

Helping Our Ukrainian Friends

December 2024 Update

Nearly three years on from the full scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, Ukraine's suffering continues.

Our friends across the country tell us of continual aerial attacks and of hours of black outs. On the front lines, the brutal artillery bombardments continue. There is a weariness across the country and an increasing desperation as to what the future holds.

One positive message that we can confidently deliver is that our communities have not forgotten Ukraine. And that we continue to

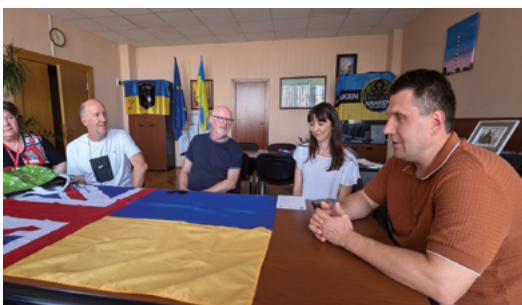
do all we can to support them. Our 19th delivery of humanitarian aid set off for Ukraine on 11 December and was our largest yet – 18 towering pallets of food, clothes, blankets, medicines, Power banks, Chrome books and gift boxes for children. And in the last 8 months alone we have raised another £85,000, taking our fundraising total to £320,000.

We want to thank all our supporters for their help and assistance in 2024. Thanks to all those who have donated food and clothes, those who have given money and those who have worked so far to make things happen. You can see from recent videos on our Facebook page just how much this support means to our Ukrainian Friends.

Our work will continue in 2025, but we thought a brief summary of our work in 2024 would be of interest to all.

Some key numbers for 2024

- Four deliveries to Kyiv this year; delivering 28 tonnes of food
- £100,000 raised in the year
- Three 4x4 vehicles delivered to Kyiv in August
- Three medical vacuum machines for sealing wounds for Sumy hospital
- £2000 of camping stoves
- £1500 for generators, torches and basic sanitary wear for Sorda, a charity for the deaf in Odesa
- Several drone detectors for military units
- Summer camp for Ukrainian war widows in June funded and supported with volunteers.
- 200 Chrome books delivered to refugee children in Peterborough's twin city of Vinnytsia.
- Supporting two new Ukrainian charities: the Cross Charity and Person to Person.
- 46,000 kilos of potatoes bought for delivery to front line communities
- 250 kilos of meat bought for a field kitchen in the Donbas!



Meeting with the Deputy Mayor of Vinnytsia, August



18 pallets on route to Kyiv, December 2024

HOUF Activities - July-December 2024.

Delivering 4x4 vehicles - August

Working with our partners, Sustain Ukraine, we purchased three 4x4 vehicles in Bucharest (cheaper and left hand drive) in early August. A team of six HOUF volunteers flew out to pick up the vehicles and led by Sustain's Dylan Owen, drove through Romania, risking the rather erratic roads and drivers, and on to Kyiv, via Vinnytsia.



Cross Charity at Work

In Vinnytsia, we were able to meet the Deputy Mayor and hand over the first consignment of several hundred Chrome books from Peterborough City Council.

The team stayed for two nights in Kyiv, handing the 4x4s over to Ukrainian military units, who will use them for casualty evacuation. They were also able to meet with our partners at Cross Charity. Being in Kyiv is a sobering experience: on the one

hand, life proceeds as normal and it can feel like you're on a city break. But then the air raid siren goes off, or you turn a corner and see a sea of flags, each one commemorating a fallen soldier, and you realise that you are in a country at war. The team travelled back to Poland on the train.

September Fly-Buy

Boosted by the success of our fundraising and particularly Phil Newby's Jukeboxathon and Susie Hall's August garden party, a team from HOUF's Northern Powerhouse (Sheffield and Dronfield) and Helpston, visited Kyiv in September with £15,000 to spend. Working again with Sustain and Cross Charity they were able to buy large quantities of generators, Powerbanks, and food, plus a trailer for a front line unit. There are some great photos of their purchases including 250 kilos of meat from a market stall! They also bought arts, crafts, and sports equipment for the Smart Programme in Kharkiv, supporting young people in that war torn city. And sent much needed supplies to refugee families in Chernivtsi, who we have been supporting since June 2022, as well as for a kindergarten in Kharkiv.

December delivery

In early December we were able to send out 18 pallets of donated goods, far more than we anticipated and certainly our largest delivery so far. Many individuals and organisations contributed, but



Buying food in Kyiv, September 2024

particular thanks to Mountain Warehouse for organising a donation point at the store in Stamford, the Ness Group of Churches, All Saints Church, Peterborough, Rotary Clubs in Sheffield, Peterborough and Market Deeping, and the Dore Methodist Church.

Sadly, the security situation in Kyiv was judged to be too risky for any of the HOUF team to journey out to help unload the lorry and to buy goods there, but we were able to send a further £9000 to our partners to make that happen.



4x4 delivery to Kyiv, August 2024



Fundraising.

We have been incredibly fortunate to have so much fund raising support throughout 2024. The support of Peterborough company, **Princebuild**, has been quite outstanding - in total they have raised over £32,000 for our work, mainly through their participation in the Lincoln 10k run in April, but they also provided vans and fuel for our June delivery. **Friends of Chernobyl's Children** also continued to be at the heart of our work, and donated well over £30,000, focusing on supporting our Summer Camp in Poland.

