

Summer 2016



Millers' mailbox

Defining "Home Service"

Answering the Question, "What are you up to these days?"

You've probably heard by now that we are back in the US and are in a phase of ministry transition. We run in to a lot of people that ask the question, "What are you up to these days?" That's a great question, but the answer isn't so simple! We are currently on what SEND calls "home service." Some missions call it "furlough" or "home assignment," but we've determined that no matter what you call it, the time tends to look different for just about every missionary.

Our home service officially began in late January after a full day of uneventful air travel from our apartment in Kyiv. Actually, the process started a couple of months before that, as we packed up or sold our belongings and said many difficult good-byes. Our boxes completed their international trek and arrived safely to Indiana, just a couple of weeks after we arrived. The good-bye process is still on our minds (even as we have been greeted with many warm "hellos" on this side of the world) – this transition is truly bittersweet.

For SEND, home service is a time set aside for missionaries to reconnect with the home office, family, friends, ministry partners, and their home culture, as well as prepare for upcoming ministry. If that sounds very vague, it's probably because it is! The details of a home service are different for each family. Our current "job description" entails spending time doing all of these things in varying degrees, including some relaxation and getting over reverse culture shock. We've enjoyed lots of time with family, sporting

events and dance recitals, conferences, a counseling retreat, spending time with friends, trips to the zoo, several hours at the public library, worshipping with many of our supporting churches, and connecting with groups of young parents in our area. Andy has also been able to invest a lot of time preparing for the new ministry that lies ahead. Some days are quite full of activity and other days get a bit boring when we're all three at home trying to think of something to do! Nevertheless, this time has been very helpful in closing out one phase of ministry in Ukraine and preparing for a new ministry opportunity in mobilization.

Our new role in mobilization is a fully support-based ministry, just like in Ukraine. Home service is also a time set aside for raising additional funding to carry through the next term of service. Missionaries often lose support for various reasons over the course of a term. Cost of living is also recalculated, so our total has increased due to serving in the US. Our funding is approximately \$2,000/month below the goal. If you'd like to know more about how you can join us our ministry team, please give us a call or send us an e-mail using the contact information below.

For more information about fall ministries and mobilization, please be sure to read the article on the next page, *What is "Mobilization?"* Hopefully it will give you a better idea of what we're staying in the United States to do and how you can pray for our family in the months to come.



TOP BACKGROUND: Harvest! We love the view from the mission house!
TOP: Family photo, May 2016, © Erin Geyer Photography
RIGHT TOP: Andy with the SEND display on a mobilization trip to Moody
RIGHT MIDDLE: Sophie helping with our display table after speaking at Lake Missionary Church in Angola.
RIGHT BOTTOM: The SEND campus hosted students from Cedarville University's Intro to Missions course in April. As new members of the mobilization department, we were invited to join them for the weekend.

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What is "Mobilization?"

According to merriam-webster.com, a simple definition of "mobilize" is: *to bring people together for action; to come together for action; to make soldiers or an army ready for war.* One of our first thoughts, and the reaction we have gotten from many others, is that mobilization is similar to "recruiting" – like a recruiter for the army.

For us (and for SEND), mobilization is all about building relationships with people. We like the definition from one of our "Go Mobilize" lessons – "to mobilize is to awaken, excite, inspire, provoke, stimulate, galvanize, and encourage groups of people toward some specific action." It's about meeting with and encouraging people – like Kyle, Ryan, Mike, James, Jon, Ethan, and many, many others – who are interested in reaching the world for Christ. It's about coming alongside them to discover where they are, where God wants them to be, and helping them get there through mentorship and discipleship.

During our time of home service, Andy has had several opportunities to travel with Ron (the current Great Lakes mobilizer, or "missions coach" as they are often referred to) to get a better idea of what mobilization looks like for SEND International. Much of Andy's time will be spent on college campuses, meeting with new contacts who are interested in getting to know SEND and interacting with students who he's previously been in contact with about their interest in global missions. While he's not on campus, he will keep in contact with these students via calls, texts, and e-mails. Andy will also be representing SEND at various missions conferences on college campuses. As of now, Andy will be traveling between Moody Bible Institute, Grace College, Huntington University, and Cedarville University. Ron has already introduced Andy to several key faculty, staff, and students at these colleges during their seven trips together this spring – which will prove invaluable as Andy officially starts the role as "missions coach" in September. Thanks, Ron!

Another part of the role in mobilization will include making initial contact with those who find SEND International via the website (www.send.org). Anyone from the Great Lakes region (Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin) inquiring about SEND will be put in contact with Andy for further information about ministry opportunities and the application process.

