

Ukraine – You Have Made a Difference!



by Rev. Dr. Bob Henley

Just about a month ago, I received a call from a friend, a concerned Equity Member of the Club. His intent, expressed in that call, was to make a matching gift donation of \$100,000 to support Ukrainian relief. His desire was to invite support from participants of the congregations of the chapel, and the Members of the Club.

An All-Out Club Effort

When I submitted the article to the Ocean Reef Press, inviting your financial support, initially it appeared to be a non-starter. The reason being, a well-established policy that all fundraising within the Club is conducted through the All Charities Event.

However, being Ocean Reef, and knowing the unprecedented global crisis facing the Ukrainian people, whose lives are caught up in this conflict, what appeared to be a non-starter became instead, an all-out community effort!

With the blessing of the Community Foundation Board, an exception to this important policy was granted, and the article was published.

Their support made the effort possible, and I get to give you a report on the difference you have made!

The Results

As of this past Sunday, you have given \$301,215 – to date, including the matching gift. There are still a few gifts that are coming in. What you have done has more than tripled the generous matching gift that started this outpouring of support.

Who Receives the Money?

A committee composed of **Dave Meredith, Jeannie Schiavone, Candy Sutfin**, and chaired by **Pack St. Clair**, conducted the research into possible recipients, and made the final determination.

As I indicated in my initial article, the goal of this team was to be able to “*move the needle*” through the support provided to a designated organization.

After considering five different organizations, all having a four-star Charity Navigator rating, they settled on two – Convoy of Hope and Americares. The funds will be divided equally between the two, in support of their work that is already taking place on the ground.

Convoy of Hope is a faith-based organization with a driving passion to feed the world. With a long history as an early responder in times of natural disasters, Convoy has served more than 193 million people since its founding in 1994.

Through partners across Europe and teams on the ground, Convoy of Hope is providing shelter, food, water, hygiene kits and other necessities to Ukrainian refugees in Poland and other strategic locations. Since a team from Convoy arrived in Poland on March 1, they have procured a warehouse in which to store incoming supplies and organize a full-scale response to facilitate the distribution of much-needed aid.

Go to their website, convoyofhope.org, to see first-person reports of the impact of their work.

Americares is a global non-profit organization focused on health and development that responds to individuals affected by poverty, disaster, or crisis. The organization addresses these needs by providing medicine, medical supplies and health programs.

Americares has emergency response teams in Poland and Romania to support health services for families affected

by the escalating humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. Their teams have expertise in coordinating large-scale shipments of medicine and relief supplies, and mobilizing emergency medical teams in crisis situations.

To date, Americares has shipped or delivered more than 37 tons of medicine and relief supplies to 8 partners responding in Ukraine and at least a dozen more shipments are underway or planned.

In addition, the Poland team has successfully completed the first local procurement of supplies valued at more than \$100,000 and weighing 12.5 tons to be distributed to local partners. They are also providing emergency funding to local organizations supporting children and adults caught in the crisis in Poland, Ukraine and Romania.

We encourage you to visit their website, americares.org, to learn more about their work.

Final Thoughts

Will the generosity of the matching gift donor, and all the gifts we have given, meet every need? The answer obviously is, “Of course not.” But to those who are the recipients of the resources provided, it will be life-changing, to each one of them.

Sadly, the brutality being inflicted by the Russian military, is now in its 60th day. It shows no end of letting up. Yet neither does the resilience and courage of the Ukrainian people, their leaders, and their military!

There is still one other resource everyone can provide. Our prayers. Never take for granted the immense power of God in response to the cries and prayers of his people for compassion and justice in the face of such needless bloodshed and disruption of life.

One more thing. Never take for granted the generosity and compassion of the Ocean Reef Community. You are a community that makes a difference!