

## Art Therapy Camp for Orphans and Displaced Youth in Ukraine



UCHI has partnered with Ukrainian non-profit organization “Тепла Долоня» (Warm Palms) to finance art therapy camps for orphans and underprivileged youth displaced from regions in eastern and southern Ukraine as a result of the Russian invasion. Funds from the Ukrainian Humanitarian Relief Fund (UHRF) financed encampments held August 15 - 25 and October 21 - 30, 2022.

Fifty three children took part in the August encampment and 50 children attended October's. The camps are held on the grounds of a former Soviet-era tuberculosis sanatorium in Zamlynyya in Ukraine's Luts'k oblast named

“The International Integration Center,” which the international aid association Caritas redeveloped. Father Yan Buras runs the center and serves Divine Liturgy daily at the Center's chapel and also serves a parish in Lyubomyl', which is about 20 km from the Center. Program Director, Tetyana Myalkovska, runs the program along with a staff of ten trainers - a medical doctor, three psychologists, an art therapist, three volunteer team leaders, and two teachers. An additional four master artists join the program for two-day stays training the children.

Children come from orphanages and shelters - 90 percent of whom were evacuated from areas of southern and eastern Ukraine under Russian attack or occupation. The sound of air raid sirens is almost constant throughout Ukraine, but the children experience peace and quiet during their time at the Center. Lights must be turned out at the Center at times, though it is in the forest far from the cities where the sirens rage. The nearby cities of Luts'k and Kovel' were bombed during the October program, and the area's electrical plant was destroyed. The Center has multiple generators which can supply electricity and heat when needed.



The intensive ten-day encampments use the most popular methods and techniques of practical classes in art therapy, as well as spiritual support, rehabilitation using natural resources, contact with animals, hippotherapy (horseback riding), and sports. The children actively work with coaches, master artists, a psychologist, and volunteer assistants. While at the beginning of the encampment the children demonstrate social isolation, low self-esteem, aloofness, excessive anxiety, aggressiveness, and demonstrative behavior, by the end of the program they learn to show their own emotions, explain their psychological and physical state openly in the form of “I” messages, and to talk about their problems. The children work with psychologists and trainers and actively develop communicative social skills. The positive effects of the therapy are profound and clear.



The children experience regenerative physical and psychological rest at the Center. Time spent outdoors and participating in creative workshops contributes to their rehabilitation. Father Yan conducts daily prayers and services, which contribute to their psychological and spiritual state of development. The staff show them attention and love. The art therapy classes enhance the children's use of imagination, fine motor skills, creativity, and expand their thinking and perception of the world. They deal with the trauma they have experienced and develop interests and skills they can take with them for a lifetime.

The organizers are hoping to hold two special holiday sessions in January 2023 — with your help!

### Support the Ukrainian Humanitarian Relief Fund (UHRF) - Help us Help More Children!

Every penny of all donations to the UHRF go to assist those affected by the war; every penny goes to a fully-vetted and trustworthy recipient; every penny shows a specific, transparent story reported back to donors. UCHI is 501(c)3 corporation - all donations are deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

**Online:** [www.uchi-us.com](http://www.uchi-us.com) - click the “Donate” button

**Mail:** Send checks payable to “UCHI” at 610 Bouquet Street - Carnegie, PA 15106

**In person:** At the [Dollar Bank](#) location nearest you, asking for the Ukrainian Humanitarian Relief Fund or at the [Ukrainian Selfreliance of Western Pennsylvania Federal Credit Union](#) - 700 Washington Avenue, Suite 100 - Carnegie, PA 15106.