in Yorkton SK. New organizations were partnered with in 2016 continued this year. Perogy Paradise 12 continued as our primary fundraising event that also informed the 450 attendees of trafficking worldwide and locally. Development of 'One Perogy at a Time, the Sequel' has started.

2018 - Sorted through 1000 videos and 6000 pictures that needed to be reformatted for compatibility with the video! Though a huge undertaking, the successful launch of 'One Perogy at a Time, the Sequel' occurred in several cities and on the OMNI Network This video production is available and may be viewed on YouTube on the NASHI channel. It was decided to start a Facebook account to promote the video and provide information about us. NASHI OUR CHILDREN garnished 5000 hits the first year. Email subscriptions now at 900. Folks were asking about T-shirts with our logo, thus another successful undertaking and yet another way to communicate our mission. Victor Malarek visited our girls and was moved by what he saw firsthand, girls flourishing, happy and healthy! Perogy Paradise 13 continued to bring new people to our event; this along with our presentations in Ottawa, Winnipeg, Flin Flon and Regina made for a busy year.

2019 - Volunteer tour participants were so happy to meet our 16 girls; while there, three pedal bikes were purchased-pure pleasure for all! Another first for the girls as they had never had this before. Their bee keeping project is teaching them about the process and how this will generate income alongside that from the orchards and vegetable gardens. Presentations continued in various locations in AB,BC,MB,ON that included the Global Conference in Mississauga ON where Victor spoke. Savelia attended an awareness forum in Turkey. Continued participation at the Rotarian Lobster Fest, Ukrainian Day in the Park and the annual Christmas craftfaire. Hosted 'Enough is Enough' action day in Saskatoon. This year saw awareness taken to the next level with the introduction of the National Canadian Human Trafficking HOT LINE phone number [1-833-900-1010]

2020 – The impact on the pandemic felt worldwide definitely impacted NASHI. With Perogy Paradise cancelled, raffles, on-line auctions, off-sale perogy sales, we were able to keep the organization functioning. In-person monthly meetings quickly changed to online. Creative events like Steve's 'Teddy Bear' sky-diving jump. Amazing! Also, we became involved with Sarcan's Drop & Go bottle return program [our children]. Once again Marion's chapbook "A Time of Peace" with 100% proceeds coming to us. Amazing! An online awareness summit, attracted 22,000 attendees, worldwide. Such wonderful initiatives of continuing on with creating awareness! Website saw an increase of activity with 8500 visits, and email subscribers now at 950. We took the time to catalogue 10,000 pictures.

2021 - Another year that Perogy Paradise did not occur due to the Pandemic. Once again creativity was required; 50/50 lottery ticket sales, four raffles and four online auctions helped cover expenses here and in Ukraine. Our girls continued their studies online; we are happy to say that one of girls, wrote, passed her examination that allowed her to be accepted into university YAY. Our volunteer tour was cancelled, Lobster fest cancelled however events continued online via variety of platforms like Edmonton's Green Light Society having a virtual Gala. Zoom calls to Ukraine continue. Another global summit attracted 20,000 people keeping the message going. Produced a 2022 calendar, three, 20-minute pod-casts created interviewing different 'in-the-know' people [on our youtube channel]. Website visits reach an all time high.

2022 - Removal of restrictions allowed Perogy Paradise to proceed, however Ukraine was invaded in March which caused many issues. Within two weeks, Maria, our Director and mom to the girls, made arrangements to relocate to Glasyszon, Poland [SE of Krakow near the Slovakian border]. Distant learning happened with our school in Stoyaniv. During this time, thousands left on foot carrying what they could. Maple Leaf House is half way between Lviv and the Polish border. Our Maple Leaf House provided refuge to those in need providing a bag lunch and shelter. Zoom calls occurred more frequently. Calendar sales were brisk; an option was to purchase one of Victor's books as well. Launched 'By the Sea' campaign to send our girls to summer camp. Presentations resume in MB, AB, NS, SK. We relocated to a new office in the lower level of St. Joseph's Hall; connected wifi here. Donations are always welcomed, using Help Us Help as a means to reach more people. Website has a new look. With the situation in Ukraine, the traffic to our site increased considerable.

2023 - Successfulness of 'By the Sea' campaign had our girls go to Croatia for a summer camp. They had not seen that much water before and were thrilled by it. Perogy Paradise 16 occurred with the theme, The Fifties – Happy Birthday Sweet 16. Our girls settled into their new location, learning a new language appeared not to have caused much of challenge to them. Two of our girls successfully passed their university examinations, and would proceed to post-secondary education. We continue to support them until they are established in their chosen careers. Volunteer Sydney visited them in Poland. Two short videos were done with CTV. Gala Committee formed to prepare for NASHI'S 20 anniversary. Website upgrades needed to suit todays' needs. Traffic on social media is good. Although our girls want to return home permanently, they understand this is not possible, sadly.

2024 - Major fundraiser was 'AUTO LOTTO' for a chance to win a 2005 Classic Thunderbird that included 50/50 options Fr Ivan's amazing quadrathlon supported three groups, NASHI being one of them, with gratitude we acknowledge his support. A new website was launched using Wordpress. Perogy Paradise 17 themed Disco-70's – very successful theme. Presentations continued with awareness presentations in Edmonton, Calgary as well in Saskatoon & area. Volunteer Bev P. visited our girls delivering gifts along with a lot of hugs from all of us as did Sydney & husband who paid another surprise visit to the girls in Glasyszon, Poland. 20th Anniversary October 11&12, 2024 in St. Joseph's Hall, was a wonderful event that captured our twenty years beautifully. From Ukraine, Director Maria with daughter Olena, as translator, and one of our girls, Nastya were thrilled to speak of their experiences living in the Maple Leaf House and how it changed all of their lives. They were overwhelmed with the entire experience. They continue to live in Poland.

The NASHI PROJECT started as a dream,
the dream continues;
by saving lives, we change their world and **ours**..
DO SOMETHING