

Momentum

April 2024

Louis Voiron is elected President of the Centre de Jour Ukrainien

A new President and two new board members have strengthened the organising teams at the Ukraine Day Centre. Louis Voiron (pictured below), is a member of Our Lady of Faith and a familiar face to volunteers and Ukrainians alike at the Centre. He has been chosen as President to replace the former Scots Kirk Minister, Gillean MacLean, who retired last year. Ukrainian volunteer, Anna Khtema, and Scots Kirk member and Centre volunteer, Olivier Martin, have been appointed to the board.



In his earlier career, Louis served as a special advisor in the French Government. He also spent a lot of time abroad working for U.S. organisations in Washington, France, the UK and across Africa and the Middle East. He has now returned to Switzerland where his family has their roots. He is married and has a teenage daughter. Louis has a thorough knowledge of the association having started as a tea-making volunteer before joining the permanent French language teaching team on Thursdays, attended by more than 20 Ukrainians of all ages. "I feel very strongly that the Centre is about helping our Ukrainian community feel at home," he said. "We want to help them build bridges for their smooth integration in Switzerland. In my view the language and administrative support we offer are as important as the safe space we provide where they can share their experiences and break the feeling of isolation newcomers often feel." Centre Secretary Jeremy McTeague said: "Louis has an exemplary knowledge of international affairs particularly in regard to Ukraine. He is an experienced volunteer at the Centre. I am delighted that he has agreed to be President." Anna Khtema and Olivier Martin join the seven-strong board, the majority of whom are from the three churches. Anna (pictured top right) trained as a



geologist in Ukraine and arrived in Switzerland following the Russian invasion. She helps organise activities at the Centre and is pivotal in communication between the Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian speaking members and volunteers. Olivier (right) is currently a professor at EPFL where he himself studied physics. A Lausannois by birth, he returned to the city after several years working in Zurich. He is a member of the board of the Scots Kirk, one of our founding churches.

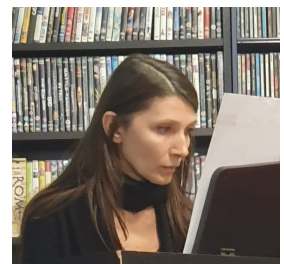


The Centre opened two years ago in April. It was founded by the three English speaking churches of Lausanne: Christ Church, Our Lady of Faith and the Scots Kirk. We would like to thank them for their ongoing support.

"...the Centre is about making our Ukrainian community feel at home... in Switzerland."- Louis Voiron

Talented Centre members Pavlina, Sofia and Daria perform at free concert

You can reserve your free seat now to hear virtuoso pianist, Pavlina Kravchenko (right), perform at a concert being held in Montreux in May. Pavlina is a well-known face at the Centre where she regularly accompanies singers at our music events. In Montreux, she will perform with singers Sofia Voronaia and Daria Zalesskaya, who also regularly appear at the Centre. The concert is being organised by the Association pour le français à Clarens. Entitled 'L'univers de la chanson lyrique ukrainienne' it will take place on Tuesday, May 14th at 19:00 at the Maison de Quartier, Jaman 8, Montreux. It will be followed by a buffet lunch. To reserve a place visit info@francais-clarens.ch or call Ann Fasnacht: 079 228 62 16.





Who we are

The Ukraine Day Centre is a not-for-profit association opened in April 2022. 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.



We still need volunteers to help at the Centre on Thursdays and Sundays. Thursdays requires two people to be there for around 90 minutes to organise refreshments. On Sundays we simply need a friendly presence for oversight. Our Ukrainian volunteers take care of reception and snacks. [Sign up](#) here for this Sunday 28th April. And [here](#) for dates in May and June.



One of the items supplied to troops by the Ukrainian knitting network is the doll-motana (above). These ancient charms are extremely important to Ukrainian families. The custom in some form is believed to date back 5,000 years. They symbolise goodness and well-being. They are believed to be lucky and represent close family ties.

Knitting for Victory

A group of Ukrainian women knitters have harnessed their skills for the war effort. Ukraine Day Centre member Nataliya Mokiienko has created a knitting network of more than twenty women across Vaud but what they need now is more wool. Our Ukrainian volunteer Alla Kyrda-Omelian spoke to Nataliya to find out more.

68-year-old Nataliya is a highly qualified teacher who worked in a kindergarten and then in a children's sanatorium in Ukraine. Since she moved to Switzerland in 2022, she has gathered together a group of more than two dozen Ukrainian women who are knitting for the troops. Nataliya is from Severodonetsk, an important industrial city in the east of Ukraine, which has been destroyed and occupied by Russian forces. The women who work with her come from many different regions. In Switzerland, they also live in various cities and towns : Lausanne, Chateaux-d'Oex, Cossonay-



Nataliya Mokiienko



Penthalaz, Leysin-Feydey, Morges, Moudon, Pully, Renens, Vevey and others.

However, they are all united by their desire to help soldiers on the front line and in hospitals with camouflage nets, warm clothing such as scarves, belts, socks, and tasty goodies. Thanks to the nimble fingers of Larysa Artemchuk, Tetiana Buzhynska, Tetiana Luganska, Halyna Skyba, Iryna Slobodyanyuk, Liubov Svyrydova, Yuliia Sytaruk, Tetiana Tregub, Tetiana Yarova, Alla Zbrozhko and others, parcels comprising 16-24 different products are sent from Switzerland to volunteers in Kyiv, Dnipro, Kharkiv, Kherson, Uman and

Zhytomyr every week, which they in turn hand to Ukrainian soldiers.

Nataliya notes that all the women not only work swiftly and to a high standard but are also extremely creative. For the parcels, one knitter adds a delicious treat, the second - a doll-motana (pictured left), the third supplies embroidered yellow and blue hearts with the words: "Angel, protect!" or "Come back alive!"

"Please donate your spare wool"

Nataliya Mokiienko says what she and her team urgently need is wool so that they can continue to work and help Ukraine's hard-pressed defence forces! If you have wool to donate please bring it to the Centre on Thursday or Sunday afternoons. Thankyou!

Donate

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