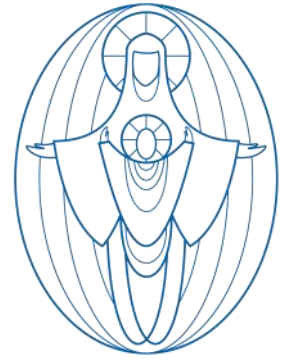


From the Heart



ST. NICHOLAS SCHOOL, IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY ACADEMY,
AND IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY SCHOOL ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

WELCOMING—PROVIDING—EMBRACING

“The early years of the School, were heady times: exciting, alive; new immigrants were pouring into Canada, looking for a better life; bringing with them, in many instances, nothing but the clothes they wore and the Spirit in their heart”.

*excerpt taken from “The Spirit is Strong”— St. Nicholas, Immaculate Heart of Mary School
100th Anniversary Book 1905-2005*



Here we are, 117 years later, welcoming students and their families seeking refuge from the unrest in Ukraine. When

the war broke out February 24th, after the initial shock, the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate, the School’s Board of Trustees and School leadership immediately began to develop a plan to accept students from Sadochok to Grade 8 to be a part of our Ukrainian Catholic School community. This decision of responding to the critical need at hand, continues in the tradition of *“the Spirit is Strong”*.

Over the past couple of months IHMS has opened its doors offering a caring, compassionate and supportive community to families who have come to Canada seeking refuge from the war in Ukraine. They are being embraced in a way that allows a family to find comfort in an educational environment that is rooted in the Ukrainian Catholic faith and culture.

The Sisters in their ministries are committed to their call of hospitality, ensuring those around them are comfortable and their needs are being met. Based on this example, welcoming new families to IHMS is more than just having children attend

classes, there are opportunities for families to gather and connect. On May 27, a wonderful community dinner was hosted at IHMS to welcome the newcomer families from Ukraine to the school. There were nearly 50 people in attendance! The dinner provided an opportunity for the new families to network with each other, and as well meet some of the other individuals in the IHMS community including the Sisters, clergy, staff and Board members. At the time of publishing this newsletter, there are 15 students that have joined the IHMS student body over the past couple of months.



Photo Credit: Andrew Sikorsky

Together we will ***“Keep the Spirit Strong”***

AN INVITATION TO HELP!

IHMS is committed to meeting the needs, of every arriving student and family to the extent that IHMS’s existing capacities permit. To help IHMS meet these needs and in making the most of existing and potential capacity, we invite you to consider a gift to the **IHMS - Ukraine Student Relief Fund**. This Fund has been established to support the educational needs of Sadochok to Grade 8 students enrolled at IHMS, and their families, that have fled the war in Ukraine. Donations to this Fund will be used to offset tuition costs, supplies, uniforms, extra-educational support, or any other identified needs that will aid in the education and stability of these students and their families.

To donate visit ihms.mb.ca



GOD HAS A PLAN FOR US - WE RESPONDED AS BEST WE CAN

When the news broke about the war in Ukraine, my husband, Father Mykhaylo and I immediately did what we know best – we prayed. Those first few days were overwhelming. We felt a numbness but yet had a strong need to do something, even though we were so far away.

Within a few days, things in our village in Ukraine changed. There were stop checks in place to enter the village and all men, eighteen and over were recruited to help. My brother and dad were amongst those recruited. They were a group of men ready to help but had nothing, especially protective gear. Back in Winnipeg, our community around us



wanted to help. I sent out a message to eighteen friends and the response was over-

whelming. People were generously providing financial support so the men from our village could have at least bullet-proof vests.

In the meantime, Father Mykhaylo received messages from friends near the front line that needed help to make bread. They had access to a Pizza Place but needed yeast. Sending yeast from Canada was not an option, but transferring the funds to make the purchase in Ukraine was a possibility. My sister after receiving the funds, purchased the yeast and then through the help of very willing volunteers were able to transport it quickly to Eastern Ukraine. Within a day and a half bread was baked and ready to share.

Our family is still okay but they have shared many experiences that are life changing. In the first twenty-four hours of shelling in Kyiv, my cousin went into labour and had her baby in the basement of a bomb shelter. My uncle and his family in Kharkiv, recently purchased their apartment, in fact the kitchen appliances were delivered a week before. As the city was being hit, my uncle felt they needed to



leave their ninth floor apartment. Three hours later their apartment was hit. They were safe and were able to flee the city to be with family in Western Ukraine.

It has been hard to be in Winnipeg, so far away from family. However, God has a plan for us, to do what we can, to help with financial support for supplies and to be a support for those fleeing Ukraine, coming to Winnipeg.

I teach Grade one at Immaculate Heart of Mary School. At the time of writing this article I have two children in my class, a boy from Kharkiv and a girl from Odessa. Adapting to a country, city and school, especially with a language that you do not know has been a bit hard on the students. However, the love and willingness of the children and staff at IHMS has helped with the transition. We look forward to welcoming more families.

