

# **Petrolia & Area Information Sharing Meeting Regarding Ukrainian Immigrants**

**Wednesday, May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

**People's Church – Wyoming, Ontario**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**Handouts** – Tool Kit for Ukrainians Arriving in Lambton County  
Resources List for Community Helpers to Assist with Ukrainian Immigrants Settlement (updated)  
Host Families Screening form

- These handouts are available from the Facebook Group – Save Ukraine – Sarnia Lambton under files -  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1150159255797647/files>

## **Welcome & Greeting**

- Introduction from Carolyn (From Marilyn' Gladu's office)
  - o Introduced Carla Rankin & Rachel Phillips – Carla is helping to coordinate efforts in the Petrolia area to support Ukrainians and would like to host a family.
  - o Rachel Phillips is from Trinity Anglican Church and has offered to volunteer with Carolyn to assist in the process of vetting potential host families and connecting Ukrainians with these hosts. Carolyn & Rachel are working together with Jonathan Verroen (From Sarnia-Lambton) but on the ground in Ukraine volunteering and connecting us with Ukrainians wanting to come to Canada.
- Written Greeting from Marilyn Gladu – read by Carolyn
  - o Message from Marilyn – A message of thanks to all willing to support Ukrainian people come to the Sarnia-Lambton area.
- Things to consider before committing to hosting families in a smaller town. The town will need to come together and offer the supports that Ukrainians will need to settle in the area while also being able to access all required services in Sarnia.

**Our Boots on the Ground Connection** - Johnathon Verroone – He went to Ukraine of his own free will. He ensures families receive all of the needed paperwork, such as visas and biometrics (your pictures and fingerprints) they will need to come to Canada. He went to Ukraine with no specific plan, and while he was there connected with Marilyn Gladu and asked if her office could help. Many years ago, Marilyn was Johnathan's youth leader. Johnathan is working with another Canadian named Anna. She is a nurse that is also volunteering her time. Together, they also assist Ukrainians with transportation to the different appointments for their paperwork and even travel with them when needed.

**Fundraiser** - Lighthouse Community Church is having a fundraiser on June 10<sup>th</sup> - tickets are \$25.00, dinner, and an auction. Funds will be given to support the local Ukrainian support efforts.

<https://sarnialighthouse.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/1303948>

**Map of Ukraine** – on May 20<sup>th</sup>, every province in Ukraine had air raid sirens. This shows the dire need to support these families to get to Canada. This is a site that shows active sirens in Ukraine - <https://linktr.ee/UASA>

**Objective for meeting:**

To come together to discuss the challenges of hosting families outside of the immediate Sarnia area and then decide how best to move forward facing these challenges.  
(perspective *from a non-resident*)

**Challenges**

**1. Transportation to Sarnia, where most resources are located**

- With the rising cost of fuel, travelling back and forth to Sarnia is expensive.
- Having access to transportation for services and employment in Sarnia is necessary for Ukrainians to settle well in a smaller town

**2. Finances – especially considering the rising costs of groceries & gas**

- Presently there is no financial support for host families. The costs associated with supporting these families will lie with the host families.
- There is some financial support for the Ukrainian families from Ontario Works - \$733/month if you are a single person for up to 6 months. You may receive more if you have children. These funds are for the Ukrainian families, we hope they would consider offering some to the host families to support with the costs of gas and food, but that would be their responsibility to choose to do that.
- Airfare – There are no government supports to pay for the air fare for Ukrainians. There were a few flights that arrived to Canada but that has not been ongoing. The cost of airfare will need to be considered when supporting a family.

**3. Communication with other host families and Ukrainian families in order to encourage and support each other**

- A communication strategy needs to be in place to ensure Ukrainians and host families are connected and can support one another.

**4. Local Day Care**

- Child care will be a need for Ukrainian families to allow them to work and to be able to attend appointments when needed.

**YMCA Settlement Services** - Roxanne Gilroy-Machado – They have many supports for Ukrainian families. Roxanne was unable to join us tonight but some of the supports her team of “navigators” can help with - support with paperwork, OHIP applications, drivers licences, connecting with schools etc.