Being a missions coach is like a dream come true for Andy – his passion has always been to work with college students in some capacity, and he has a deep heart for missions around the world. Praise the Lord for this wonderful opportunity of combined passions! **In this transition from overseas missionary to US-based missions coach, there are many ways that you can pray for us:**

- Pray for the students that Andy has already met and the ones that he will get to know during the upcoming school year. Ask the Lord to give Andy clarity and direction when working with each student and for good relationships to be formed.
- Pray for the many young people who will begin their senior year of college in the fall. Ask God to guide them as they make important decisions about their future in serving Him.
- There are plenty of mission fields, but few workers. Pray for many new contacts in the coming school year.
- Pray for Andy as he works to sharpen his electronic communication skills via text and e-mail, which will be crucial for this new role and in keeping up with college students.

WHAT'S COMING UP in MOBILIZATION:

There will be many trips and activities added to this calendar as the school year approaches, but this is what we know of currently.

July 17 – 22: Reconnect Retreat with SEND International – Cassie will be assisting with cooking meals for 60+ missionaries who have recently returned from overseas fields and are beginning home service. Andy will be working more with Ron on mobilization, and Sophie will join the children's program.

July 23: Sophie turns 3! We will have a party with family – it's the first time they'll all be able to celebrate with us in person!

July 24 – 28: SEND North America Area Conference in Detroit, MI

July 28 – 29: Mobilization Retreat with all SEND mission coaches, also in Detroit, MI

September 1: Andy officially takes the role as "missions coach"

October 11 – 14: Moody Bible Institute's Missions Conference in Chicago, IL

November 1 – 4: Grace College's Missions Conference in Winona Lake, IN

November 20 – 26: SEND International's Youth Ministry Summit in Bangkok, Thailand – Andy has been helping to plan/organize this conference, but his attendance is questionable with the due date of Baby #2! Sophie arrived a month early, so the doctor isn't sure we'll make it the full 40 weeks.

Mid-December: Baby Miller #2 is expected to make his/her appearance!

January 10 – 12: Cedarville University's Missions Conference in Cedarville, OH

March 28 – 30: Huntington University's "Go Week" Missions Conference in Huntington, IN

Praises & Prayer Requests

- **Praise the Lord** for His bountiful provision during our transition back to the US. We have the privilege of staying in a furnished missions home owned by one of our supporting churches. We also had the funds to purchase a family vehicle and a second car at very good prices. God is so good!
- **Praise the Lord** for family and friends. It has been wonderful to connect with so many people in the time we've been back. We look forward to connecting with even more people in the months to come.
- **Please pray** for Cassie and baby during this pregnancy. We really like our doctor, and the prenatal process has proven to be much less stressful than in Ukraine. Cassie is doing well but is experiencing the normal second trimester tiredness, along with exhaustion from unbalanced thyroid levels. Pray for energy for her.
 - **Please pray** for our housing situation. Living in temporary housing has been a huge blessing and has given us time to look at future options. Pending the sale of our rental property in Huntington, we'd like to buy a house in northeast Indiana (preferably close to one of the colleges where Andy will be working). Ask the Lord to guide us in the process of looking for a home that will suit the needs of our family and our ministries.
- **Please pray** for new ministry partners. Our new role in mobilization is a fully support-based position. Due to some lost support and changes in cost of living, we need to raise about \$2000/per month in additional funds.

Sophia's Spotlight

Sophie had a difficult time watching us pack up our apartment in Kyiv, but her transition to the US went very smoothly – thank you for your prayers for her! She's at just the right age where she's easily adaptable, but at just the wrong age for saying (and understanding) meaningful good-byes. She often talks about our friends in Kyiv, so at least we know that she has good memories of them! In fact, she still asks to pray for one special Ukrainian couple – Marina & Zhenya – almost every night!

Summer has been fun for Sophie. She loves swimming and is quite daring in the water! She also likes trips to the park and the library and keeps us entertained as she's learning to ride her tricycle. ☺ We were able to take a vacation in June with Andy's family to Disney – truly a magical place for a nearly 3-year-old!

Sophie is excited about the new title of "Big Sister," but she isn't quite sure how drastically life will change by the end of this year. ☺ Most of the time, she says that she wants a brother, but follows it up with, "but God has to choose!" She likes to hug and kiss the baby in Mommy's belly. We are pretty sure that she'll make a great big sister!



Left: Watch out! Future "Big Sister" coming through!

Right: Mini Minnie Mouse – ready for a trip to Disney World!