**Our prayers continue to be with
all Ukrainians
during this time of war.**

Iryna Khomitska

– IHMS Grade One Teacher immigrated with her husband Fr. Mykhaylo Khomitsky and family from Ukraine in 2009

ONE PHONE CALL – CHANGED OUR LIFE

It was 5 a.m. on February 24th when we received a call from our parents telling us that the war had begun. They learned about this from family that lives in Winnipeg. I ran to open the window to see what was going on and just then a rocket flew over my area. Frightened, my husband and I began to wake the children up and collect the necessary things. An hour later, two large drones flew over our house, now the children were scared. Planes and helicopters began to take over the sky.

The traffic on the roads was growing, crowds of people were walking with just backpacks on their backs. Five hours later we left Kyiv, after overcoming 30 kilometers of traffic. We went to my parents but four days later I left Ukraine with our two children and my mother-in-law.

In the meantime, bombing of the Zhulyany airport started the next day on February 25th in the area where we lived.

It was a difficult journey, leaving Ukraine, driving through Hungary, Slovakia and then staying in the Czech Republic for a couple of weeks. We then traveled on to Vienna to do our biometrics and waited for our visas to come through. We are blessed to have family in Winnipeg who enabled us to come to Canada.



It is my husband's sister and her husband Sergiï that live in Winnipeg. They have been here for eight years and have a strong connection of friends, experience and knowledge of living here.

Landing in Winnipeg, we were warmly welcomed. Our children ages eleven and five are in Grade 5 and Kindergarten, attending Immaculate Heart of Mary School, where Sergiï is a teacher. Although the school year is nearing the end they were able to settle in and adjust to this new unknown experience. Upon my arrival, I received an open Work Permit for three years. The community of Sisters also generously welcomed us not only at the School but also provided me with employment. I will always be grateful to Sergiï for all that he has done to help with schooling and the connection with the Sisters. May the Lord protect him and his family.

We may be living in Winnipeg and it feels all is in place; but we are not together as a family. My hope is that the war will end soon and my husband will join us. We miss him a lot – I miss him a lot – it is really difficult to work and raise two small children alone. I am hopeful that this day will come and we will be together again as a family, living in Canada, embracing the opportunity for a better life.

Iryna Kuchmenko from Kyiv, Ukraine
now living in Winnipeg

ALUMNI UPDATES

As war broke out in Ukraine, our Ukrainian community in Winnipeg joined the battle from afar by organizing demonstrations, fundraising for humanitarian aid, sending supplies and money to the frontlines, spreading awareness, and aiding in the expedited immigration of displaced Ukrainians to Canada. As an emergency physician and proud Ukrainian Canadian, I felt that I could perhaps help in another way as well and signed up as a volunteer with the Canadian Medical Assistance Teams (CMAT), a non-profit disaster relief organization.



I had the immense privilege of traveling to Ukraine for 3 weeks in early May as the Medical Lead for CMAT's Team ECHO, an incredible group of volunteer physicians, nurses and paramedics.

With Russian attacks focused on eastern and southern borders, the flood of millions of displaced Ukrainians into Western Ukraine completely overwhelmed the medical system and resulted in a massive shortage of medical care for those seeking refuge in western regions. Our team, along with other medical organizations from partnering countries, did what we could to help fill these gaps. We travelled to various field hospitals, clinics, and internally displaced persons (IDP) centres to provide much needed medical care. We treated children,



adults, and the elderly, all who had lived through a nightmare, witnessed horrible atrocities, and fled from constant shelling and threat of death. Once we sorted out the prescribing differences between our countries, the medicine itself was not the difficult part. We trained for years and had extensive experience

in trauma, acute and critical care and could manage a wide range of presentations. Treating a festering wound, uncontrolled hypertension, arrhythmias, poorly controlled diabetes, or shrapnel injuries was simple compared to the hundreds of cases of psychological trauma inflicted by the war. That was the difficult part – a child having night terrors because he witnessed his neighbor lying dead in the street, a woman having flashbacks of the ceiling caving in on her as the subway platform her family had been hiding in was directly bombed, a father in tears as he agonizes with survivor's guilt after his entire family was killed in

Luhansk, a wife suffering from anxiety and insomnia as she awaits the fate of her husband, father and brother, all soldiers fighting the frontlines in the Donbas.... Everyone had a story, a friend who had died, a courageous brother fighting for Ukraine's freedom, a home that was leveled to the ground by a cruise missile and so forth. This less visible psychological trauma from Russia's unprovoked war in Ukraine was the most difficult to manage and will certainly linger for generations.

