

FFWPU UK: Families Supporting Families - The Ukrainian Cultural Evening

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I will not forget the evening of Saturday 25 February very quickly. How can I, when God's mighty hand was at work that evening?

It all started at the joint WFWP/UPF Christmas celebration in December last year. Nelina Kolpaktchi and her team entertained the gathering with some lively and inspiring Ukrainian music. It was just all too short. A full evening with Ukrainian music would be such a treat. It dawned on me that if I wanted that to happen, I better do something about it.



So here we were a couple of months later at our fundraising event for the Ukraine: Families Supporting Families. Nelina was in charge of the musical program, and I took care of the organizational matters. My vision for the event was to do something big, in the name of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification. As an organization I feel we should be out there, among the big names that deliver aid. Who better to do so than us? I wanted the public to come, to reach people in society who have not heard about the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification yet. At least expose something of ourselves that we are good at - serving others.

I asked a few friends for support and feedback. My initial thoughts to role out big came to naught; charity commission, using public or private bank account, advertising, GoFundMe page details, opinions - were all obstacles that had to be dealt with. I must admit, I got quite discouraged. Anyway, the date was set. No point to pull out. We could just do our best under the circumstances.

It quickly became obvious that Nelina's and my working hours made it impossible to meet. Thank God for messaging, and bit by bit it all came together. However, the morning before the event I just knew of 22 people coming. I was not too concerned though. I could not do more than offer my sincere and wholehearted effort, and trust that God would work. And I felt He would.



Nelina had put together a wonderful program. We started off watching a thoughtful and moving video, singing the national anthem, hearing a rendition of words from President Zelensky and offering a minute of silence by candlelight, in remembrance of the one year since the war started. A children's choir performed beautiful songs and a 11-year old girl sang solo. Others played guitar and piano. As the program progressed, more and more lively and uplifting folk songs and music filled the hall. We were even made to dance. All the performances were excellent. We were taken on a real Ukrainian cultural experience. A special thank you goes to the Kolpaktchi family, Mark, Nelina, Greg and Maria, and all the performers.



Beautiful homemade Ukrainian cakes and food were for sale. Layered cakes, layered salads, layered...to me that means Ukrainian. I hope those who came got a taste; absolutely delicious! Such a labour of love!

It was a beautiful evening. The turnout was beyond our expectations. The hall was overflowing. We had reached people in society. Another big thank you goes to Sonja Read and Simon Rosselli who helped with advertising on all kinds of community group and Facebook pages, and to all the hands who helped behind the scene.

The evening raised over £2000 through ticket, food and raffle sales, and some donations. The GoFundMe page is still open and amounts to an additional £655. Maybe my original dream of reaching £3000 and being able to buy 3 EcoFlow Generators for people on the frontline in the Ukraine will come true? Thank you God. We could not have done it without you.