

March 29, 2022

Dear Sponsors, Donors and Friends of **The TOUCH Project**,

We continue to be overwhelmed with the support from so many people, businesses, and organizations on behalf of our efforts with the refugees in Uzhhorod, Ukraine. This has been gratifying to our friends and colleagues in Uzhhorod whom we have known for decades. They know that we care.

To date, donors have contributed **\$189,000** at the Citizens Bank “Uzhhorod Refugee Fund” over a period of four weeks after the account was opened on March 3, 2022. Of that amount, **\$47,000** has been delivered and received by our Uzhhorod Refugee Team in Ukraine. In addition, nearly **\$39,000** has been raised through GoFundMe account. Thank you for being the reason that **\$228,000** has been raised for the refugee efforts in Uzhhorod, Ukraine in less than one month!! Thank you.

We will continue to raise money that will help with the refugee situation in Uzhhorod. Our sister city remains free from air strikes although the air raid sirens go off just about every day. That is because cities like Lviv are being hit in Western Ukraine. We’ve been told that the United Nations office in Kyiv has relocated to Uzhhorod. As the most western city in Ukraine, and bordered by 2 NATO nations in that area, Uzhhorod is a safe haven for refugees fleeing from war torn areas. This scenario will not go away very quickly. Please continue to share these ways to donate with your friends.

**[DONATE TO THE UZHGOROD REFUGEE FUND](#)**



- The **GoFundMe account** -This is the link to share with all: <https://gofund.me/a28dca8d>
- Checks and cash can also be dropped off or mailed to:  
**Citizens Bank- Circle Branch**  
**978 NW Circle Blvd., Corvallis, Oregon 97330**  
Please make checks payable to: **Uzhhorod Refugee Fund**  
Note that due to the emergency nature of this fund, these donations are **not tax deductible.**

### **MESSAGE FROM DR. PAUL KOLESNYK**

Dr. Paul Kolesnyk has been a great friend to the Corvallis Sister Cities Association. He first came to Corvallis as a young Family Practice physician in 2013. Over the years, he has developed Family Practice in Western Ukraine and is now the Director of the Family Practice Training Clinic at Uzhhorod National University. He has always welcomed members of the Corvallis Sister Cities Association or The TOUCH Project delegation when they visit Uzhhorod and many of us have benefitted from his wife, Dr. Natalie Kolesnyk's delicious Ukrainian cooking. He has also been helpful with medical concerns with children in The TOUCH Project. Dr. Mark Rampton and Dr. Kolesnyk have partnered on many medical programs and projects over the last 20 years. Paul (Pavlo) and other members of the Uzhhorod Refugee Fund Committee including Vasyl Chubar (TOUCH Project Director in Uzhhorod), Arpad Kron (President of the Uzhhorod Sister Cities Association), and Victoria Kundryk have been working to ensure that your donations get to the right place. This is a photo of Paul with the tubs and suitcases filled with supplies for the refugees and transported by Sabra and Randy Killen this past weekend to the

## Uzhhorod Refugee Team in Ukraine.



Here is a poignant message sent yesterday from Dr. Kolesnyk with his personal perspective:

Dear beloved Corvallis Community,

It's more than one month of having the terrible experience of living in war for our country. Though it's peaceful and meanwhile quiet in our God blessed Transcarpathia region, family and children are being awakened almost every night from alarms of possible bombing which is being done all over Ukraine. Our day time is being broken because of alarms almost every day. The coming future is unpredictable. The sky has still not been protected from bombing which was expected from EU. Though we try to keep patience and to be strong despite the disaster.

Our volunteer groups are helping refugees that are coming and coming to escape bombing of their households. Our residents and doctors work hard and long hours doing their routine work and their volunteer work. In this hard time, your help is coming and is like a blessing for our people. With your help, we can get medical help and household items for the refugees and vulnerable people from the community.

Yesterday I consulted a lady from Mariupol: she came to Uzhhorod with 2 small children after 25 days of living in hell which has now

become their beautiful city at the seaside. They lived without electricity, water source, suffering from bombing and she was scared and praying in her ground floor. She cooked meal for her and her kids on a fire, getting water from the springs in her yard. No shops, pharmacy, medical support. Terrible. Here in Uzhhorod, we are able to provide her better living conditions using your funds and supplying 10 shelters with ovens, washing machines, refrigerators, and other items. In a few days all refugee shelters will have these goods due to your help! And she and her children can now receive medical care, also.

We thank you all for your support and help. Let's hope for the best in a coming future.

