

Cultural Preservation and Development/Volunteerism

George Hupka, Saskatoon

From his youth George has been active in the Ukrainian community, serving as altar boy for his priest father at All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Saskatoon. He participated in the Orthodox Youth group SUMK and assumed executive positions from an early age.

Gifted with an amazing voice, George sang in choir, formed carolling groups and sang and performed in cultural events. George was a founding member of Lastiwka choir and orchestra and has been a group leader and mentor for youth for many years. He has been featured as a vocalist in numerous productions. He has travelled nationally and internationally performing and recording with such groups as Lastiwka and Pavlychenko Folklorique Ensemble on their tours.

His expertise in video recording was invaluable in preparation of UCC-SPC Community Recognition Awards announcements during the pandemic. A fixture of the Saskatoon Ukrainian community, George has shared his skills and knowledge with the broader community, directing and producing Kinsmen TeleMiracle from 1993 to 2020. He has performed and been MC at Vesna Festival, the Karpaty Pavilion at Folkfest, and Ukrainian Day in the Park, sharing and educating the broader community about Ukrainian culture and history.

Leadership

Ernie Cherepuschak, Regina

Born in rural Saskatchewan, the youngest son in a family of 14 children, Ernie has been active in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit Sobor-Church for 55 years.

He was president of the Ukrainian Cooperative Association Limited of Regina from 1989 to 2015, during which time the co-op underwent major expansion and renovation. He has also been a long time active member of TYC, and CYC, volunteering with Ukrainian Orthodox Youth.

His community volunteerism and involvement extends beyond the Ukrainian community, particularly in the promotion and support of minor hockey and fast ball. He has been an active member and leader in the Regina Optimist Club, Highland Curling Club, and Queen City Minor Hockey Association.

Leadership/Volunteerism

Olena Shyian, White City

Olena was born, raised and educated in Kyiv oblast Ukraine. She immigrated to Canada with her family in 2007. Obtained her third degree, Bachelor of Education at University of Regina. She has volunteered annually at Kyiv Pavilion, Regina Mosaic since 2009. Olena was nominated as UNF Regina vice-president and in 2014 and then took on the role of President, which she has held to this day.

She has played a role in the start-up of UNF Regina Ridna Shkola and the School has flourished under her leadership. Olena is Western VP of UNF National and a UNF Foundation Board member for over six years. She has also been involved with Chaban Ukrainian Dance and Descent of the Holy Spirit Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Carolyn Warnyca Griffin, Osage

Carolyn has been Festival Chairperson for the Tavia Ukrainian Dance Festival from 2010 to 2022. From 2018 to the present, she has been Camp Administrator for Camp Trident. Carolyn has taken active rolls in the recreation boards in Osage, Fillmore and Tyvan as well as volunteering at sporting events in Montmartre and area, coaching soccer, organizing tournaments and serving on her local Figure Skating Board.

James Chorney, Regina

Born in rural Saskatchewan, James Chorney has devoted his life to leadership to the Ukrainian and broader community. He is a retired school principal for Ituna (Gr 1-12) for 17 years, James was instrumental in promoting Ukrainian language instruction for grades 7 to 12. He also promoted Ukrainian community collaboration through joint recognition of graduating classes and Ecumenical student recognition services. James also facilitated observance of Ukrainian holidays during the regular school year.

James has assumed a variety of leadership roles in Ukrainian Orthodox parishes where he has resided – Foam Lake, Ituna and Regina, as well as serving nationally as treasurer for the Central Eparchy Council of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada for nine years.

James has been president of Selo Estates Condo Association of Regina for the past eight years. He remains very active in Descent of the Holy Spirit parish, and in the Prosvita and TYC.

Dana Lesiuk, Regina

Dana Lesiuk spearheaded the Regina Donation Centre for Displaced Ukrainians in the late spring of 2022 initially by proposing REAL District, UNF and UCC. To manage the Donation Centres, she drew on her leadership skills acquired from event management, building/managing companies within the entertainment and media industries (Aristea Artists/Hospitality Network Canada/GV Audio Inc./CBC/Access), as well as her extensive 20-year career in the film and television industry. She is an award-winning producer, director, writer, editor and executive, and holds many credits on numerous recognized international films and television series such as Just Friends, Corner Gas, Rust (2009), and History Television/National Geographic documentary series. Her Ukrainian heritage and background in Ukrainian dance and customs form the basis for her next production, for which she travelled to Ukraine in 2019, but in the meantime, felt the strong call to help with immediate relief needs of displaced Ukrainians directly.

