

Terry Baugh, President, Mother of Luda

Kidsave

Here Comes the Cavalry!

When I met Luda, she was two years old, with an unrepaired cleft lip and palate. She had lived in a Russian orphanage since birth. Frightened by me, a stranger, she started to cry. I picked her up. But instead of molding to my body she arched her back away from me. I was horrified that this small child had rarely been held. Her memory haunted me until I adopted her. Luda's early neglect led to numerous learning disabilities, small and large motor delays. All of this could have been avoided with just one parent giving her attention she needed from the beginning. At age three Luda started receiving the surgeries and help she so desperately needed. Today she is now a productive college student.

Kidsave is so very proud that USAID and a multitude of federal departments, agencies and offices have joined in developing the US Government Action Plan on Children in Adversity (APCA), supporting children outside of family care and other vulnerable children in the worst situations worldwide. We support the holistic approach that the APCA takes – and the focus on “appropriate, permanent, and protective” family care for all children.

Today we feel real hope that more children like Luda will start in a healthy family, grow up safe, healthy and free from violence, abuse and neglect. Our challenge is to ensure that the APCA's work becomes a tangible lifeline to millions of children -- engaging a cavalry, rather than a few hardy foot shoulders, to lead the way.

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