Warm regards, Paul Kolesnyk

### **REFUGEES IN UZHGOROD**

Hannah Bittner Zurjanova who is originally from Corvallis, Oregon, has been in Ukraine since mid-March with her husband, Misha (US Citizen born in Ukraine), bringing supplies to the Ukrainian soldiers and to Misha's family members and others in Uzhhorod. Hannah shared the following regarding the refugee situation: "There are TONS of people here... it feels very crowded, in comparison to usual times. It feels "safe" but I think it's also important to remember things can change in a moment. There are air sirens every day or every other day, but most people don't get into bunkers if there's only one siren... two in a row indicates you need to hide immediately. But everybody has a bunker, a basement, or a plan for where to go. But definitely LOTS of people and lots of traffic! Everybody I know is involved in volunteering in some way." This is a photo of the refugees coming to register before being assigned to a shelter.



## **KILLENS ARRIVE IN EASTERN EUROPE!**



Note from Alice: Sabra and Randy Killen arrived at the Portland airport on the morning of March 24<sup>th</sup> with ten pieces of luggage to take to Ukraine. These suitcases and tubs included items for health care needs for the refugees including 20 stethoscopes, 24 otoscopes, 24 wrist and ankle braces, 30 tubes of triple antibiotic ointment, steroid cream, coban, ostomy supplies, medications, burn cream, pressure bandages, wound seals, blood pressure cuffs and other items. Dr. Kolesnyk is working with his resident physicians to visit the refugee centers and these individual otoscopes and stethoscopes will help them with health care delivery. Other suitcases and tubs included 4 dozen pairs of warm socks,

containers of vitamins, eye drops, nose drops, bandages, 28 waterproof mattress pads, hand warmers, band aids, two dozen toothbrushes, over-the counter cold, cough, flu and stomach relief meds, underwear, 10 sets of walkie talkies, 15 hygiene kits, 17 coloring books and boxes of crayons, and much more for the refugee centers and refugees. And one of the most precious items in the suitcases were drawings made by students in Corvallis schools, a Girl Scout Troop and children in Yakima, Washington. They will be distributed to children at the refugee centers, also.

When they arrived at the airport, a Delta agent saw the Sister Cities' "Stand with Uzhhorod" labels on the tubs and waived all the fees for the baggage. They had a 40-minute layover in Seattle and were met at the gate by a Delta employee who took them in a cart to their next gate and assured them that Delta would make sure all ten suitcases/tubs made it onto their plane despite the short time connection. And they did, arriving in Budapest safely. Randy and Sabra rented a van at the airport and met up with Zita and Istvan Bathori-Tarsi who now live in Budapest. Then they headed to Kosice, Slovakia which is about 60 miles from Uzhhorod. Their hotel room in Kosice became their headquarters as they continued to communicate with Uzhhorod Refugee Team members and TOUCH Project (Take One Ukrainian Child's Hand) program leaders to determine needs in Uzhhorod. They have spent the last few days not only transferring their suitcases to a woman, named Ruslana, who helps with the Uzhhorod Refugee Team. Ruslana drives a van over the border and has picked up the suitcases plus many other items that the Killens have bought in Slovakia for the various sites where refugees are living. These purchases included baby food, diapers and wet wipes, 32 blankets, 3 sleeping bags, 22 pairs of children's shoes, 3 children's backpack, 7 pillows, over 170 rolls of toilet paper, 9 microwaves, six refrigerators, 4 mattresses, 6 irons, 9 teapots, 1 washing machine, soap, a coffee maker and many, many boxes of food. Though many of these

items are still available in Uzhhorod, inflation is rising and the prices for products are often cheaper in Slovakia. One of the items that is very difficult to find in Uzhhorod right now are mattresses. And these are essential for the refugee centers. So yesterday, the Killens drove their rented van back to Budapest and bought 46 mattresses and the last 9 mattress covers at IKEA! They are miracle workers!! Those donations to the Uzhhorod Refugee Fund are making this happen and bringing nourishment, comfort, warmth, and civility to the lives of the refugees. This is what the back of a van looks like with 46 mattresses! Thank you, Killens. Stay safe.



### **WORK OF THE UZHGOROD REFUGEE FUND TEAM**

Dr. Kolesnyk and his team have been active meeting and determining needs as he described in an earlier email to physician colleagues in many countries outside of Ukraine: *“We are working together with an active group of volunteers from Uzhhorod side of the Sister-Cities Association “Corvallis - Uzhhorod” to provide aid for the displaced persons (refugees) who were settled in 10+ shelters in Uzhhorod. We had a meeting to brainstorm the ideas and define the most efficient ways to use the “The Uzhhorod Refugee Fund” to encompass as many people as possible.*

*We agreed that focusing on the biggest shelters that accommodate at least 50 DPs (actually, it's more than 100 and up to 400 DPs) would make most sense. Usually these shelters are set up in communal buildings such as public schools, university dormitories, and sports arenas. Not all the buildings are equally comfortable*

*and equipped, sometimes basic amenities are missing.*

*The shelters are running 24/7 and usually people who are in a really tough situation end up there. Of course, there are thousands of those who simply relocated to Uzhhorod and Zakarpattya and can afford to rent a place and continue to live a regular life.*

