

Momentum

February 2023




The Ukrainian volunteers who help us help them

A year after the conflict began we pay tribute to all our volunteers without whom the Centre can not operate and thank the Ukrainians who have helped transform it into a dynamic community

At 13.30h, every Thursday and Sunday a small group of volunteers puts out the tables and chairs ready to turn the Scot's Kirk church hall into a welcome centre for Ukrainian refugees. Except now, at least half the volunteers on some days are Ukrainians themselves. The refugees who once sought support now help run the clothes shop, and the registration. The Centre opened in April last year, after the invasion of Ukraine by Russia a year ago. Centre coordinator Jeremy McTeague says : 'Our Ukrainian volunteers are key to our success. For one thing they speak Ukrainian or Russian, which really helps people arriving who have no French or English. In fact what we need are more volunteers and more Ukrainian volunteers.'

The registration is almost entirely managed by Ukrainian Centre members. 'It is really important for safety issues; we know who's in the Centre and how many people are using it, which is important for our fundraising,' explains Jeremy. No-one is paid of course but all the money raised funds the Centre and essentials.

If you can help us: sign up using
the QR code 



Centre Volunteer, Elizabet Malkova

I arrived in March last year to stay with my daughter who is married to a Swiss national. I started to help at the Centre when I saw how difficult it is for many of my compatriots to adapt to a new country, I knew Lausanne and spoke some French.

'I like volunteering and meeting my compatriots'

I help in the clothing bank that provides free clothes, shoes, and children's toys that are donated. I come every Sunday and frankly, I like volunteering, because it is not only helping, but also communicating with my compatriots. There is a very friendly atmosphere at the Centre, many people bring newcomers when they arrive and it helps them in adapting to a new country. They also bring their children. There is drawing, reading craft activities, and excursions. We have all encountered similar problems when processing official paperwork because without knowing the language it is very difficult. We are very grateful to the Swiss for providing us with accommodation. Also the Churches, ministers and everyone who has helped us to live in a foreign country.



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 services are free.

The Centre in numbers

A total of 3020 visits have been made to the Centre since it opened in April 2022. Since January 2023, 130 new people have signed up.

Pepperdine

25 students from Pepperdine have signed up to help with the normal volunteers duties and also to use their skills for design and IT and they will organise sports and youth activities.

Dates for your Diary

Feb 24: Ukraine 'Unbreakable.' An evening of music and poetry at the Centre on the year long anniversary of the war at 1800h.

Mar 5: The Centre AGM at 1600h. All volunteers are welcome to attend.



Let's Talk about ...well anything

Our volunteers Caroline Rennie and Dmytro Milashchuk have set up a self-help group for refugees to discuss problems around integration and loneliness. Here they tell us about the first meeting held this month.

On the 5th of February we kicked off the first "Let's Talk" workshop to help build a sense of community and lessen the intense loneliness of being an immigrant and a refugee of war. Twenty very diverse people came and from the first moment the atmosphere was warm and lightly buzzy.

"I thought it was only my issue but heard that others also experienced it," - a participant

In small groups participants shared stories about times when they felt at home in Switzerland, and times when they felt incredibly foreign.

The idea is to help people see what they have in common, and inspire each other with their resourcefulness. There was an immediate request that we do it again.

The next Let's Talk session will be March 5, 17-19:00 at the centre.

Topic: Getting involved in local activities.



An evening of solidarity with Ukraine

Life goes on - is the message from our Ukrainian friends as they organise a cultural evening on Friday, February 24th. It is a year since the war started but the theme is 'Unbreakable Ukraine.' Ukrainian coordinator and Centre volunteer, Ludmila Bahmut, says: 'People have been having children, growing crops, baking bread, caring for soldiers and civilians, helping the army from providing vehicles to knitting warm socks, getting married, teaching children in the metro and winning sports.' Ukrainian culture is at the heart of this event, says director and volunteer, Volodymir Soroka, but this time featuring music, songs and poems composed in the last year. Everyone is welcome to attend. Ukraine has announced Friday as a day of support for musicians around the world. Click here for more: [music of defiance](#) .

Pictured: new tunes and new talent with Mykhailo Shapoval on guitar

How can you help ?

We especially welcome volunteers and really appreciate donations of winter clothes, money and food.

For donations:

Le Centre de jour ukrainien
Ave d'Ouchy 60, 106 Lausanne
IBAN: CH11 0076 7000 C555 4695 4

Editorial Team

Heather Lima
Jeremy McTeague

