

# HELP US HELP

NEWSLETTER SPRING/SUMMER 2020

help us help u

## A letter from our Interim Executive Director



Dear Help Us Help (HUH) Community,

I hope this newsletter finds you and your loved ones safe and healthy. We are all living through challenging times right now and I know that everyone is doing what they can to support one another and their community and so is Help Us Help.

I am honoured to have been serving as the Interim Executive Director of HUH since December 2019. As a long-time volunteer with HUH, I have watched the organization grow and adapt its programming to the needs of Ukraine, and now is no exception.

HUH made the difficult decision in April 2020 to cancel our Summer Camp this year. Our Board of Directors put the safety of those who participate in our programs first and decided that our resources should be allocated towards helping vulnerable populations get through this difficult time of global uncertainty.

HUH took action and started several important initiatives since a quarantine was announced in Ukraine on March 11, 2020. New programs were designed to address a shortage of basic life necessities, as well as some of the mental health stressors that individuals are facing while in isolation. Programs include an **Online Seminar Series** for our past and present scholarship students, an **Online Buddy Program** between our past and present scholarship students and HUH volunteers in Canada and the USA, **Online Support Groups** for veterans and their families, and the **COVID-19 Children's Relief Project**.

Locally, we are encouraging our volunteers to support Ukrainian Canadian Social Services in helping to deliver food to families and seniors in need.

Details of all of these timely and important initiatives can be found throughout the newsletter. Please reach out if you would like to get involved in any way. None of our work would be possible without the backing and generosity of our HUH community. Please accept my heartfelt thanks for all your support over the years. Our work continues and we are grateful for your ongoing support. Stay safe and keep well.

With gratitude,

Krystina Waler

Check out what's inside this issue!

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- BABY CARE INITIATIVE
- MEET OUR TEAM!



**COVID-19  
CHILDREN'S  
RELIEF**

# HELP US HELP DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES IN UKRAINE DURING COVID-19

**DONATE NOW**

Any donation over \$20 dollars is eligible for a tax receipt.



**Meest**



help us help u

**\$100**

**Will feed a family of four for a month**

**\$50**

**Provides a family of four with needed hygiene products**

Flour, 1 kg	4
Buckwheat (900 g)	2
Rice groats (900 g)	3
Couscous groats (500 g)	2
Oatmeal with fruits ( 500 g )	4
Sea salt (250 g)	4
Sugar (900 g)	4
Spaghetti (400 g)	4
Pasta butterflies (400 g)	4
Tuna pieces (170 g)	2
Mayonnaise Provencal (190 g)	4
Long-term storage milk Selianske (950 g)	2
Sunflower oil (920 g)	2
Cookies Maria (155 g)	8
Waffles Artek (80 g)	4
Natural honey (250 g)	2
Green tea (90 g)	2
Black tea (90 g)	2
Ground coffee of Old Lviv (100 g)	4
Canned corn (420 g)	2
Canned peas (420 g)	2
Cacao (250 g)	2
Bulgur (500 g)	2
Ketchup or tomato paste (400 g)	4
Canned pork (525 g)	2

Toothpaste Gentle mint Blend-a-med (100 ml)	1
Toothbrushes	4
Toilet paper (1 pcs, 4 rolls)	4
Chloride-free Antibacterial washing gel (850 ml)	1
Dishwashing gel Gala (1 lt)	1
Household gloves (1 pcs)	4
Garbage bags of 35 l	2
Laundry soap (1 pcs, 200 g)	2
Wet wipes 72 pcs.	1
Liquid soap (330 ml)	2
Kitchen sponges, triple effect 5 + 1 (6 pcs)	1
Wash powder Gala (4 kg)	1
Shampoo Kallos (1 lt)	1



**To learn more about this initiative, visit:**

**[www.covid19childrensrelief.ca](http://www.covid19childrensrelief.ca)**

All of the packages are curated and delivered by Meest.

