

About Us

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The members of the CCOC office are asked to spell Chernobyl dozens of times each day by people scattered throughout America. . In 1986, a nuclear reactor blew up. People died instantly, the government announced that the radioactive debris falling was actually snow, and cancer rates and birth defects skyrocketed; and yet, people are still asking how to spell Chernobyl.

The impact of the nuclear meltdown caused a global reaction. People in the region suffered physically, mentally, and financially, people outside of the region suffered from nuclear panic. Today, two decades later, there are few who remember.

On April 26, 1986 Chernobyl nuclear reactor four exploded, the result of a test gone dreadfully wrong. That moment marked the worst nuclear radiation the world has yet encountered. The years passed and, as the children of the Chernobyl region began to mature, the affects of the radiation became increasingly apparent.

By 1990, Chernobyl reached epidemic proportions. The earth, air and water cycled radioactivity through every part of the Chernobyl ecosystem; food, drinking water, and oxygen were and continue to be radioactive vehicles forcing its way into the bodies of innocent children. Immune systems were shattered; premature death became a grim reality. And yet, people are still asking how to spell Chernobyl.

“C-H-E-R-N-O-B-Y-L.”

In that same year, 1990, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, stood up for the children who could neither physically nor financially stand for themselves. He called upon a group of his students to establish Chabad's Children of Chernobyl (CCOC).

This group united in one paramount goal that has not been altered— to rescue the children of Chernobyl, bring them to Israel permanently, and to care for them fully once they began their new chapters of life. From a humanitarian perspective, the process is simple. From a legal perspective, it is a constant battle. The bureaucratic red tape in the former Soviet Union is as difficult to penetrate as the iron bars of a jail cell; but, the CCOC staff and supporters have worked tirelessly and against huge odds to guarantee the children's safety. CCOC is the only organization in the world to bring children out of the contaminated areas permanently.

Temporary “cleansing vacations” from the contaminated region help to an extent, but permanent evacuation is the only option for the most complete recoveries. CCOC understands that there are also children who cannot or will not leave the Chernobyl region for a variety of reasons; medicine, medical equipment, therapeutic aids, and other needed items are airlifted into the contaminated areas to help those who remain there. Additionally, CCOC has trained local physicians to specialize in radiation-induced illnesses and has built a mammography clinic to help combat the artificially high rates of breast cancer in the area.

“C-H-E-R-N-O-B-Y-L.”

Today, the situation in Chernobyl has worsened. The sarcophagus built around the reactor to confine the radioactivity is cracking under pressure; the whole structure can tumble if the cracks continue to grow. If this scenario occurs the result will be more destructive than the original meltdown in 1986. The fractures are hazardous in and of themselves as they have allowed rainwater to seep in, which allows the semi confined contamination to enter the drinking water when the rainwater flows out. And yet, people are still asking how to spell Chernobyl. Radiation lurks in the drinking water, the soil, the cattle, the milk, the food and the air; the longer the children remain in this radioactive environment, the longer this cycle is pushed forward.