



The Comox Valley Ukrainian Cultural Society is seeking financial and in-kind sponsorship from generous organizations and people of the Comox Valley and Campbell River to support two fundraising performances:

“Still Standing With Ukraine”

Thursday, September 21, 2023 at the Sid Williams Comox Valley Theater in Courtenay
and

Saturday, September 23, 2023 at the Tidemark Theatre in Campbell River

All proceeds from these performances will be used to assist new Ukrainian families. **There is a continued need for food security, housing security, employment and educational opportunities, host family support and support for physical, mental and emotional health!**

In addition to raising money, the goal of these performances is to raise awareness of the importance of ongoing local support for families displaced by the conflict in Ukraine.

The performance featuring Ukrainian themed traditional dances and songs was produced jointly by two volunteer groups, Junior Tryzub Ukrainian Dance Troupe and Ukraine Nightingale Project. The performance were virtual sellouts and received a standing ovations in February in Oliver and Penticton.

The Comox Valley Ukrainian Cultural Society will be launching an extensive promotional and marketing campaign featuring the support and recognition of our major sponsors both prior to, and during the two events. Follow-up reporting will be provided to our sponsors and published in local newspapers.

We are fortunate to feature the Junior Tryzub Ukrainian Dance Troupe from Calgary, as well as acclaimed Ukrainian singer, Ihor Bohdan, who have graciously offered to waive their performance fees. The troupe is comprised of fifteen young people between the ages of 13 and 18. They will be joined by members of the choir from the local Comox Valley Ukrainian Cultural Society.

The Comox Valley Ukrainian Cultural Society has had generous support from host families and volunteers that has enabled 65 households, over 170 people to find new hopes and opportunities in the Comox Valley and Campbell River. The conflict in Ukraine, unfortunately, shows very little signs of resolution with recent demolitions of a major dam forcing another 40,000 people from their homes. The Canadian government response under the Canadian-Ukrainian Authorization for Emergency Travel program has received over 1,000,000 applications and 775,532 visas have been approved. While this is good news, as of June 27, 2023, only 162,568 or less than 20% of the people with approved visas have been able to travel to Canada.

The Comox Valley Ukrainian Cultural Society, formed 40 years ago, preserves, practices and promotes Ukrainian traditions, language and cultural interests for Canadians of primarily Ukrainian heritage. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, a small group of members

established the “Committee Funding Ukrainian Survivors” to assist displaced Ukrainian newcomers in rebuilding their lives here in the Comox Valley.

Over the past 18 months, members have hosted social and cultural events with Ukrainian families, coordinated pop-up free clothing shop days, enhanced our volunteer base and undertaken fundraising initiatives.

Here are some of the ways that the community’s generosity has been utilized to support the over 65 Ukrainian families (representing over 170 individuals) arriving over the past 17 months:

- Welcome Baskets – Ukrainian newcomers receive a personalized basket with items for personal and household use and an information folder. In collaboration with HUVI (Help Ukraine Vancouver Island).
- Produced Bilingual Guide to the Comox Valley to assist Ukrainian Newcomers and host families.
- Emergency Financial Assistance to Newcomers – for short-term emergency financial assistance.
- Food Security – Individual donors, local grocers, and service organizations have provided grocery gift cards and financial donations offering food boxes, hampers and an ongoing FoodShare program.
- Conversational English Classes – bilingual conversational English classes to complement the classes offered through the Immigrant Welcome Centre.
- Hiring of a Ukrainian Integration Coordinator for 2023 funded by a grant from the Refugee Readiness Network.
- Summer Day Camps - for 30 Ukrainian children and teens supported by a grant from the United Way as a fun and educational way to enhance English language acquisition.

The **Tryzub Ukrainian Dance Society**, a registered non-profit organization for almost 50 years, preserves and promotes Ukrainian dance and culture. They also assist families displaced by the war to find housing and employment opportunities in Southern Alberta. They have raised funds to support families and donated performances in multiple locations, including two shows in February in the South Okanagan working with the Ukraine Nightingale Project.

The Tryzub Ukrainian Dance Society provides instant access to a vital social network and community of like-minded people sharing their passion and love of Ukraine and Ukrainian dance. It also provides a safe haven for children to interact, mixing Ukrainian speaking children with English speaking children, taught by Ukrainian-English bilingual instructors.

Based on statistics gathered by the Alberta Ukrainian Dance Association in March 2023, Tryzub’s Newcomer Dance Program is supporting approximately 50% of all children from Ukraine taking Ukrainian dance in the province of Alberta.

In September 2022, The Tryzub Ukrainian Dance Society provided financial support to 13 children from Ukraine on Canadian-Ukrainian Authorization for Emergency Travel visas participating in our full school program. To meet the needs of the newly arriving Ukrainian newcomers to Calgary, in 2023, Tryzub created a new Saturday morning dance program. Already, 37 additional students enrolled, and those classes are now full. They now have a total of 50 students on visas dancing with Tryzub. Financial support for their newcomer families

includes tuition, costumes and costume maintenance fees, studio rent, festival and registration fees, and tickets for families to attend their children's performances. Tryzub will receive a contribution of 15% of the net proceeds of the Comox Valley and Campbell River performances to support their newcomer program.

The **Ukraine Nightingale Project** is a registered non-profit society that aids Ukrainian families relocating to the South Okanagan, by helping them to access and qualify for food security, clothing, medical and dental assistance, education and employment once they arrive. Our overall goal is to assist them to make a smooth transition into a new life in the South Okanagan.

As the war in Ukraine commenced in early 2022, the Ukraine Nightingale Project started with a very successful series of fundraising events, that began in Oliver in the spring of 2022 under the banner of "1,000 Rides Out". Working with the support of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) they were able to transport over 4000 people to safety in other locations in Ukraine or in neighboring countries. They also provided humanitarian relief and supplies to families remaining within the conflict areas.

As it became evident that the scale and duration of the conflict was increasing, the Ukraine Nightingale Project realized that both the amount of support and the types of support needed was changing. This resulted in a second set of concerts under the banner "1000 Flights Out" specifically designed to generate funds to support families arriving in the South Okanagan.

As more families have arrived in the South Okanagan, the Ukraine Nightingale Project has recognized a need to assist them to enroll in post-secondary education or certified trades programs through a tuition refund program. Fifteen percent of the net proceeds from the two Vancouver Island performances will go to support their Future Ready Skills Training" initiative.

All three organizations are private groups of volunteers who are responding to the overwhelming needs of 8 million Ukrainian people displaced by war. They share a common desire to assist families who have made the difficult choice to leave their homeland and begin new lives in Canada.

For more information, please go to our websites:

<https://cvukrainianculturalsociety.ca>

<https://ukrainenightingaleproject.ca>

<https://www.tryzub.ca>

Thank you for your support and consideration on how you can contribute to positively changing lives for Ukrainian families displaced by war.

Sincerely,

Andy Frost, Concert Co-Chair
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www.ukrainenightingaleproject.ca
Charitable Registration Number:132056813RR0001