Visit: [www.giftsforukraine.com](http://www.giftsforukraine.com)





# COVID-19 CHILDREN'S RELIEF INITIATIVE

*Temporary New Program in Response to COVID-19*

Ukraine has among the highest numbers of institutionalized children in Europe. The majority of these children have families that are unable to provide or care for them. Just under 100,000 children were living in residential institutions or rehabilitation centres prior to the quarantine announced on March 11, 2020.

In an effort to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus approximately 50,000 children were sent home to their biological families. There is great concern that, due to a lack of support from social services in place, these children and families will endure additional hardships during the pandemic.

Mr. Mykola Kuleba, *the Ombudsman for Children with the President of Ukraine*, has long been an advocate for Ukraine to take steps in transitioning from a society that puts parentless or neglected children in institutions, to one with an extensive Social-Care network that allows children to safely remain in their homes or to enter into foster care. The pandemic has brought about an opportunity for Ukraine to begin this transition by focusing on the needs of the families of children that have been sent home.

With your support, these vulnerable children can remain where they belong, at home, with their families. Immediate relief in the form of food and hygiene kits alleviates the parents' stress of being ill-equipped to care for the health and safety of their children. These kits are distributed by a qualified social worker who visit the homes of the identified vulnerable children to assess their situations and ensure their safety.

This initiative is being led by *Help Us Help* and the *Canada-Ukraine Foundation*. It is supported by *Meest Corporation* and the *Ukrainian Canadian Congress*, in partnership with the *Ombudsman for Children with the President of Ukraine*.

The ultimate goal of the *COVID-19 Children's Relief Project* is to help move deinstitutionalization reforms forward in the country. The kits and social worker visits are the first steps in ensuring these children remain with their families beyond the threat of COVID-19.



# HALYNA LOZOVITSKA'S FAMILY OF SEVEN CHILDREN



Photos: Halyna Lozovitska and her family and the support that they received through the COVID-19 Children's Relief Initiative



After graduating from a vocational school in Berdychiv, Ukraine, Halyna married at the age of 19 and gave birth to four children: Serhiy, Vlada, Nastya, and Andriy. Although her husband did not leave the family, he was not involved in the upbringing of the children. He avoided contact with them and began drinking heavily.

In 2012, Halyna's husband suddenly died, leaving her alone with four children. Halyna found herself in a very difficult financial situation and as a result, made the difficult decision to place her two eldest sons into institutional care.

Despite their troubles, with support from the Berdychiv's religious community and social services, a few years later Halyna was able to bring her family back together, re-marry and welcome three more children: Bohdan, Antonina, and Timofey.

Unfortunately, a series of events resulted in the children having to re-enter institutional care. The family is currently faced with many obstacles during the pandemic including her husband's disability, the son's health problems, and very tight living quarters. Despite all of that, Halyna is thrilled to have everyone at home again and is determined to keep her family together.

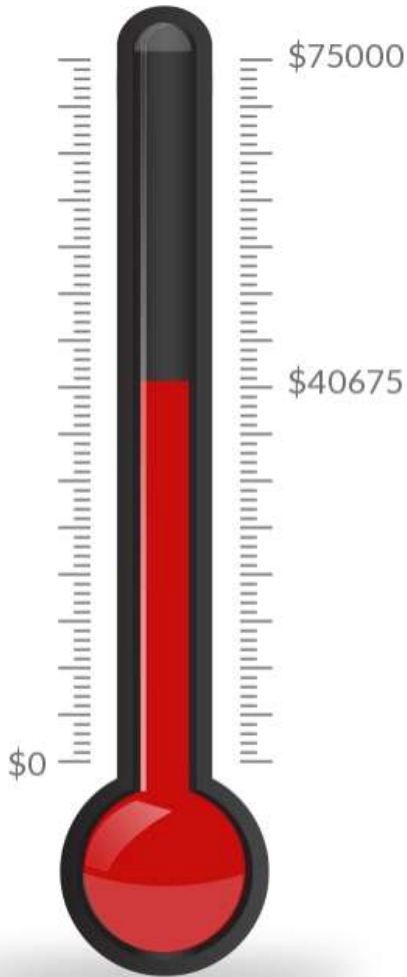
Through the support of our joint COVID-19 Relief Initiative, Halyna and her family have had one less thing to worry about and have been able to enjoy being together while waiting to hear what supportive measures the government is taking to try and help families like this one stay together.