*Whereas for others becoming a registered refugee and settling in a shelter is the only option to get a place to sleep, shower, do laundry, and have hot meals. Even though the shelters coordinate their work with the volunteers and the Uzh Humanitarian Aid Center, there is always something they need - cookware, washing machines, kitchen appliances, bed linen set, extra food etc.*

*Over the past weekend, separate teams of our active group visited the biggest shelters in town to assess the conditions there and define the needs they have. We learned that many shelters don't have enough washing machines to do laundry for 100+ people or they break down rather quickly because of working non-stop. Others ask for fridges to store food or an oven and microwaves to cook. so, these are the needs we focus on working on at the current stage.”*

With this in mind, the Uzhhorod Refugee Fund Team purchased items for 12 of the Refugee Centers that are currently hosting over 2400 refugees/displaced persons. One of these locations (a sports arena) had 500 displaced persons but no kitchen and one shower. The school for the deaf has 80 additional displaced individuals. These are the items purchased during the last 2 weeks:

- 9 microwaves
- 6 refrigerators
- 2 stoves
- 19 washing machines
- 8 electric kettles
- 4 irons

- 18 cooking pots
- 2 pressure cookers
- 2 freezers

Hopefully you are getting a picture of the work that is happening on both sides of the border, utilizing your donations to the Uzhhorod Refugee Fund. They are all heroes and helping those in very vulnerable situations. At the same time, many professions in Uzhhorod have been forced to take a cut in pay due to the funds needed to maintain the military. This is not an easy time for anyone in Ukraine.

### **GOODNESS CONTINUES TO PREVAIL IN THE MIDST OF WAR**

Despite the ugliness of war, people around the world keep reaching out to support Ukraine. We mentioned many of these heartwarming stories in our last update. Here are a few more:



Near Tillamook, Oregon is a small community named Cape Meares. Resident Ellen Steen writes a column about news in Cape Meares entitled “Fenceposts.” In the March 29<sup>th</sup> column Ellen let local residents know that one way to help support the thousands of refugees in Ukraine is by donating to the Uzhhorod Refugee Fund in Corvallis, Oregon. Merrie Ziady, who was raised in Corvallis, had shared with Ellen about this opportunity. And to date, the residents of Cape Meares have donated \$600! Thank you, Cape Meares!



One of our sponsors and donors to The **TOUCH** Project and the Uzhhorod Refugee Fund is Gaia (PJay) Peterson. Gaia volunteered many years ago in Uzhhorod with the Peace Corps and

worked specifically with the children with disabilities at the Rehabilitation Center, Path of Life. To this day, she maintains close contact with those she met in Uzhhorod and was a **TOUCH** delegation member in 2019. She now divides her time between Mazatlán, Mexico and Laredo, Texas. One of her friends in Mazatlán is a Canadian woman works with young girls who have been abused. Here is Gaia's story, "These 5 girls, who live together in a home for abused girls in Mazatlán, are learning to sew. They make coasters and coin purses and glass cases and wallets, which they sell to support themselves. Their teacher is a good friend of mine. She is a Canadian. These beautiful young women have donated 1000 pesos to Ukraine. Their teacher and I have matched their donation. I am just so touched that these girls, who had to leave their homes because of abuse, want to reach out to the people of Ukraine to show their love and support! Isn't that amazing! I just sent \$150 to the Uzhhorod GoFundMe site." Thank you to the five young women, their teacher, and Gaia.



As mentioned in the last update, two teenage sisters from Corvallis, 16-year-old Alessandra Bakker and 13-year-old Isabella Bakker, wanted to do something to help the refugee situation in Ukraine. They have created beautiful posters and note cards. Local artist, Sharon Rackham-King donated paper and supplies and printed the posters and note cards, free of charge with all proceeds going to the Uzhhorod refugee Fund. We wanted to feature these beautiful pieces of art once again:



“Rise” by Alessandra Bakker, age 16



“Field of Hope by Isabella Bakker, age 13

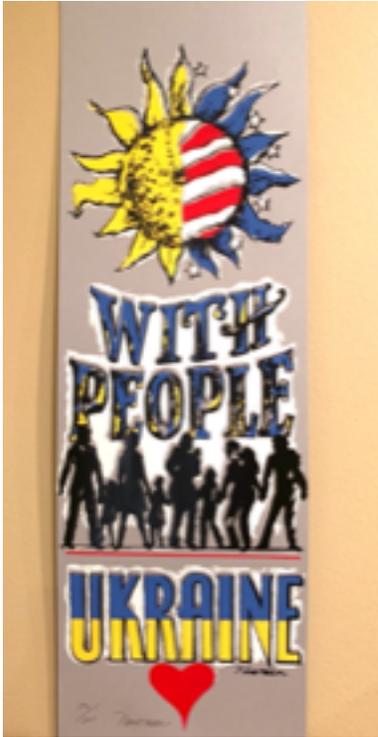
Prints (8x10) are \$30 and 4 notecards of both scenes are \$25. *Attached* to this email is an order form for you to use to purchase either the prints, notecards or both. They are also available to purchase at Visit Corvallis at 113 SW 3<sup>rd</sup> in downtown Corvallis. Thank you, Sharon, Alessandra, and Isabella.



