

Helping Ukraine: Students Of Ohio University Collaborate With WFWP USA

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When the hostilities erupted in Ukraine in late February, I was devastated. My grandparents immigrated to the USA from the far eastern border of Slovakia in 1913. I still have relatives there. My DNA reveals that my lineage on my mom's side goes back into antiquity in the area which is now Ukraine and Russia.

In 1994, I started a project to bring Chernobyl Children to the USA for health respite. This was supported by WFWP at the time. In 1995, we sent two tons of fish protein powder to orphanages through the Chernobyl region which includes Ukraine.

After nearly 30 years, how could this be happening? It has hit the world now, three months later, in ways far beyond what anyone could imagine. What more can happen? No one knows.

I am a doll collector. I prayed with the WFWP prayer group for Ukraine and Russian reconciliation. I thought about the Bridge of Peace. At this point, our dear sisters are divided between worlds of very different information. I decided to put the Russian doll and the 100 year old bisque doll representing Ukraine together as a symbolic start. I posted this to Facebook as a desperate effort to show support for those suffering. From this, I received a message back from a new Facebook page, Bobcats for Ukraine. I live in Athens, Ohio near Ohio University which uses the Bobcat as a mascot. I think the universe responds in unexpected ways. I have seen it so many times that I have learned to depend on it.

The next step was making a plan to meet with some of the Bobcats for Ukraine volunteers at a popular coffee shop. I found out that the program was started by some Ukrainian students in response to the onset of the war. Two students decided to go back to Kiev immediately and report back. Once there, they found that the fighters were very low in almost all needs including medical supplies. There is a supply house in Ohio for military aid kits, so the volunteers began raising funds to send over suitcases filled with these supplies. The students in Kiev report back with social media and cell phones to coordinate. They asked if I could get some large suitcases for future shipments.

I then explained to them the history of WFWP since 1992. I explained about the work that I had done with WFWP with the Chernobyl Children program and then about the Bridge of Peace ceremony. I brought my two dolls to demonstrate the meeting of two opposite sides in reconciliation. They agreed that this was needed in the whole world and might be done on campus in the future.

Upon request for donations for suitcases, responses came along with financial donations through our WFWP and UPF friends in Ohio. When the suitcases were picked up last week, Anastasia, the Ukrainian volunteer, explained that she was taking them herself to Warsaw. From there she will go to villages in Ukraine where she knows friends who are supporting the elderly who were left behind because they were invalids. They need medicine and food. These suitcases were filled with special dried food packets which could quickly nourish those who are starving. This is what the WFWP Ohio was able to assist with and promised to do more.