**Make a positive and direct impact on Ukrainian families in need. DONATE TODAY!**



# COVID-19 CHILDREN'S RELIEF INITIATIVE

Help Us Reach  
Our Goal!!



Photos: Boxes being delivered to families in-need in Zhytomyr Oblast

Thanks to the generosity of donors across North America and Ukraine, **250 families** have received monthly food and hygiene kits.

These kits are curated and delivered by **Meest** and distributed by social workers wearing personal protective equipment as they visit the families to assess the health and well-being of the children and their environment.



Not only is this initiative providing immediate relief to hundreds of families, but, importantly, it is helping implement social support systems that will allow children who are in safe circumstances to remain with their biological families beyond the threat of COVID-19.

Help families like these stay together beyond Coronavirus quarantine measures!  
**DONATE TODAY!**

# ONLINE SEMINAR SERIES FOR SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS

## ADAPTING TO PRESENT-DAY REALITIES WHILST CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE NEW GENERATION

Due to the COVID-19 quarantine, Help Us Help (HUH) was not able to carry-out an in-person retreat for our scholarship students as originally planned. In order to continue to offer our scholarship students opportunities to further develop life-skills while following Ukraine's quarantine directive, an online seminar series was created. This initiative launched on May 9th, 2020 inviting both past and present scholarship students to participate.

During the first seminar, HUH President and Founder, Ruslana Wrzesnewskyj, welcomed **33 individuals**, including current scholarship students, alumni of the scholarship program, HUH volunteers and HUH staff.

In total, HUH hosted **11 online seminars** over three weeks with participants that were enthused and engaged with the speakers. As part of leadership training, current scholarship students were given an opportunity to act as the "moderator" during the online seminar series. They introduced the topic of the seminar and speaker, as well as fielded questions from participants.

Several of the online seminars were interactive and focused on team-work and communication. During these seminars, break-out rooms were created and smaller teams would discuss the question that was posed to them. The participants enjoyed the team-building and the opportunity to interact on a more personal level with each other at a time where they were feeling very isolated from the world. For individuals unable to attend the meetings, video recordings of each online seminar, as well as presentations, videos, and comments, were uploaded to the seminar series Facebook group.

### Seminar topics included:

- HEALTH & WELLNESS - staying positive in a pandemic
- JOB SEARCHING & CAREER GUIDANCE - "how to"
- PSYCHOTHERAPY - how to navigate a pandemic
- VOLUNTEERISM - community engagement
- BUSINESS - online sales, creating your own business
- ENGLISH LANGUAGE - importance of languages
- CRITICAL THINKING - in a pandemic
- POSITIVE THINKING - the key to being successful
- MENTAL HEALTH - emotional intelligence
- WORK & TRAVEL - experiences of a HUH alumni
- SPEAKING - self-expression and public speaking





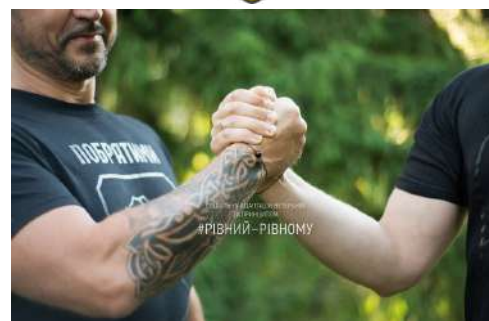
# INTRODUCTION TO PEER-TO-PEER TRAINING FOR SPOUSES OF VETERANS

Help Us Help (HUH), in partnership with Ukrainian NGO Pobratymy and Veteran Hub in Kyiv, is proud to launch a new veterans' relief program encompassed within HUH's "**The Return/Повернення**" Project.

