



Families gather goods to ship to war-torn Ukraine

By Stephanie Preweda

For Digital First Media

By definition, the word “community” means a group of people living together in one particular area or place.

Ukrainians are giving a new meaning to the word “community” as they come together from all over the world to help those being directly impacted within Ukraine.

Metro Detroit families are getting involved with helping the Ukrainian community.

Roman Zubar of Bloomfield Township is one of them. He’s an active member of the local Ukrainian community and said the Detroit chapter is sending “anything that would afford them (Ukrainians) a normal life.”

“These people have left home and are living in tents and whatever other makeshift shelters,” Zubar said.

“They have been involuntarily moved.” Zubar’s parents came to America from Western Ukraine near Lviv in 1949, while the country was still part of the Soviet Union, through Ellis Island in New York and ended up in Detroit through the auto industry.

The global organization Save Ukraine Now, or SUN, was founded to provide for soldiers, volunteers and families who are literally in the line of fire of Russia’s invasion — particularly the eastern cities of Donetsk and Luhansk that border Ukraine and Russia.

According to SUN’s website, 5 million people have been affected in those two cities alone, while 1.2 million people have been relocated within Ukraine.

From April 2014 to April 2015, at least 6,225 people have been killed and 15,511 have been injured in Donetsk and Luhansk.

Different city chapters of SUN have been coming together to donate hygiene products, clothes, shoes, children’s toys, home goods, medical supplies and more.

The Detroit chapter of Save Ukraine Now was launched this past spring and since then has collected donations to fill about 2,000 boxes.

Volunteers at the Immaculate Conception Ukrainian School in Warren packaged the donations.

The first shipment of over 600 packages was loaded this past week and blessed this past Monday at the school. The boxes will be ready to be sent by the end of July.

According to Zubar, the packages will be sent to Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, and from there will be distributed out to families and soldiers as needed.

In addition to SUN, the American Ukrainian Medical Foundation (AUMF) was recently in Ukraine distributing medical books to doctors and those on the front.

The AUMF is a nonprofit organization founded in 1996. Their mission is to translate and publish American medical textbooks and dictionaries into Ukrainian for medical facilities, schools and libraries in Ukraine.

Their most recently translated book is "Emergency War Surgery," written by multiple military surgeons.

A Ukrainian surgeon in Texas contacted the president of AUMF, Lubomyr Jachnycky, from Rochester Hills, about the project.

"I was contacted by Dr. Sergiy Nesterenko, an orthopedic surgeon in Texas, who indicated that the U.S. Army had granted permission for the publication of the EWS book in Ukrainian and asked that AUMF take over the project," he said.

Jachnycky then reviewed the book, which was revised in 2013 and focuses on the latest practices and procedures employed in orthopedic surgeries on the battlefield.

"This book of state-of-the-art procedures appeared ideal for AUMF entering into the publication of military medical textbooks because it also was filled with graphic information in treating wounded soldiers," he said.

Jachnycky has family in the Ukrainian cities of Lviv, Ternopil and Chortkiv.

From there the book was translated from English to Ukrainian and then from Ukrainian to English.

Communications Director of AUMF, Dr. Boris Leheta M.D., from GrossePointe Park, spent a week in Ukraine in June presenting and distributing 2,000 copies of the book for free.

Leheta's family resides in the Ukrainian city of Lviv.

Hard copies were given to medical universities and hospitals while soft cover copies were given to those directly in the trenches on the front line as well as medical volunteers.

Leheta said the biggest compliment he received while presenting the book was, "the separatists called us wanting 20 copies, that was the highest compliment, your enemy wants a copy of what you are giving away."

In addition to distributing copies, the book can be downloaded for free online as a PDF for anyone who wants a copy.

By providing copies of the book, Leheta said he hopes to bring western standards of medical practice to Ukraine.

"They don't have things like evidence based medicine," he said. "They don't necessarily follow research, they follow what their mentor said."

The book is bulletpointed and provides stepby-step procedures for treatments that are up to date with western standards.

Jachnycky said their goal at AUMF is to now move on to translating a second book that deals with psychiatry — "Combat and Operational Behavioral Health," from the Textbook Military Medical series.

"Dealing with mental disorders soldiers encounter from being in the war zone," he said. "From my viewpoint, what I find fascinating is the chapters dedicated to care providers such as families." *Stephanie Prewada is a freelance journalist who can be reached at sdpreweda@gmail.com*

Father Walter and Father Mario, of the Ukrainian community in Metro Detroit, bless the container of donations before they are sent to Ukraine.

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