

# Momentum

July 2023

## E-membership

The new registration system introduced last month is working well. New e-membership cards can now be loaded onto members' phones and scanned by reception to speed up the process.



## Doing it for themselves

Our Ukrainian members are increasingly helping to run the Centre for themselves. The centre's organising team comprising volunteers, Ukrainian members, our sister organisation, Ukraine Reborn, and volunteers from the three Churches involved, agreed that it is important for our Ukrainian friends to be as involved as much as possible in the management. They now run the reception, the clothing bank, and prepare a lot of the refreshments. This is on top of all the other activities they organise as our Centre doubles as a cultural venue. Co-ordinator Jeremy McTeague said: "It's really great but we still rely on all our volunteers to help so please keep signing up."

## Volunteer Valentina's cooks up a tasty cake for the Centre children



## Double school and double exams for Ukraine's young students



**Dasha Bahmut**, age 17, has been studying the Swiss curriculum for more than a year now, despite not speaking a word of French when she arrived in Switzerland in March 2022. However, what was more difficult for her and hundreds of

young Ukrainians like her was simultaneously pursuing their Ukraine education. "It was very hard. I was doing my Swiss schooling in the day and working on maths, English and Ukrainian online with my Ukraine teachers in the evenings." Dasha and others had to pass their Ukrainian exams at an official centre. She went to France, as there were no more places in Switzerland, accompanied by her mother, Ludmila, who helps run our Ukraine Day Centre. "I had to get up at 4 am and catch the 6am train to Paris to sit three exams in three subjects in three hours," says Dasha "but I passed" she says smiling. According to a report by [UNICEF in January 2023](#), the Russian invasion of Ukraine has disrupted education for around 5 million children inside Ukraine, already struggling after two years of the covid pandemic. It is the same story for the 2.2 million Ukrainian school age children who fled the country and are schooled by their European host countries (as of December 2022), 13,000 of them in Switzerland and 1200 in Vaud, stated in a report by the Swiss news agency [Swissinfo](#). They have now spent a full year following programmes in French or German, depending on their location. However, studying Ukrainian remains an important goal as these young people hope to return home. For older ones, like Dasha, it was essential to pass their Ukrainian exams. Dasha thinks she may leave Swiss school now and start an apprenticeship as university would be quite difficult here. "I am really pleased because I passed my exams. It means I can go to university in Ukraine whenever I return home."

## Ukraine Independence Day

Plans are afoot for a major celebration to mark Ukraine Independence Day. Last year, members of our community (pictured right) organised a march through Lausanne from Riponne to the Scots Kirk with around 100 people as well as music and cultural events. 'This year it promises to be much bigger,' says centre coordinator Ludmila Bahmut though she is keeping the details close to her chest. We will have a full report in the next edition of Momentum.





### Who we are

The Ukraine Day Centre is a not-for-profit association opened on April 28th. It is an ecumenical initiative between Our Lady of Faith, Christ Church and the Scots Kirk. We support those fleeing Ukraine irrespective of language, race, faith or gender. The Centre's services are free.

### Hansel and Gretel find safety at the Ukraine Day centre



Youngsters aged six to 16 staged their version of Hansel and Gretel as the culmination of the Ukraine Day Centre summer camp. The children learned their parts at home and rehearsed together a few times at the camp. Regular Centre volunteer, Biata Lysenko, who put the play together, said: 'Performing gets you out of your comfort zone and develops your communication skills. Some of the children who were shy during the camp opened up and felt better on stage and then among their peers.'

### Dates for your diary

**24 August:** Ukraine Independence Day

### How can you help ?

We welcome volunteers and monetary donations. At present we are unable to take any more clothing donations.

## Meet the volunteers

**N**adia Halushko is an expert in keeping young children occupied; with three boys of her own aged

six to 12, she has had plenty of practice. At the Ukraine Day Centre, she and her husband Vadim, encourage everyone to make things, not just children. Nadia has also run candle making workshops for adults. They left Zaporizhzhia in March 2022, when the Russian invaders



occupied territory 30 km away. They spent two months in a hotel in Bulgaria, where Nadia organised activities to support very traumatized children. They then moved to Italy for three months before settling in Yverdon. Vadim, who was allowed to leave Ukraine because of his three young children, speaks good English and is now looking for work as a web designer. "The children have settled in well here. They are at school and we are learning French as it is very hard to find work without it, even in Information Technology."

**S**ylvia Rubli was born in Swiss German speaking Switzerland in the beautiful city of Schaffhausen on the banks of the Rhine in the extreme north of the country close to the German border.

"When we were playing in the forest as children, we never knew if we were in Germany or Switzerland," she says. After completing a commercial apprenticeship, she moved to Suisse romande. Sylvie has worked for a number of major international organisations such as the World Wildlife Fund and the World Economic Forum and has travelled extensively including four months camping on the back of a truck from South Africa to Kenya with her fiancé. Her hobbies have included scuba diving, golfing and sailing. Since retiring, she has worked for several charities including the Ukraine Day Centre. Sylvie helps with the tea and coffee and is a font of knowledge for all matters Swiss. "I think the Centre does a great job," she says. "It's developing from an emergency centre into a cultural centre where the Ukrainians are taking more and more responsibility for the programme and managing the Centre."



### Donate

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### Editorial Team

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