



# The *SUNRISER*

Monthly Newsletter of Medford Sunrise Rotary

**Tribute to Rotary in Ukraine**

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## 3 Ambulances in 6 months!

In August, Tommy and David flew to Frankfurt and delivered our first ambulance to Lviv Rotary Club in Ukraine. It was promptly put into use in the front-line city of Kharkiv, where hundreds of innocent civilians have been killed by Russian missiles and bombs.

In August, Kevin and David returned to deliver a second ambulance, this time it went to Cherkasy, where ambulances are needed to carry many critically injured soldiers to the closest trauma and surgical center to another region's front line.

Last week, Chris and David went back and delivered our third ambulance.



## The Power of the Rotary Network

If anybody ever asks you, "What is Rotary?" this project is a great case study. Starting in Houston, where one ordinary Medford Rotarian had the vision of providing an ambulance after meeting another Rotarian—a doctor from Ukraine, the Medford Sunrise club unanimously agreed to adopt the project a week later.

But we are one tiny club in New Jersey! How could we *raise the money* to buy an ambulance, *find* an ambulance in Europe, *buy* an ambulance, and to whom would we *deliver* such a vehicle?

Thanks to DG Michael Thompson's putting out the word of our project, Rotary clubs across District 7505 chipped in with financial support.

Enter the Rotary Club of Obernburg, Germany. The moment we contacted them, they embraced the idea. Since then, they have partnered with us to mechanically

check out the vehicles we selected, to provide many thousands of dollars of medical and firefighting supplies to fill each ambulance, and to take our drivers from Frankfurt to the dealership many miles away. They have been our *perfect* partners in service!

But how would we know where to take the ambulances? How could we ensure they were not sold on the black market? Enter our third partners: the Rotary clubs in Lviv. These are our Rotary heroes. They have advised us what medical supplies are most-urgently needed. They then look all over the country to determine where an ambulance is needed the most, and when we have our joyful meeting with them at the end of our LONG drive across Europe, they deliver the ambulances directly to the front-line cities where they are immediately put into use saving lives.

Only Rotary could take a chance meeting between 2 Rotarians into an international project across three countries that is saving lives every day!



## Rotary Responds to Ukraine

Rotarians, their clubs and districts—and The Rotary Foundation—responded quickly and generously to help the people of Ukraine, almost from the day the Russians invaded the peace-loving country.

The Rotary Foundation designated millions of dollars for clubs and districts to use for disaster relief.

Rotary clubs in England have delivered fire engines. Rotarian doctors have travelled to Ukraine to provide trauma care and reconstructive surgery training to front-line medical personnel. Other clubs have delivered generators and water purification equipment to towns whose infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed.

And Rotary clubs in Europe and the US have provided temporary housing and relocation assistance to tens of thousands of Ukrainian women and children refugees. One club outside Warsaw, Poland has converted a 3-story building into a beautifully decorated home for Ukrainian women and children refugees from cities on the front line. The Rotarians provide counselors for the trauma the families experienced along with food, and are teaching them Polish and English.

Rotary members in North America, South America, and Europe have collaborated with a U.S.-based association of Ukrainian health care workers and used their connections to collect and ship more than 350 tons of critical medical supplies to Ukraine.

As of May, five cargo planes packed with medical supplies such as tourniquets, blood-clotting gauze, negative pressure wound therapy equipment, and medications have been flown from Chicago to Europe, where Rotarians delivered them to Ukraine.

"It is Rotary doing what Rotary does best. It networks, pulls people together, and gets the job done," says RI Director Pat Merryweather-Arges, who has helped coordinate the shipments.

North American and Argentine Rotary clubs combined their resources to purchase medical supplies and worked with pharmaceutical companies and medical equipment manufacturers to arrange donations. For example, a hospital in Peoria, Illinois, networked with others to have seven ambulances shipped to Ukraine.

Supplies streamed into a warehouse operated by the Ukrainian Medical Association of North America near Chicago's O'Hare International Airport. Rotary clubs in

Nebraska, Wisconsin, and Iowa collected supplies to ship to the warehouse.

"It's amazing what one Rotarian talking to another Rotarian can accomplish," says Marga Hewko, past president of the Rotary Club of Chicago.



## Now THAT's a Rotary Project!

Our partner club in Obernburg, Germany is helping with one of the most amazing projects: they and their district are helping provide new modular homes in the Ukrainian town of Moschun. Russian shelling destroyed 85% of the homes in Moschun before they were driven out by Ukrainian defenders.

The Rotary project will build 300 new modular homes there. They will be constructed locally—providing much-needed employment for the villagers.

To quote the project's organizers:

The restoration of Moshchun village will be executed in two stages:

— Stage 1: Installation of modular housing as a means of temporary "relief" residence.

— Stage 2: Partnering with various donor organizations, real-estate developers and architects, design and rebuild residential & social infrastructure in the area. This is the long-term solution and through beautiful, sophisticated design and craftsmanship, we hope to make the area a symbol of our future, where we rebuild better than ever before. We dream that Moshchun people will start to call it "Rotary village in Ukraine."

In Slovakia and the Czech Republic, Rotary clubs partnered with a railway and cargo company to transport some 2,300 refugees to safety.