She feels fortunate for her team of valued volunteers whom she deems as critical to the success of the donation centres in providing clothing, furniture, and household supplies to displaced Ukrainians, free of charge, as they attempt to rebuild their lives in Canada. Dana has donated an incredible amount of her time and energy into managing the operations, securing facilities, securing needed donations, organizing volunteers, scheduling, promoting, as well as aiding individual newcomers as they navigate their new lives in Saskatchewan.

Nettie Cherniatenski, Saskatoon

Nettie is a person of faith and an active member of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of All Saints. She has been the outreach coordinator at her parish for over ten years. Her caring nature has taken her to parishioners houses and care homes. The Ukrainian language and culture are her guiding force in her work wherever she is. When the news of Russia's invasion of Ukraine came, Nettie was the first member to say, "what can I do"? She said she had a calling during her prayers, and it became her mission to help the people of Ukraine who came to Saskatoon and our province. Within a brief time and with generous donations of monetary and in-kind donations, "Baba's Closet" was realized. She also managed to obtain help from many volunteers of all nationalities to assist her with the daily influx of goods. Nettie's personality is constant enthusiasm for all she cares about. Throughout her Monday to Saturday schedule of days at Baba's Closet, she maintains a welcoming cheerful attitude to all who come for needed items.

Rostyk and Olesya Hursky, Saskatoon

In April, 2022 Rostyk and Olesya organized 7 pallets of humanitarian aid to Ukraine through the Edmonton firefighters on their airplane. On July 8th with the help of Food for the Hungry Canada they organized a 20-foot container which contained 10,000 kg of freeze dried soup to help those in need in Ukraine. They were also able to raise \$8,000 dollars to pay for the container and the shipment and the soup was donated.

In the first week of August, a 40 foot container containing 11,000 kg of aid was procured through their sources and shipped by boat via Hamburg to Ukraine.

The Hurskys received a donation from the Saskatoon Firefighters Union Local 80. The cheque for \$12,770 fully paid for a container to Ukraine

In addition, thanks to incoming donations and financial support, they were able to send an additional \$30,000 dollars to Ukraine via wire transfer. \$20,000 went to support the work and projects of [МІСТО ДОБРА Центр доброти для мами і дитини](#). And [Я Майбутнє України благодійний фонд](#) and \$10,000 dollars went to the [Повернись живим Сергій Притула](#) fund to help the soldiers!

Since February 25, 2022, they have sent \$106,591 dollars to directly help people of Ukraine.

Sister Sophia, Saskatoon

With the support of the Sisters of St Joseph, the staff organized many perogy bees where they sold the perogies and raised over \$100,000. Funds were used to purchase medical supplies, like tourniquets, Tylenol, breathing equipment, band-aids, and other supplies needed to assist with the injured. These supplies were packed in huge boxes and shipped to Germany where Sister Sophia met with family and then went of to Poland to have it delivered to the army.

The Sisters also purchased bullet proof vests and had Sister Sophia travel to Germany and then Poland to deliver these to the soldiers of Ukraine. The Sisters worked with a doctor from Lviv to get medical equipment to Ukraine. Sister Sophia has travelled to Ukraine three times since the war has started to assist first the orphaned children, soldiers and last trip with the elderly, and people of Kharkiv. In her travels in Ukraine by train, her destination (Kharkiv) was supporting the children, soldiers and the victims of this war by providing them humanitarian aid (clothing, pampers, toys, strollers, walkers for elderly, generators) and to give them the love and care that they need.

Myroslava and Vitaliy Kushnir, Saskatoon

The Kushnirs have been active in Saskatoon's Ukrainian newcomer community for a number of years. They operate the SMAK Ukrainian stores in Saskatoon and Yorkton.

With Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Slava and Vitaly have dedicated countless hours to assist Displaced Ukrainian settle into our community. From organizing and coordinating donations of furniture and household items to organizing newcomer events. The Kushnirs have shown themselves to be leaders in this important humanitarian work. Some of their events include: informational seminars on a variety of different topics, social events, helping to organize rides and child care as well. Newcomer social media chat.

Myroslava is a board member of UCC Saskatoon. Both partake in a variety of leadership roles and initiatives in the community. They demonstrate instrumental leadership with the UCC Saskatoon Furniture Depot initiative for Displaced Ukrainians including organizing all the volunteers for it.

Sonya Jahn, Prince Albert

It began when the owner of a beautiful and spacious historical Bed and Breakfast offered the home as accommodations for Ukrainian Newcomer Families looking for shelter in Prince Albert. Knowing accommodations were available, Sonya Jahn took the lead to welcome Displaced Ukrainian families to the community and developed a strategic plan and framework to assist Ukrainian Newcomers fleeing the war to settle in Prince Albert.

Sonya reached out to Ukrainian families who had lived in Prince Albert for 10 years or less to see if their families and friends in Ukraine would like to seek refuge in Prince Albert. It became immediately apparent that Ukrainian families would begin to arrive shortly.

The results include:

Raising cash donations of over \$25,000 to assist displaced Ukrainian families. Receiving 17 new Queen and Double beds donated by Dufresne Furniture and 17 new bicycles along with a new helmet and a lock for each. Establishing a "Food Pantry" for Ukrainian Newcomer families. Providing a "Welcome Laundry Basket" filled with various products, essential items and grocery gift cards for each new family.

Establishing a team of volunteers to assist with the many activities required to support the Newcomers.

Assisting Newcomers in finding jobs, including identification of prospective employers.

Facilitating Newcomer family connections for children. Encouraging Newcomer children to participate in sporting activities, the Arts and extracurricular social activities, and finding ways to support their participation.

Planning monthly social events for Ukrainian Newcomers to get together socially to encourage networking and peer support.

Offering women opportunities to participate in painting classes and Ukrainian Choir

Creating "Prince Albert SK Welcomes Ukrainians" Facebook page used to share relevant information and news.

Since mid-April 2022 at least 36 Ukrainian families have arrived in Prince Albert from different parts of Ukraine. There are now over 100 new Ukrainians in the city.

Terry Kuzyk, Regina

As President of UCC Regina, Terry has been involved with a majority of the initiatives to assist the Displaced Ukrainians that have taken place in Regina. Terry has worked closely with Dana Lesiuk in arranging for the facilities for the Donation Centres. Terry volunteers countless hours to help the newcomers transport furniture and items to their new homes. He has also helped transport donated items to the donation centres. Terry and the UCC Regina Board have been responsible for collecting and distributing the donation money that was directed to UCC Regina by various local donors. Terry also coordinates the purchase and distribution of the "Bed in a Box" initiative to provide the newcomers with bed mattresses.

Steve and Wayne Halabura

Cousins Steve and Wayne Halabura took a leadership role in creating Sunflower network that helps families fleeing the crisis created by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Through this network they have been providing assistance to displaced Ukrainian families who wish to seek new lives and opportunities in Saskatchewan.

They have been assisting in arranging transportation, finding safe and secure housing, connections with other aid groups, education and childcare, medical services, and employment.

Lana Niland, Saskatoon, SK - Kyiv, Ukraine

On the fifth day of the Russian invasion into Ukraine, Lana Niland was in her apartment in Kyiv as a column of tanks 60-kilometres long inched toward the capital, threatening her very existence. Instead of giving in to fear, Lana decided to act. She founded Ukrainian Patriot.

Ukrainian Patriot is a group of Ukrainian and international volunteers who believe in the future of this country. We procure and deliver critical medical supplies and humanitarian aid to combat-affected communities, as well as volunteer and medical battalions along the frontline.

Five pillars of support guide their actions: medical equipment and medicines; humanitarian assistance including food, water, and hygiene products for people and animals; protective gear; PTSD and psychological trauma care; and rebuilding. The first three pillars are the current priorities; they have begun movement on pillar four in recent weeks.