What I found truly incredible was that despite the decimation of cities, the torture and targeted killings of thousands of civilians, the Ukrainian spirit truly remains unbroken. Between air raid sirens and quiet huddles in basements and bomb shelters, life goes on. Children play in the streets, people are rushing to work, cafes and restaurants are bustling, the cities are vibrant and very much alive. Morale is still high and the country has united around a common enemy. Positive messages of hope are constantly broadcast over the radio, written on billboards in cities and along the highways, and on signage along sidewalks and in stores and restaurants. Slava Ukraini (Glory to Ukraine) has become a common greeting, much like hello. Everyone truly believes that Ukraine will end this war victorious and that good will triumph over evil, and this belief is carrying people through their day-to-day lives as the war continues to escalate.



There is so much more I could write about but overall, the experience was surreal and incredibly hum-

bling. The sheer numbers of displaced persons and those requiring help is beyond anything I could have ever imagined. It's difficult to reflect on the work we did and not wonder whether it was simply a few drops in a bucket. But the Ukrainian saying "together we are strength" rings true. We each do what we can to help and when our efforts are combined, it truly does make a massive impact. CMAT and other medical organizations continue to work tirelessly to provide care for the millions of displaced Ukrainians and soldiers affected by this war. I hope to return soon to add a few more drops into that bucket.



Слава Україні! Героям Слава!

Glory to Ukraine! Glory to her heroes!

Tamara McColl MD FRCPC

Assistant Professor, Max Rady College of Medicine, University of Manitoba
Emergency Physician, St. Boniface Hospital
(IHMS Grad '99)

HAPPENINGS AT IHMS

Wow ... what a year this has been! Perhaps unprecedented in the history of the school?! We are just coming out of a pandemic and then the invasion of Ukraine takes place. Both of these global events have had a direct impact on our community here at Immaculate Heart of Mary School.

The positive trending developments of the COVID-19 have been of great relief at the school. Although we are still proceeding with caution, the overall improvement in community health has enabled us to return to some of the normal activities, events, and opportunities for the students. In just these past few weeks we've been able to host an in-person Oratorical Contest. The Annual Track and Field Meets, as well as the K-3 Field Day have taken place. The students and staff participated in a beautiful Rosary Prayer Service at the end of May. The Annual Awards Day and Grade 8 Graduation events are scheduled to take place at the end of June. Also some very exciting news, at the end of May the Catholic Schools' basketball season concluded and the IHMS Girls Basketball Team were the League Champions! Go Spirit Go!

As the pandemic winds down, the war activity in Ukraine and refugees fleeing the country is rising. Many of these refugee families are arriving at the doorstep of our School and we are doing all we can to assist them. There is no cost to arriving Ukrainian families to attend Immaculate Heart. As of mid June, IHMS has 15 newcomer students enrolled. There are more anticipated arrivals before the end of June and over the summer months. An immeasurable benefit for the new families enrolled at IHMS is most of the staff are fluent in Ukrainian, as well as many of the students in each of the classrooms.

Over the summer months there will be changes taking place inside the school building. Remember the colorful roller blinds in each of the classrooms? They have lasted us 60 years!! This summer there will be new, retractable window coverings installed in each of the classrooms. This upgrade along with the recent new flooring, and the re-finishing of the cabinetry, has really spruced up the classrooms!

Remember the stacking chairs in the gymnasium that we've used for hundreds of community events over the years?! We are replacing them with brand new folding chairs that make more efficient use of our limited storage space. If you're interested in purchasing one of our vintage chairs, please call the School Office: 204-582-5698.

Gratitude to all alumni for your continued support and prayers. It's largely due to your contributions and affirmations that IHMS is able to continue to provide the amazing experiences for our students. May you be blessed with a wonderful summer.

Rod Picklyk, Principal

Share AN UPDATE

Do you have an update you would like to share? Did you just get married or have a baby? Where are you living? What have you been up to? Let us know by sending an email to alumni@ihms.mb.ca

Have you moved? Newsletter still showing up at your childhood home? Let us know your new address! Email us at info@lubovfoundation.ca so we can update your records!



Eternal MEMORY

Walter Sahan 1927 – 2022



Over the years, Immaculate Heart of Mary School has been blessed with people who were always available to help. We remember one of our greatest volunteer leaders and former alumni from St. Nicholas School, **Walter Sahan**. As Co-Chair of the Building Committee in the 1960s Walter was instrumental in helping build the School, which is still used today. He continued to be a part of the School community as an Alumni attending St. Nicholas School (1930-1945), Parent, Honorary Board Member, Donor and great friend. Walter fell asleep in the Lord on May 8, 2022. He will be missed.

May his memory be eternal!

Helen Goshlak 1924-2022

Helen passed away on February 8, 2022 peacefully in her home at the Holy Family Towers. She attended St. Nicholas School for only two grades but remained connected and supportive as a donor of the Sisters' School throughout her life. She was a lifelong member of St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church. She was active in sports and shared her passion for choral singing with the Church Choir and O. Koshetz Choir.



May her memory be eternal!

Thank you to our newsletter sponsor:



Thank you to our Alumni who contributed to this issue. If you have news or stories you would like to share, please contact:



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