In addition to the established "**The Return/Повернення**" Retreat, Weekly Veteran Support Group Meetings and Post-Combat Humanitarian Assistance programs, in 2020-2021 we are introducing Peer-to-Peer Training for Spouses of Veterans.

This new program seeks to empower spouses of veterans to deal with their personal psychological trauma related to their partner's combat experience. In addition, the program teaches them how to effectively support their partner and children, other veterans, and other spouses of veterans.

The program is divided into **five stages** that occur over six months. The first four stages are executed at the Veteran Hub in Kyiv and the fifth and final stage takes place at a secluded location in the Carpathian mountains in Ukraine.



## THE STAGES:

### Understanding trauma and shock

Behavioural changes are assessed and analyzed both on a physiological and psychological level. As such, this stage focuses on two key and critical factors: trauma and shock. These two themes are explored with participants in relation to body systems which include hormonal function. Proper understanding of trauma and shock provides the foundation for subsequent training stages.

### Physical and social strategies for working with post-shock anxiety and trauma:

The second stage consists of two phases. The first phase helps participants identify a support network of individuals with whom they can comfortably and safely identify with and speak to about their trauma and shock experiences. The second part focuses on developing strategies that allow an individual to appropriately communicate, interact with, and support others who have experienced similar trauma.

### Shock and trauma recovery:

Stage three is focused on the principle that recovery is supported through increased awareness, insight and acceptance of past shock and trauma experiences. This stage involves various means to enable participant growth and development such as group therapy, 1:1 therapy sessions, constructive rehabilitative group activities as well as life skills activities.

### Reintegration and Post-Traumatic Growth:

The fourth stage is focused on understanding the new skills that were developed throughout the training, as well as utilizing those skills to reintegrate oneself with his/her community and to create personal goals for his/her future.

### "Повернення//The Return" Family Retreat

*(this stage is combined with our previously established program)*

All stages use a peer-to-peer training approach. Currently, this program accepts 25 spouses of veterans. These spouses work with two military psychologists (one of whom is a Ukrainian veteran) and four graduates of our previously run programs over a six-month training period.

**DONATE TODAY!**

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# HELP US HELP'S BUDDY PROGRAM

Help Us Help's *Buddy Program* was developed in an effort to provide a reliable point of social connection during "social isolation". Launched in May 2020, the *Buddy Program* involves **42 of the charity's past and present scholarship students from Ukraine** and **32 Help Us Help volunteers** from across North America!

The goal of the *Buddy Program* is to help maintain the mental health of the Help Us Help family throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and to help form and maintain friendships between our Ukrainian and North American community members. The program also provides an opportunity for the scholarship students to practice conversational English, and volunteers to practice conversational Ukrainian. Read on and learn more about Lily and Markian's experiences with the Buddy Program!



Looking to "do good" during COVID-19?

**Volunteer for our Buddy Program.**

Pair up with one of Help Us Help's Scholarship Students to:

- Provide a much-needed human connection
- Reinforce Ukrainian language
- Help students practice English



## LILY POTOCZNY'S EXPERIENCE

"Quarantine has made me feel a little lonely recently, so when Help us Help announced a *Buddy Program* that virtually matched Canadian volunteers with a "buddy" in Ukraine I was eager to join. I have been paired with two amazing people: Vlad and Katerina, both of whom I have had the opportunity to connect with.

The *Buddy Program* has given me the opportunity to practice my Ukrainian. When I am speaking with Katerina, we only speak in Ukrainian and when I speak with Vlad, his English is already amazing, so we use the opportunity to improve his grammar and vocabulary.

Quarantine and isolation can be tough on a person's mental health. Being part of this program makes you feel like you aren't so alone. By simply talking to someone, sharing laughs, and bonding about common interests, your spirits are instantly lifted.

Vlad and I met at *Winter Camp* two years ago, but Katerina I have never met. I am excited to be able to grow these friendships at a distance as we continue talking. Both are amazing people and so easy to talk to. It feels as though I have known them for a lifetime. Thank you Help Us Help!"