Other local companies have been by our side too. **Comparethemarket** have helped with the purchase of 50 Power banks and **Cross Keys Homes** purchased LED lights for the June drive out.

In recent months there has been a number of successful fundraising events. **The Pensby café** on the Wirral organised a sponsored cycle to Ukraine (on static bikes) event. **Ashton Fete** donated its proceedings. **The Deepings Inner Wheel** held a fashion show in Maxey Village Hall - which also separately hosted a local fundraising coffee

morning. There was a quiz at All Saints Church in Peterborough and who can forget **Phil Newby's** amazing Juke-boxathon in July, with Phil subjecting himself to 24 hours of nonstop music chosen by friends, family and HOUF members!

Susie Hall's garden party on 31 August raised £7,000 for the purchase of more generators, Powerbanks and other products that can help bring light and energy this winter. With much of the Ukrainian energy infrastructure deliberately destroyed by Russia, estimates are that there will only be 20% enough energy this winter. Our fundraising year ended with the third **Art 4 Ukraine** exhibition, with over 50 artists displaying their work at Helpston Village Hall, and the enchanting concert by **Singers of Note** in the Long Gallery at Milton Hall on 30 November - both raised over £2000 each. Tremendous efforts by Will Thompson and David Turnock to make these events happen.

Quietly in the background we have a number of **regular individual donors** too - they know who they are. We are deeply grateful for their continued support, and for the hard work of all those knitting, making cards (the wonderful **Liz Symonds** has now raised over £5,000 selling her Cards for Ukraine), cycling or running races! Thank you!

Our partners.

We couldn't make any of this happen without the support and hard work of our key partners - just a few words on them below. We are not only thankful for their help, but also in awe of their bravery and determination.

Pastor Aleksander - we have been working with Pastor Aleksander since the start. Based in Rivne, the Pastor makes regular trips delivering essentials to communities in southern and eastern Ukraine. A lot of our donated items go through Pastor Aleksander, and he sends regular videos of them being handed out. We also helped him to buy those 46,000 kilos of potatoes! Sadly, we weren't able to visit him this year, but we are in regular contact, hopefully we will see him again in 2025.

Sustain Ukraine - we started working with Sustain this year. This charity is based in Bucharest and Kyiv and has been working since the start of the war, delivering aid to front line communities and to military units. They were instrumental in purchasing the 4x4s we took to Kyiv in August and in delivering the supplies we bought on the two fly/buy trips in April and September. Their main team - Dylan, Max and Neil - are fearless in driving supplies to where they are most needed. They are also building a Warriors' Retreat to offer care and assistance to soldiers suffering from PTSD.



Sustain Ukraine
Delivering Supplies to
Military Units, 2024



Milton Hall Fundraising Concert, November 2024

HOUF has made a donation to this project too.

HUGS - based in Kharkiv, HUGS operates a garage where military and civilian vehicles are repaired, and also runs a programme for young people - the SMART programme. Our team met with members of SMART in September and we were able to supply large quantities of games, arts and crafts materials and money to buy fresh fruit.

The Cross Charity - we were introduced to Cross Charity by a Ukrainian lady studying English in Peterborough! And what a great introduction that was. Cross make regular trips to just behind the front-line where they set up a field kitchen, making soup and stew for soldiers and members of the community. As a Christian charity they also offer moral and spiritual support. Check out the



HUGS Smart Kids Programme, Kharkiv

videos on our Facebook page and admire the size of their cauldrons! We have helped fund several trips now and made some huge food purchases with them in Kyiv's markets.

Galya Mokryk - Galya isn't really a partner, she's a key member of the HOUF team. She moved back to Kyiv from Poland last year, after fleeing with her three

daughters in 2022. She is our anchor in Ukraine and tirelessly helps sort out deliveries and links with partners. She is also the main organiser of the Summer Camp, with our friend Kashia. HOUF has also regularly helped her husband, Igor, who is Head of Adult Heart Surgery at the Kyiv Heart Institute. This year we sent seven more heart valves.

Next steps.

The future is very uncertain.

We all sincerely hope for a just peace soon. But we are sure that whatever happens on the ground, there will be a need for continued support either as fighting continues or as Ukraine tries to rebuild after the war. We are planning to continue with our programme of fly/buys, drive outs and support for the Summer Camp in 2025, hopefully making a total of five more trips to Poland and Ukraine. Our next collection campaign is likely to be in late Spring 2025, but we hope to be in Kyiv, buying supplies there well before that, if we can.

Please continue to support us.



JustGiving

You can donate money - <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/helpingourukrainianfriends2023>



You can keep up with our work on Facebook - www.helpingourukrainianfriends.com



Or on our website - <https://www.helpingourukrainianfriends.com>

We are always collecting tinned and dried food, candles, medicines, sanitary products, batteries, Powerbanks and arts and crafts equipment for children. If you'd like to arrange collection/delivery just let us know.

What we particularly need is to open new collection points. This means more people can hear about our work and make more donations! Let us know if you can help!

Contact us

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