

Moldovan Student Sponsorship Newsletter

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THE CHARM OF THE WINTER HOLIDAYS IN MOLDOVA by Angela Arhip

The extravaganza of winter holidays has begun to haunt Moldova, too: Christmas trees, Santa Clauses, wreaths, toys, gifts, etc ... I cannot say that right now the preparations here are as intense as they are in US or France, but the beginning is delightful.

Usually the bustle of these holidays begins a little bit later in Moldova and greatly intensifies towards Christmas Eve. Speaking about Christmas, I need to tell you more. Even we Moldovans are a small country and not very rich materially, we are wealthy spiritually. We have many beautiful and deep-rooted traditions which we celebrate and keep alive.

For example, when I was a child, people celebrated Christmas on the old style on January 7, 8, 9. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the country has changed not only politically and socially, but also traditionally. More and more people celebrate Christmas on the new style, on December 25. And some others, who do not want to upset Christmas celebrate it two times; on the new age and old styles. To be more precise, the majority of people in the countryside still recognize and preserves the old Christmas. For instance, for people of my parents' and my grandparents' age, there's only one Christmas – the one in January. The flurry of preparation begins early; a special cleaning of the house and yard, the butchering of pigs and then the baking in the outside big brick furnaces. When I say pigs, I mean real big pigs raised by people from the countryside that are butchered on Christmas Eve. Housewives use pork to cook appetizing meals. Of course, they prepare other dishes, too. On Christmas Day parents set the table with lush meals and wait for their children and other guests.

This holiday in the countryside has its special charm; its flavor is exquisite. While villages are full of life in this period, the cities are almost deserted and sad on these January days. (January 7, 8 are officially holiday days.) Christmas on December 25, on the contrary, is at its height in cities. New Years (December 31 to January 1) is not less important than Christmas: delicious meals, the traditional cake and champagne at midnight, gifts under Christmas tree, etc. Namely on this day, people give gifts to each other, sleepy children wait for Father Christmas and many of them find the gifts only on January 1 in the morning because

they fall asleep and do not see Father Christmas. They are upset because they missed the Father's visit, but their hearts are softened because of the nice presents left by Father under the Christmas tree. Children usually write letters to Father Christmas asking for a gift or gifts, usually, these are toys. But, it doesn't mean that they always get what they ask for. If they have a bad behavior, Father Christmas doesn't bring anything to them or he brings a very small and unimportant present. Kids are also cautioned that they cannot ask for too much, because Father Christmas is only one person, but he has to rejoice in millions of children and he doesn't have enough room in his sleigh for so many gifts for only one child. More kids and people give and receive gifts at the New Year's night. However, there are some who use to exchange gifts on December 25.

The winter holidays don't stop here. It has its end on January 14. On January 13 Moldovans also celebrate the Old New Year or the New Year on old style. It's a tradition of going to people's houses to sing carols and say special wishes. The hosts reward the singers with candies, "colaci" (a special type of bread), and even money. On January 14 the hosts are again visited. The guests usually bring with them wheat or rice and throw in the host's house wishing them a wealthy year. This grain is considered to be the symbol of wealth and of abundant harvest. That is why people leave the rice and the wheat for the whole day without cleaning the house. I know that the winter holidays are celebrated all over the world and each country has its own charm in making them more magical.

Merry Christmas!!!

Happy New Year!!!

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Please note:

- *If you decide to send a Christmas card and/or a monetary gift to your student, it needs to be in the CAS office by Dec 23. Thanks!*
- *Do you get corporate matching for your donation? Be sure to let Marcy know so we can insure that all steps are completed on our end to receive the corporate funds.*
- *I welcome your input into the program - drop me an email with your thoughts!*

Winter Holidays for the Sponsorship Program Students

"I still believe in Father Christmas. It makes my life more beautiful and sweeter..."

"The winter holidays for me represent new hopes, wishes, dreams and I celebrate them by the fireside and it is so warm and nice..."

It would be a pity to talk so much about winter holidays without saying what they mean for the students of the Sponsorship Program and how they celebrate it. Below are pieces of their answers; they seem to be simple, but they have their own charm:

"For me New Year and Christmas are special. I celebrate with the dearest..."