Another excellent resource for Host Families and Ukrainian Families - The Tool Kit for Ukrainians Arriving in Lambton County is also available in Ukrainian and Russian that lists the many services in the area that will offer support. (Created by Maggie Elliott)

**English Version:**

<https://docs.google.com/.../1jZArH6WLfbN-8Mh67Vdx.../edit...>

**Ukrainian Version:**

<https://docs.google.com/.../1UaC.../edit...>

**Russian Version:**

<https://docs.google.com/.../13kpHV3gbh29QF30IdJcB.../edit...>

**Group Suggestions to Overcome Challenges – Open Discussion**

*First steps – what to do, how to do it, who will do it?*

**Transportation Challenges**

- Attendee feels that being outside of Sarnia is not a challenge because volunteers can support with rides. There are many people driving in and out of Petrolia at different times throughout the day to offer transportation to those that need it. It is just a matter of connecting people.
- There would need to be someone in charge of transportation to compile a list of people offering transportation and when they are available.
- Attendee stated that each person could connect with their friends and family to support all the needs that may arise with transportation or finances.
- Attendee states that many people say they want to help, but we need to know those that are genuinely committed to these efforts. There are challenges such as transportation, but these can all be overcome with a committed community
- Question about Driver's Licence – Ukrainians can get their Driver's Licence but they still must follow the graduating licencing system - Test for G1, Then G2, then get a letter from their consulate that will state previous driver experience to get the final G. This can be expediated based on previous driving experience. (Ukrainian woman Iryna, in attendance, has gone through this process recently)
- An Attendee stated there is also an option for an international Driver's Licence which could assist with this.
- Carla Rankin called Lambton Elderly Outreach to discuss their volunteer driving program and asked if they could help, they offered to train a transportation coordinator and also communicate with their volunteer drivers about the needs we may have. Their volunteers are paid for the KMS they drive
- Consensus - Transportation does not seem to be a concern as people will reach out to friends, families, churches, OR other community groups to assist with this.

**Financial Challenges**

- Attendee (Carla Rankin) has had calls about job opportunities for Ukrainians
- Discussion about the medical that may be needed for Ukrainians that want to work – some people may need this for employment, and there are significant costs (around \$300) to get this completed
- An attendee stated that people who are not hosting might want to support financially because they cannot host.

- Attendee suggested connecting with other local charities or churches that may offer tax receipts for financial donations
- Some churches have collected funds to support their host families for utilities and groceries etc. to ensure hosts are not overburdened with expenses
- Suggestions to reach out to local plants to see if they can contribute financially to any needs

## Communication

- Discussion around the Facebook page - **Facebook Page – Save Ukraine Sarnia and Lambton County** - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1150159255797647> - This page was created by Dr. Cassandra Taylor who has done a lot to support Ukrainians coming to Sarnia. This page is an excellent resource for host families and those wanting to help.
- Suggestion to set up a Facebook group for hosts and Ukrainians specific to the Wyoming/Petrolia area, there can be sections for hosts, and Ukrainian families wanting to communicate and share what they need, and communicate with other Ukrainians in the area, Adding more communication to the present facebook site may be overwhelming and make it difficult to connect with people specifically to the Petrolia/Wyoming area

## Other Comments

- Suggestion of having a master list of volunteers for each role – with each volunteer stating what they can support with and if they can assist with transportation state availability (At the back of the room there is a willingness to volunteer form to be filled out)
- This is up to the community to make this happen
- If you are a host family, share the needs you have– do not be afraid to ask for help

A comment from a local host family not able to be here tonight shared- *There are challenges, but the blessings of sharing life together far outweigh the challenges.*

## Next Steps:

### Is up to you

Suggested ways to donate to the Local Ukrainian Supports

Donations can also be made by E-transfer to **Dr. Taylor** at [saveukrainesarnia@gmail.com](mailto:saveukrainesarnia@gmail.com) (No receipts will be issued for these donations)

Donations can also be made by E-transfer to **Johnathan Verroen** at [Johnathan.Verroen@gmail.com](mailto:Johnathan.Verroen@gmail.com) (No receipts will be issued for these donations)

Cheques can also be mailed to/ or dropped off to Trinity Anglican Church

## Trinity Anglican Church

1194 Murphy Rd.

Sarnia, ON

N7S 2Y2

E transfer – [trinity@trinitysarnia.org](mailto:trinity@trinitysarnia.org)

Please note - Ukraine Support

100 percent of all funds donated will go directly to supporting Ukrainians en route to Canada and getting settled in our community. Please ensure to include your mailing address so we can send your charitable receipts at the end of the year.

**Loads of Love – Canadian Registered Charity** – Funds may not go locally, but they have been helping in Ukraine for many years.

<https://www.loadsoflove.org/donate>