You have two more days (until the end of March 31) to shop at the First Alternative Natural Foods Coop in Corvallis at one of their two locations- 1007 SE 3<sup>rd</sup> or 2855 NW Grant Ave. They will be donating all contributions that are made by patrons to the Uzhhorod Refugee Fund and matching those donations up to \$1000. Thanks to the Coop owners!



We can now unveil the symbolic and memorable image created by silkscreen artist Earl Newman of Summit, Oregon. As we shared earlier, Earl created the Monterey Jazz Festival Posters for over 50 years in California. Now in his 90s, he wanted to create a piece that showed solidarity with Ukraine and those millions of people displaced because of the war in Ukraine. It’s a work of love.



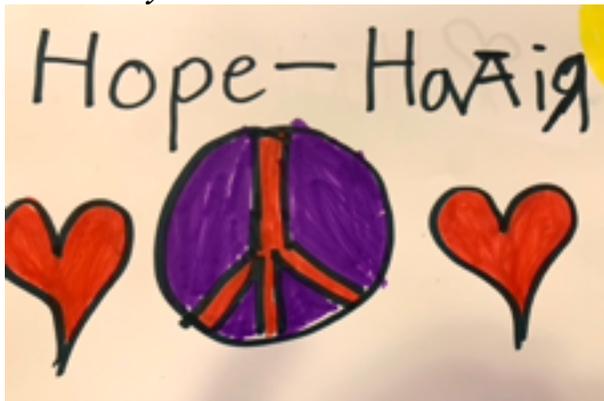
The prints were hand silk-screened at his studio in Summit with the help of friends. Earl has donated 200 prints, with all proceeds going to the Uzhhorod Refugee Fund. Each print is signed and numbered.

- The prints numbered 1-20 will be nicely framed and sold for \$1000.
- The prints numbered 21-200 will be sold for \$100.

Several of the prints at both prices have been sold already. Attached is an information flyer. If you would like to purchase a print, email [standwithuzhhorod@gmail.com](mailto:standwithuzhhorod@gmail.com) or go to the sister city website: [https://sistercities.corvallis.or.us/earl\\_newman\\_print/](https://sistercities.corvallis.or.us/earl_newman_print/) Prints numbered 20-200 are also available at the **Corvallis Arts Center**, 700 SW. Madison Ave., Corvallis, Or. 97333. See the *attached* flyer about the Newman print.



School age children in Corvallis continue to draw pictures for the refugee children. Tomorrow, March 30, KPTV in Portland will feature some of the children at Adams School who are creating artwork to go in the next suitcase traveling to Ukraine. Laura Rathja is the English Language Teacher at Adams Elementary in Corvallis. She shared the following in regards to the experience with students drawing pictures to send to Ukraine in suitcases which the Killens carried over last week, *“The drawings have already brightened the lives of teachers and students here! I have been in several classrooms as kids made them, and it was such a good way to discuss the struggles happening in Ukraine and how we can take action in some small way. We have a few students from Ukraine at our school too, and I know it was huge for them, to be able to share their perspective and their language (telling us how to pronounce the words you sent!) and know that we stand in solidarity.”*



Wishes of Hope and Courage from Corvallis students.

## **NEW SPONSOR FOR THE TOUCH PROJECT**

Before the war broke out, The TOUCH Project updates were used to share the activities of the over 400 children who are in the program. The war has closed Public School #14 and limited the activities of the New Family Center. All four program sites, including the Pavlovo Farm Home and Path of Life for Children with Disabilities are sheltering refugees. But our sponsors and donors continue to care for these children and young adults. We will continue to support them in their efforts, also. The Killens are keeping close contact with the program leaders and children during their time in Eastern Europe, though they may not be able to actually travel into Ukraine. Texts, phone calls, Facebook, messenger and other means of communication are happening daily.

**We would like to welcome our latest sponsor/donor in The TOUCH Project- Bob and Sandy Bennett of Castle Rock, Colorado.** Thanks for joining the program. Please see the list of all the TOUCH sponsors and donors *attached*. (Note these individuals are separate from the Uzhhorod Refugee Fund donors although many of you have contributed to both).

We yearn for the day when this update will be all about the TOUCH kids and their wonderful leaders in Ukraine!

Sincerely,

Alice Rampton, Co-Director

*the Ukraine border next to Uzhhorod)*

The TOUCH Project

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