## Our 3<sup>rd</sup> Ambulance went to Sumy

Sumy, in northeastern Ukraine, is only 20 miles from Russia, which it borders on two sides. It has been relentlessly attacked from the first day of the invasion. On the day the war began, Sumy had no troops, so its civilians in a single day decided to defend the city themselves and created their own self-defense force. Going up against the mighty Russian army, which encircled the city, and using nothing more than archaic



weapons and self-made Molotov cocktails, they held off the invaders for 6 weeks and disrupted Russian supply lines until the Russians finally gave up and went to attack elsewhere

Britain’s *Guardian* newspaper reported, “Though there were only a few thousand civilians with rifles, a few dozen anti-tank weapons and no armed vehicles or heavy weaponry, by mid-March the Russians were scared to enter the city. In an alleged recording of a phone call released by Ukrainian intelligence services on 16 March, a Russian soldier can be heard breaking down after telling his mother that they needed to take



the road through Sumy city but “not a single column of [theirs] had survived.”

More recently, Russian jets bombed the city’s hospital, destroying it and causing numerous casualties. This photo shows the aftermath. Can you imagine a group of citizens who better deserve our latest ambulance?



### Rotary is GROWING in Ukraine!

Incredibly, despite the harsh conditions, Rotary is growing its membership in Ukraine, in part because of the opportunities for volunteerism it offers non-Rotarian Ukraine citizens and foreign residents in the country.

According to Tom Gump (PDG District 5950) and Mykola Stebljanko (PDG District 2232 -Ukraine), “Membership has grown 23.5% in Ukraine since Russian forces invaded the country on 24 February 2022. The region, which comprises Rotary District 2232, has added four Rotary clubs and five satellite clubs. The reasons behind this growth hold important insights for any Rotary club interested in increasing its membership or any district looking to add clubs.

The clubs in Ukraine became more visible in their communities in the days and months after the war began. People are witnessing the positive impact members are having and want to join in on making a difference.

One club, for example, had their members learn to become volunteer firefighters so they could help put out fires, literally, when local building are hit by shelling.

People are drawn to the opportunity to find meaning and purpose when they see real positive change taking place.”

Ukraine has 62 Rotary clubs and seven satellite clubs — about 1,100 members in total, as well as 25 Rotaract clubs that combined have more than 300 members.

The Rotary Club of Cherkasy (where we sent our second ambulance) purchased medical supplies and medicine and delivered them to local hospitals. Members of the Rotary Club of Kharkiv International have traveled to border countries to help refugees adapt to their new situations and have worked, through their project Yellow Help, to evacuate families near war zones.

The Rotary Club of Kyiv Synergy collected 350 boxes of medical supplies from Italy and distributed them to areas within Kyiv and Sumy.

The Rotary Club of Kyiv-Sophia prepared hot meals and delivered them to residents of Kyiv and its suburbs of Irpin and Bucha. Members purchased hygiene products and medicine and delivered them to young mothers and the elderly.



## What Can We Do Next?

Here's the conundrum for Medford Sunrise Rotary: We have raised \$35,000 plus thousands more in donations-in-kind and have delivered three ambulances stocked with medical supplies since last August. Our small club now has to focus on our upcoming commitments such as the Field of Honor, and honestly, it seems our local community has reached their limit of financial support.

But what about the ongoing needs from our Ukrainian partners? When we delivered our third ambulance last week, they were so incredibly grateful and asked us to continue providing for their dire needs.

Rather than continue this project with the main obligation for fundraising coming from our small club, let's expand our sights and ask other clubs and districts to fulfill the fundraising role, and we will provide the logistics template for the supply and delivery of those ambulances. Please have clubs or districts contact David Forward at 609.354.8104 to continue the discussion.

The next ambulance, just waiting for Rotarians to help make it possible to deliver to Ukraine:



## Your Morning Chuckle

- Vladimir Putin stands at the lectern to address the athletes gathered for the 2014 Winter Olympics in Russia. He cleared his throat and began reading his speech: "O, O, O, O, O," he said. And aide nervously whispered in his ear, "No, Comrade President, those are not words for your speech, they are the Olympic rings on your paper."
- President Zelensky calls Putin:  
Zelensky: "I have a joke for you."  
Putin: "Go ahead."  
Zelensky: "Ukraine."  
Putin: "I don't get it."  
Zelensky: "No, and you never *will* get it."
- It's 3AM. Putin is awakened by an aide. "Comrade President," he said. "It's the Ukrainians. They are ready to talk about capitulation." Putin smiled. "Finally!" he said. "Put them on the phone." "No," said the aide. "They're outside your door right now."
- The leaders of Russia, Iran, and Serbia are all in a sinking boat. Who survives? *Ukraine*.
- The Russian armaments supply chain is in deep trouble. The Russian general in Ukraine is told the state TV is sending a crew to show their heroic efforts on the front line. "This is what we'll do when they start filming," the general tells his sergeant. "You throw rocks that way, towards Kharkiv, and every time he does that, you yell 'BOOM!'"
- Putin used to claim he had the second-most powerful army in the world. Now he can claim he has the second-most powerful army in Ukraine.
- Putin visited an elementary school outside Moscow and decided to have an "Ask the President" session. Little Sasha raises her hand and says, "I have two questions: why did Russia take Crimea when it didn't belong to us? And why are so many of our brave soldiers being defeated in Ukraine?" Putin says, "Good questions . . ." but before he can answer, the bell rings and the teacher says it is time for lunch. After lunch the Q & A session resumes. Another girl, Misha raises her hand and says, "Mr. President, I have four questions: why did Russia take Crimea when it didn't belong to us? Why are so many of our brave soldiers being defeated in Ukraine? Why did the lunch bell ring 20 minutes early today, and where is Sasha?"