

Ukraine Refugee Update

By now I'm sure many of you attended or have seen one of the presentations about my trip to Slovakia to help the Ukrainian refugees. It has been a powerful, moving and in many ways heartbreaking experience. I still can't believe that there is war in Europe, right on the doorsteps of my home country. The suffering of so many displaced people, mostly women and children will shake you to the core. They are the heroes of this conflict, mothers and grandmothers taking their children into safety, making sure that they experience as little trauma as possible. As one mother said, *"During the day we try to make the journey an adventure for the children, and then at night we cry."* And who wouldn't cry, when you have to leave your homeland, your community, your family and friends, but also your career, your hobbies and interests, your dreams and goals. I know many of us can't even imagine what that must be like.



It is in the midst of this kind of suffering, that I've also experienced the incredible response of so many who live out Christ's calling to love their neighbor and help those in need: volunteering at the border, handing out supplies, carrying suitcases, cooking meals, providing health care, or just a warm place to stay overnight. People that drive those in a need of accommodations and then churches, organizations and families that are housing those without a home. The need is tremendous, not only at the border, but also in the places where people are committed to helping the refugees long term--opening their homes to strangers, without knowing how long they will stay. I had the privilege to work with these churches and organizations and with your financial support we were able to lend a helping hand during this humanitarian crisis.

The work is not over. There are more people coming, with an immediate need of help, but there are also those, who now deal with integration into their new "home" and recovery from the trauma they experienced along the way. And our commitment is to stay involved in aiding those in need. So far we were able to distribute around \$27,000 to congregations that are working directly with refugees. The financial support is helping with accommodations, food, clothing, transportation and school supplies for kids as well as direct help at the border. We are also helping inside Ukraine, at the border city of Uzhhorod, where thousands of Ukrainians fled to from the areas affected by war. In Uzhhorod we are partnering with Salvation Church, as they are feeding, housing, transporting and helping those looking for safety in their city but not looking to leave their country.



THANK YOU! We would have not been able to do this without you! You are all a part of this work as we continue in communication with our partner congregations assessing current needs and coming up with plan of how to continue in helping the refugees. We will keep updating you as we continue in these humanitarian efforts. Thank you so much for all your generous contributions. If you'd like to donate, you can still do so at www.elchome.org by clicking on Give Online/Ukrainian Refugee Fund. Thank you once again for all your support!