

SIX-YEAR OLD IVAN CAN'T WAIT TO GO TO SCHOOL

The child, whose life story left no one indifferent, every half an hour, asks his grandmother, how many hours have to pass for the first school bell to ring. He is a small, but a smart boy: "I have to study to be able to work". After the story broadcasted on Kanal 5, many generous people and companies helped Ivan and his grandmother Violeta...

Six-year-old Ivan can't wait until tomorrow's first day of school, 1st of September. He will be a first grade student. The child, whose life story left no one indifferent, asks his grandmother every half an hour, how many have to pass for the first school bell to ring. He is a small, but a smart boy: "I have to study to be able to work one day".

Ivan: *I want to work as a policeman.*

Reporter: *Why do you want to be a policeman?*

Ivan: *Because everybody is bad and I will catch them.*

Reporter: *What kind of a toy would you like to have, so that you can play with it in your free time?*

Ivan: *Battery power car.*

The Principal of the school "Tihomir Miloshevski" in the Gjorce Petrov suburb wished him a warm welcome today at school and gave him a backpack and school supplies, something his grandmother cannot afford to buy.

The Principal: *"What the school can promise Ivan is to take care of his continuous education. Starting from this year, we have prepared something for first graders from this social category as a small gift for the pupils – school supplies and a backpack. The school will completely cover his education in the first grade and in the future we will decide what to do next, on the needs",* says the Principal.

Six-year old Ivan, as happy as can be, two days ago said farewell to the Ohrid Lake. He was on a holiday for the first time in his life, and bravely learned to swim all alone. His holiday was financially supported by the humanitarian organization "Milosrdie".

Ivan: *I was bathing, diving, swimming...*

Reporter: *Who taught you to swim?*

Ivan: *I did it myself; in the big, deep pool.*

After TV Kanal 5 broadcasted the story, many generous people and companies helped Ivan and his grandmother Violeta. The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy will donate them one-time financial assistance of MKD 30.000, while the Center of Social Care – MKD 4.000. Ivan is dressed up from head to toes thanks to the donations. He got a tablet and many other toys. Starting from tomorrow, many companies will renovate the old house and the bathroom. On the other hand, Violeta is especially happy because her son was employed in “Makoil”.

Violeta: *“The house will be repaired, both on the inside and on the outside with additional isolating material. They will make a room for Ivan. “Alkaloid” will repair the bathroom, and “Makoil” will take care of the house. This is where Nikola works as well. He was given a job and says that he is content. I am very happy for both Nikola and Ivan.”*

Ivan lives with his grandmother and his uncle. His mother left him, while his father is in prison. He has learnt from an early age that life is difficult. The light in their home will not last long. If they do not pay the bills he will continue eating and writing by candlelight. When we saw him the first time, his wish was to get ice cream. The ice cream cones are his favorites. Today, even his eyes laughed. We wish him a successful start at school and a happy and carefree childhood.

KANAL 5 VISITS LITTLE IVAN FOR THE NEW YEAR

I am very happy during the holidays, because my grandmother always prepares my favorite meal, sunny side up fried eggs, a hot dog and my absolute favorite - kebabs.

Six-year old Ivan told us how he would spend New Year's Eve. The boy, who six months ago wished to try ice cream in a cone for the first time in his life, leaving nobody indifferent, today in front of TV Kanal 5 camera, repeated his wishes and thanked everyone who helped them. People did not forget this dear boy; our viewers had sent him some money for the New Year holidays. He gave the money to his grandmother to buy everything they need. He will help his grandmother Violeta to prepare the meals for New Year.

Ivan: *I know how.*

Reporter: *Did you learn the recipe from your grandmother?*

Ivan: *Yes. You put the kebabs to fry and they will be ready.*

Reporter: *Where do you fry them?*

Ivan: *In a pan.*

Reporter: *What do you put in the pan?*

Ivan: *The kebabs, the meat...*

It is humble in their home. He received a small Christmas tree and a bauble as a present from friends. After several donations, the house was refurbished – they have new windows, house appliances, furniture, but there is still moisture.

Violeta: *“The floor is concrete; the house does not have any isolation. We are looking for some good person to help, at least solve the problem with the floor... I have submitted the documents for welfare support, but the money has still not been transferred. I received one-off financial assistance, and I've bought a tap in the kitchen, stove pipes and that was all the money.”*

Ivan, like any other child, has wishes for Santa Clause, he wants a battery powered car.

But, this is his true wish:

Ivan: *I want my father to come for the New Year.*

Reporter: *Have you seen your father?*

Ivan: *Yes.*

Reporter: *What did you tell him?*

Ivan: *I told him – will you get out for New Year? He told me he didn't know.*

His father is in the prison “Idrizovo” for illegal transfer of immigrants. Ivan and his grandmother hope to see him for the holidays. Ivan lives with his uncle and his grandmother.

Violeta: *To be allowed to come home at weekends.*

Reporter: *To how long was he sentenced?*

Violeta: *He was sentenced to 6 years and has been in jail for 2 and a half years.*

Reporter: *On what grounds?*

Violeta: *The migrants.*

Ivan goes to first grade and he likes school. On this occasion he sent greetings to his friends, but he also made a promise to his teachers.

Reporter: *What do the teachers tell you?*

Ivan: *They tell me to stay quiet.*

Reporter: *Aren't you already?*

Ivan: *I just played at the desk.*

Reporter: *Will you promise the teachers for New Year that you will be better?*

Ivan: *I will.*

YOUNG IVAN AND HIS GRANDMOTHER SURVIVE WITHOUT ANY HELP

In the decaying mouldy old house, the lively and cunning eyes of six-year-old Ivan welcome you to the room. He starts to tell his stories about his games and wishes, which no one can make come true. He wants a children's room, a tablet and a computer. He has been living in this house with his grandmother and his 18-year-old uncle. For years now, the 58-year-old Violeta has been managing to survive with the help of her daughters and neighbors. The Catholic Church has not forgotten them as well. Her age and rheumatism forced her to seek help through television.

She stopped her heavy sighs and started telling her life story.

Violeta Stojanović: "His mother left him when he was a baby and remarried. I've been taking care of him ever since he was very little. His father is serving a seven-year sentence in the "Idrizovo" prison for trafficking migrants. He has been in prison for two years now. We have no income. Neighbors give us food."

Reporter: How much money do you spend in a month?

Violeta Stojanović: Well, my daughter from Gostivar sends me 500-1,000 denars. We save. This money is for him, for food."

They have been living without electricity for a year, because of unpaid debt of MKD 320,000. Their water supply might be cut anytime now. Violeta neither receives welfare support, nor pension. The only light is the candle, and they save it. It burns only when Ivan is having dinner. Their only hope is that her 18-year son, who finished high-school for professional cooks, will start working and those who can help them repair the decaying house.

Violeta Stojanović: He is looking for work. We are asking for help ... for the electricity, for water..."

Reporter: Why can't you receive pension benefits, you are 58-years old?

Violeta Stojanović: I and my husband were not married, he did not want to marry. We were cohabitees and spent 20 years together. You see that mini gas stove over there? We usually fry something there to eat. We live in difficult conditions."

Ivan is happiest when his grandmother prepares him fried eggs and sausages. He wants to ride the biggest truck in the world when he grows up.

Ivan Stojanović: *"I want to eat ice cream from a cone, the one that costs 20 denars. I haven't I tried that one ..."*

The grandmother and the grandson stayed in the house. She hopes to raise Ivan in better conditions, without any mould and bugs under the carpet. Ivan promised that when he grows up he would take care of his only grandmother Violeta.