"I analyze my spiritual state and I consider what I managed to do and what I have to for the next year..."

"I still believe in Father Christmas. It makes my life more beautiful and sweeter..."

"I celebrate the New Year with my friends and as we don't have money to buy gifts for everyone, we meet before the holidays and do the following: we write our names on small pieces of paper, then put them in a basket and everyone takes a piece of paper (the name is hidden). Each of us is supposed to prepare a gift for the person, whose name is in his hands. We keep the name and the gift in secret. During the celebration we have big surprises sharing the gifts with our dear friends..."

"I celebrate the night of New Year with my friends downtown, at the big Christmas tree..."

"Taking into consideration the situation in which I am in, I don't know how I'll celebrate these holidays, but I'd like a lot to celebrate them with my friends and family..."

"I'll celebrate this New Year with my mother and my little brother that I miss so much..."

"The winter holidays for me represent new hopes, wishes, dreams and I celebrate them by the fireside and it is so warm and nice..."

"For me the winter holidays are associated with oranges. I love oranges and they are traditional for us during these holidays..."

Quarterly Student meeting – November 26, 2011

By Angela Arhip

As we are on the eve of winter holidays, we tried to have a special meeting, a party one. We disclosed our experience of how we celebrate Christmas, New Years, etc. Moreover, we managed to make it a special one due to our new coordinator Marcy McHenry and people who shared their generosity with us, those who make donations. So, due to them we bought a small gift for each of our student: a mug and some candies. We hope that it will serve as a souvenir for each of them and the mug will remind them of our program, friends they have here and of course people who are so far, but due to their kindness are so close. I think it was extraordinary; especially after I heard that in our program, there are persons who have never received a gift for the holidays. I wished our gifts had been under a Christmas tree, but I am still happy that we could pleasantly surprise our dear students.



Students toasting with their Christmas gifts

(seated L-R) Vladimir Gavrilita, Elena Croitoru, Laris Garstea, Olga Rusnac, Mihai Gavrilita (can't see his face), Elmira Orozova, Jazgul Orozova, Olga Zaveriuha, Natalia Berejnaia, Angela Orozova, Irina Sunny, Oxana Gutu
Standing (L-R) Nicolae Macari, Ion Cerevatov, Valeriu Frunza, Mihai Pascal, Alexandru Cojevnicov, Maxim Cojevnicov, Andrei Simon, Tudor Proca.
(Other students present but not in the photo.)

Sponsorship student news

Six new students entered our program. Welcome to students:

- Alexandru Cojevnicov: Thanks to the Leander family for sponsoring Alexandru.
- Andrei Simon: Will be sponsored until graduation in 2012 through miscellaneous donations to the Moldova sponsorship fund.
- Natalia Olarasu: Thanks to the Mitrica family for sponsoring Natalia.
- Natalia Bolea: Will be sponsored until graduation in 2012 through miscellaneous donations to the Moldova sponsorship fund
- Tudor Proca: Thanks to the Moore family for sponsoring Tudor
- Irina Sunny: Sponsored by Marcy McHenry

We are especially proud of:

- Oxana Gutu who at the beginning of December will participate in an international song contest in Romania. Much success Oxana!!
- Mihai Galbura who on November 26 performed in a concert specially organized for the parents whose children go to the College of Music.
- Ion Terna who participated on November 26, 27 in a wrestle competition and won **1st PLACE!!!!**
- Artiom Cojevnicov who participated in a volleyball competition in the Christian League in Chisinau and won 3rd place.

Students send holiday wishes to sponsors

Students also have wishes for those who think of them, for those who care for them, for those who make them feel that at a big distance they have a family – for YOU DEAR SPONSORS:

“I wish my sponsor a long and blessed by God life...”

“I wish you much happiness and peace in your house...”

“May you always be in good mood and be surrounded only by dear people...”

“A full year of blessings...”

“May Father Christmas bring you many gifts...”

“A magical Christmas and a prosperous New year...”

“May all sponsors from US have a great Christmas holiday ...”

“Much health, success, and happiness...”

“I wish you prosperity and true friends...”

*Prieteni dragi de pretutindenii,
Astazi in prag de sarbatori,
Va fac urari de sanatate,
De mult noroc si de ninsori....*