Photo: Lily Potoczny (top right) connecting online with her "buddy" Vlad



# HELP US HELP'S BUDDY PROGRAM

## MARKIAN AND MYKOLA'S STORY

Mykola and I became “buddies” at my first Help Us Help summer camp in 2015 in Vorokhta, Ukraine. I remember being nervous that my Ukrainian wasn't “good enough” to survive two weeks on my own in the Carpathian Mountains. We were paired together as counsellors for a group of 15 teenagers from all over Ukraine.

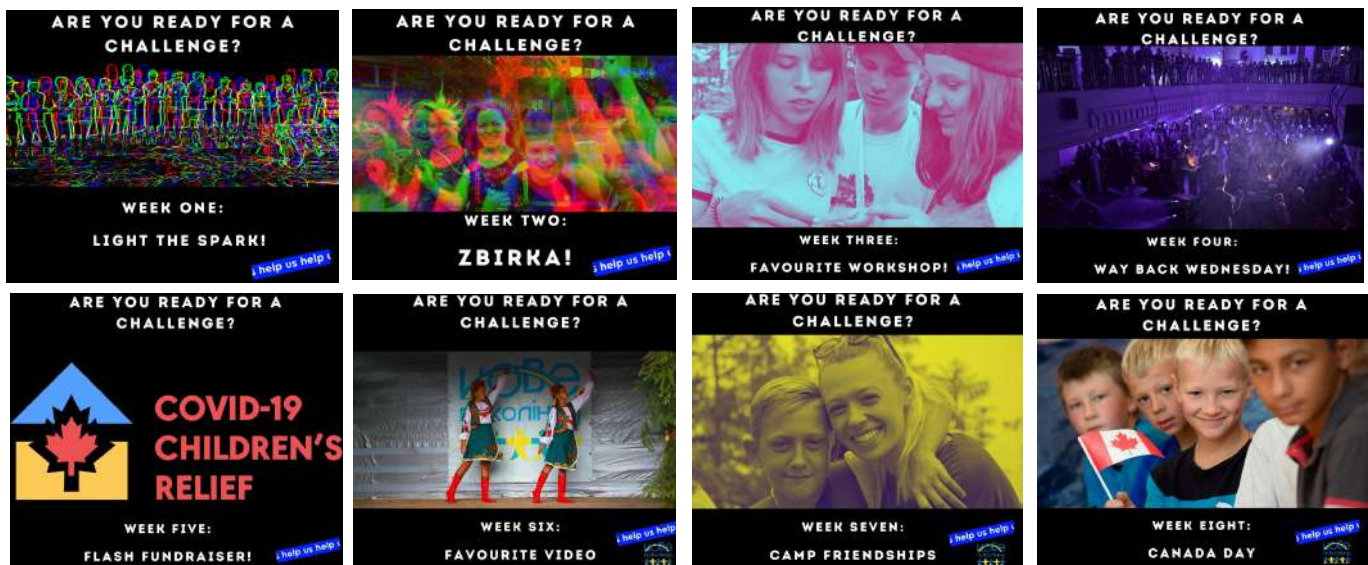
Mykola knew everything. If I didn't know where something was or what to do, he always had an answer. We quickly bonded over our love of sports, pizza, and singing around campfires. I later learned that Mykola had attended the camp as a youth and was a graduate of HUH's Scholarship Program.

My fondest memories include hiking Hoverla, swimming, playing baseball, ping-pong, and learning mixed-martial arts. I will never forget our late-night campfires where a small group of us would sing under millions of stars and talk about life. I am grateful that the buddy program allowed us to reconnect through weekly video-calls. Mykola now lives in the Czech Republic with his wife and daughter. He beams when talking about his family. He's a proud family man who speaks pure Ukrainian in his home. Mykola asked me to speak English to him so he can continue to develop his English-language skills, which he believes necessary for living successfully in Europe. Since churches have been closed, the buddy program has been a great way for me to practice my Ukrainian — Baba, and Dido would be happy. Going forward, we plan to continue this weekly routine. I can't wait to visit Mykola and his family in Prague!