Throughout this time, Lana and her team have sourced, acquired, and transported to and across Ukraine more than 20 tons of medical supplies and more than 40 tons of food, water, and hygiene products. Every time they deliver aid into combat zones, they evacuate as many civilians as possible on the way out. To date, thanks to an unassuming white van they were able to procure in the spring of 2022, hundreds of civilians have been transported to safety.

Ukrainian Patriot is responding to the energy threats as quickly as possible by sourcing alternative power options (generators, solar units, etc), pulling together winter survival kits, and collecting winter gear throughout Canada.

Volunteerism

Anna Kaminski, Regina

Anna was born in Winnipeg and moved with her family to Saskatchewan at the age of 13. Anna has continuously participated in various Ukrainian groups. Some of her roles in the Regina Ukrainian community include secretary and treasurer of the Ukrainian Women's Association; Ukrainian Orthodox Auditorium Board; the Church Council at the Descent of the Holy Spirit.

Anna is presently the secretary of Selo Gardens Seniors Residence in Regina, a Director with Prosvita, and treasurer of Selo Gardens Seniors Club. Anna has volunteered and participate in many other activities over her 70 years; teaching Sunday school, teaching Ukrainian classes, singing in the church choir, volunteering at local Art Gallery, decorating and food committee for Kyiv Pavilion, knitting for "Angels of Warmth", and assisted with foreign students taking ESL classes.

Youth Achievement

Landon Lavoy, Regina

Landon was born to parents Duane and Lori Lavoy and has one sibling. He attended the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Camp Trident at Crystal Lake as a camper, then became a Camp Counselor in his teenage years, helping supervise and teach the campers aspects of Ukrainian culture.

Landon started his Ukrainian dance career with Tavria Ukrainian School of Dance in Regina and worked his way up to the Ensemble. He has seriously pursued a career in Ukrainian dance since 2013, first in Saskatchewan, and in British Columbia, participating in workshops and Master Classes under eight prominent Ukrainian dance directors in Canada.

From September 2019 to March 2020 Landon studied and trained in a Ukrainian Dance Immersion Program in Ukraine, training with five professional companies there.

Landon has performed professionally in Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Calgary, and Vancouver, and has had the opportunity to perform on tour in Ukraine and Brazil.

Since 2018 Landon has become an accomplished dance instructor, a mentor to young male dancers, and an assistant artistic director. He is currently dancing with the Poltava Ensemble in Regina.

During much of the above-mentioned time, as a very self-motivated young man Landon studied engineering at the University of Regina and has achieved Manufacturing Engineer in Training status.

His determination and strong work ethic has enabled him to be placed on the Dean's List twice, win the Elie and Rose Zalusky Ukrainian Language Scholarship, and attain his B.A.Sc in Industrial Systems Engineering With Distinction.

Lesia Lazurko, Regina

Lesia was born in Regina.

During the past nine years she has been the leader of youth and young adults in both St. Athanasius and St. Basil Ukrainian Catholic Churches in Regina. She organizes monthly gatherings that are part faith based but also include fun activities for the youth.

Once a year Lesia organizes a provincial Catholic youth weekend with faith-based learning, guest speakers, and interactive games that help build relationships that will last a lifetime. She encourages and organizes the youth to help both parishes during many functions, by running coat checks, serving, and cleaning up after meals including dishwashing, and working at various fund-raising events.

Lesia has planned the Puschenia dance and fund-raiser for the Sisters of St. Joseph Orphanages in Ukraine and the Home of Hope in Ukraine, overseeing all the details, from the food, decorations, music, and silent auction.

During Easter Lent she organizes the youth and young adults to lead the Stations of the Cross services in both Regina parishes as well as in Moose Jaw. They have also had hands on experience in the kitchen with the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League learning to bake Ukrainian breads and cook other Ukrainian foods. As a member of St. Basil's choir Lesia now leads the rosary in Ukrainian when called upon and leads the responses during liturgies. She has also been a member of the Christmas choir, carolling and raising funds for the church.

Lesia represents the youth and young adults in monthly parish council meetings at both parishes.