Photos: Markian and Mykola on top of Hoverla (left), Markian (top right) and Mykola chatting online

## JOIN OUR WEEKLY SOCIAL MEDIA CHALLENGES!



Social media platforms have been bursting with creative challenges during the COVID-19 quarantine. Our organization has joined in on the fun to engage the online Help Us Help community! Our goal is to keep spirits high and share positivity through these trying times. Join Us! Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to participate in upcoming challenges!

 Instagram: [helpushelp.charity](https://www.instagram.com/helpushelp.charity)  Facebook : [Help Us Help](https://www.facebook.com/HelpUsHelp)

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# BABY CARE INITIATIVE

Help Us Help supports youth in their transition out of the orphanages. While you may have heard of our Scholarship program, our lesser-known post-orphanage initiative involves providing support to past campers and scholarship students who are starting families of their own.

Я, Луцький Олександр Васильович, народився 23 травня 1992 року в місті Івано-Франківськ. Батьки, Луцька Тетяна та Луцький Василь померли до 1998 року, через що мене віддали до школи-інтернат для дітей-сиріт та дітей, позбавлених батьківського піклування.

Мама і тато – два міцних крила в долі дитини, які обіймуть, захистять від негод, підтримають у польоті просторами світу, виведуть у повноцінне самостійне життя.....нажалі я цього не мав...я був самотнім...але доля приготувала мені багато подарунків в житті! Поїхавши на зимові і літні табори ще дитиною, які організував НУНТС, я дізнався багато нового, я почав змінюватися... розвинув навички спілкування, раніше мені тяжко було спілкуватися з людьми, позбавився деяких комплексів, що допомогло мені в подальшому в роботі бармена. Після школи, будучи стипендіатом, на табір я їздив вже як вихователь...Ось тоді я зрозумів, яка титанічна праця вкладена в організацію та проведення таборів, скільки коштів збирається, щоб допомогти дітям, таким як я був раніше. І мені хочеться бути часткою цього всього.

Я познайомився з багатьма цікавими людьми, з якими хотів би спілкуватися і в подальшому моєму житті. Хотів би сказати їм величезне ДЯКУЮ, за все, що було для мене зроблено. Підтримка Help Us Help свідчить про те, що ви чудово розумієте сучасні економічні негаразди і не хочете залишитися осторонь проблем дітей, позбавлених батьківського піклування. Ви відкрили своє серце, розділили з нею свою любов і душевне тепло.

Сьогодні як у нашій країні, так і у всьому світі відбуваються певні негаразди. І у вирішенні всіх проблемних питань активну участь беруть саме волонтери. Своїми вчинками вони показують приклад, що, об'єднавши зусилля, можна здолати будь-які перешкоди. Волонтери дають нам розуміння того, що найважливішим для кожного мають бути саме людські цінності – життя, свобода, доброта до ближнього. Тож кожного дня ми маємо робити щось на благо людства, беручи приклад з наших канадських волонтерів.

З майбутньою дружиною ми познайомилися в Карпатах, я був барменом, а дружина офіціанткою. Ми хочемо розповісти та висловити безмежну вдячність за матеріальну допомогу для нас. Того року у нас народився маленький синочок Данило, йому на разі 10 місяців, ми щасливі батьки!



*Photos: Scholarship Program alumni, Sasha Lutskiy and his growing family*



## BABY CARE INITIATIVE CONTINUED

Ми отримуємо матеріальну допомогу з Канади від Help Us Help і ми безмежно цьому вдячні, так як у кожного буває не простий час, це для нас надважливо!!! Хороші іграшки, багато одягу, все дуже гарне та потрібне. Також ми отримали коляску, яка просто нереально крута та винослива для наших українських доріг, матрас для синопка, який дуже зручний та корисний для його маленької розвиваючої спинки, постіль, взуття.

Я не можу передати, як це цінно, і жаль, що текстом та фото не передаються емоції на 100%. Ми цінуємо кожну річ, завдяки цій допомозі, ми впевнені у наступному дні, ми знаємо, що син має одяг на осінь, зиму, літо та весну, я впевнений, що кожна мама та тато хоче, щоб у їхнього малюка було все, тому я з впевненістю можу сказати, що завдяки цій допомозі ми маємо УСЕ... Я щиро ДЯКУЮ кожній людині, яка до цього долучається в Help Us Help, яка допомагає нам, і ще таким молодим сім'ям як наша, ви робите старт для нашого щасливого майбутнього життя!



### WOULD YOU LIKE TO SUPPORT THIS HELP US HELP INITIATIVE?

Donate your new or gently-used baby items!



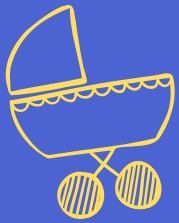
We will be accepting donations in the fall season (provided it is safe to do so).

We accept baby clothing, beginner toys, shoes, and baby gear. Kindly please launder the clothing, and make sure it is in excellent condition. Also, please ensure that all the parts are present when donating larger items. We cannot accept broken items or items with missing parts.

Contact our Donations Coordinator, Danusia Wysochanskyj for a pick-up or schedule a drop-off of your baby items: [donations@helpushelp.charity](mailto:donations@helpushelp.charity) or Tel. 1 (647) 406-4228

Help Us Help is extremely grateful for your generosity and support!

Дуже вам дякуємо!



***Help Us Help believes that there is no place for racism or intolerance of any kind in society. On a daily basis, we work to strengthen human rights but we can always do better. We will continue to listen and adapt our programming to respond to the needs of the Black Community, Indigenous Peoples and other marginalized groups across Canada and Ukraine.***

***Help Us Help вважає, що у сучасному суспільстві немає місця расизму чи будь-якої дискримінації людини. Наша команда працює над тим, щоб захищати права людей і ми намагаємось робити все для цього кожного дня. Ми будемо продовжувати прислухатися до потреб усіх громад та маргіналізованих груп, щоб адаптовувати наші програми згідно з їхніми потребами як у Канаді так і в Україні.***

# MEET OUR HELP US HELP TEAM !



**Krystina Waler**  
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**HELP US HELP IS EXCITED TO WELCOME TWO NEW YOUTH INTERNS TO OUR TEAM THIS SUMMER!  
DANA AND TAIASA WILL BE JOINING US FOR 8 WEEKS THROUGH THE CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM.**

## WONDERING HOW TO DONATE?

**Donate ONLINE RIGHT NOW!**

**Visit: [www.helpushelp.charity/donate](http://www.helpushelp.charity/donate)**

*\*\*Consider signing up to be a monthly donor. For \$150/month you could sponsor a Scholarship Student*

**Send cheques to:**

Help Us Help Memo: \*Select project\*  
PO BOX 84600 PRO Bloor West,  
Toronto, ON.,  
M6S 4Z7

**Our projects (for memo line):**

COVID-19 Children's Relief Initiative

Help Us Help The Children  
- Summer Camp  
- Winter Camp

Veterans Relief Programs / Повернення

Scholarship Program

## HELP US HELP HAS A NEW OFFICE!

**Our office is at the corner of Jane and Bloor!**

*\*Our office is currently closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.\**

2445 Bloor St W #201  
Toronto, ON  
M6S 1P7



Instagram: [helpushelp.charity](https://www.instagram.com/helpushelp.charity)

facebook : Help Us Help

website: [www.helpushelp.charity](http://www.helpushelp.charity)

**OR call us at:**  
647-406-4228

## YOUR LASTING LEGACY

A gift in your Will is one the most special gifts you can give. A gift of any size is appreciated and will make a real and lasting impact for Ukraine's children and veterans in need.

Leaving a legacy gift to Help Us Help is a promise to help form an ever-brighter future for Ukrainian children and Veterans, for generations to come. Visit our website to download your copy of a Help Us Help Legacy Package.

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**Memo:**  
Indicate WHICH project  
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