

August 2025



Delivering monthly trauma counseling retreats, food, and vital humanitarian relief to Ukraine's neediest children and families.

COMMON MAN FOR UKRAINE

A nonprofit initiative of the 501(c)3 Plymouth Rotary Foundation

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Visit our website!





OUR FOUNDING

Common Man for Ukraine (CMFU) was cofounded by Alex Ray, Lisa Mure, Steve Rand, and Susan Mathison — four friends who chose to take action after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The foursome traveled to Ukraine soon after the first bombs fell and learned firsthand about the **war's devastating impact on children**. Without an existing path to meet children's needs, the group reached across the globe to Rotary partners in Poland and Ukraine and built one, turning small-town New Hampshire heart into global impact.

OUR MISSION

The mission of CMFU is to support Ukraine's children as their country defends against foreign invasion. We achieve this mission through U.S.-based fundraising and international Rotary partnerships that provide monthly trauma counseling retreats for children of fallen soldiers and fuel volunteer-led supply convoys to safe houses, orphanages, and frontline villages in Ukraine.

OUR VISION

A future of health, healing, and humanitarian support for every Ukrainian child and family.

THE NEED

Children from all over Ukraine have been sent to a system of safe houses and orphanages to be protected from Russian bombing and well-documented kidnapping. These safe houses often reside in former schools, repurposed Soviet-era barracks, and monasteries. With an estimated 2.5 million internally displaced children in Ukraine, the pre-existing social service system is overwhelmed and war-affected budgets are incapable of providing even basic aid to these children.

Meanwhile, the **toll on children's mental health has come into sharp focus**. Multiple studies have determined that one-half of Ukraine's children have been exposed to war trauma of some type. More than one-third are experiencing psychological trauma. One third have moderate-to-severe depression, and approximately one-in-five have moderate-to-severe anxiety.

"Ukraine wants to protect its children from being killed or deported into Russia. Thousands of children are being evacuated to other places far from the frontline. In those places, there is a shortage of electricity, food, and everything needed for survival."

CMFU convoy member of the Rotary Club of Zamosc Ordynacki, Poland



In response, CMFU has established a robust and respected relationship with the military government, which facilitates border crossings and ready-access to safe house and orphanage locations and census. The CMFU food, warmth, and trauma counseling programming supports tens of thousands of children affected by the war.

FOOD AND SUPPLIES

Common Man for Ukraine partners with the Zamosc Ordynacki Rotary Club in Poland to coordinate the purchase and delivery of food and other critical supplies to orphanages, safe houses, and additional areas of need in Ukraine. Deliveries to a single safe house typically include **food, sleeping bags, and generators delivered by the pallet** directly into caretakers' hands.

TRAUMA COUNSELING AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

CMFU operates the Children of Ukraine Health Retreat each month in Zakopane, Poland. The Retreat is a three-week residential trauma counseling camp for children in Ukraine who have experienced the death of one or more parents in the war. The Rotary Club of Zamosc Ordynacki launched the program in 2014 in response to Russia's occupation of Crimea, initially holding one session per year. In 2022, CMFU committed to expanding the program to monthly sessions in order to accommodate the increased need for youth mental health services. With the help of a network of trusted partners within Ukraine, CMFU hosts 30-35 children per monthly session. **Since February 2022, CMFU has provided trauma counseling retreats to more than 1,100 Ukrainian children.**

Staffed by certified Ukrainian teachers, doctors, and psychologists, CMFU offers these 8-to-13-year-old children an important therapeutic respite from the war zone: a vibrant program of group and individual counseling, art and nature therapy, physical activity, and free play, creating deep bonds among peers.

CMFU is also the major funder of the Ukrainian Support Center near Warsaw, Poland — a day-use facility where more than 50 young children receive counseling, play therapy, education, and trauma support. In the evenings, the children's guardians — primarily mothers and grandmothers — also access trauma support, free legal assistance, and Polish and English language lessons, utilizing a vibrant mix of Ukrainian and international volunteers.



4M+

POUNDS OF FOOD

10K+

SLEEPING BAGS

100s

GENERATORS

1K+

CHILDREN IN
TRAUMA
COUNSELING



"I am safe here.

I do not hear air raid sirens or bombing."

Ukrainian child attending CMFU's trauma counseling retreat in Poland



OUR VALUES

PASSION

We believe our collective volunteer commitment to Ukrainian children can move mountains.

TRUST

We trust in our Rotary partners and volunteer heroes in the U.S., Poland, and Ukraine. Our on-the-ground partners provide the hands-on work of purchasing, transporting, and delivering goods to Ukrainian children, making our programs efficient and streamlined.

GRATITUDE

We are grateful for our donors. We honor the trust they have placed in us.

RESPONSIBILITY

Generous gifts are used with utmost care to provide humanitarian aid quickly and effectively.

INTEGRITY

We ensure that our program investments are effective and transparent. Our accounting system and on-site visits verify the efficiency and responsiveness of our supply and delivery processes.

COMMITMENT

The wellbeing of innocent Ukrainian children of war and their families are our first priority. What do they need? How can we help?

VISION

Ukraine's children are the future of their country. We believe that they will be the leaders, decision-makers, and rebuilders in Ukraine's free and independent democracy.

NEUTRALITY

We work to help innocent Ukrainian children who are victims of a war in which they had no hand. We do not advocate for any political agenda or support the military in any way.

Additionally, the tenets of Rotary International prioritize truth, fairness, good will, and beneficence for all. This four-way test guides our decision-making and program designs.

OUR PARTNERS AND ROOTS DELIVERING IMPACT

CMFU has developed a system of procurement, warehousing, distribution, efficiency, and safety that ensures cost-effective, direct delivery of aid into

"In the trauma centers, the children see that they are not alone, are understood, and supported."

Оксана Держило-Ганич
Ukrainian child psychologist at CMFU retreats



the hands of the children who need it through Rotary volunteers. Purchases are made wholesale in Poland and elsewhere in Europe, **ensuring fiscal efficiencies** that avoid shipping, tariffs, and financial leakage. CMFU's relationship with the military and border personnel not only provides critical identification of safe house needs but also facilitates **speedy border crossings**. These important relationships allow CMFU to avoid long waits at border crossings.

Common Man for Ukraine's humanitarian mission, philanthropic roots, and even the organization's name come from cofounder Alex Ray. For more than 50 years, Alex's The Common Man Family of Restaurants has led conscious giving and emergency response initiatives in his home state of New Hampshire and across the globe. Alex named his restaurants "The Common Man" because he wants all people to feel equally welcome — just as Common Man for Ukraine believes **all people are deserving of support and care**.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

After 11 trips and counting to Ukraine delivering critical aid, it is clearer than ever that the needs of Ukraine's children of war continue to grow in both scope and complexity, the number of children impacted, the duration of trauma experiences, the lack of mental health services, and the continued lack of a sense of security.

The **challenge ahead is to continue to meet the ever-growing physical and emotional needs of children** hiding in safe houses, losing parents to the war, and living in battle-ravaged communities. Waiting lists for trauma retreats and for food and supply deliveries grow longer every day.

SOLUTION: THE SEEDS OF HOPE CAMPAIGN

To date, Common Man for Ukraine has raised and delivered more than \$4 million in critical humanitarian aid to children in Ukraine. This all-volunteer CMFU network works across three countries and involves hundreds of volunteers. CMFU has delivered, so far, more than 4 million pounds of food, 10,000 sleeping bags, and hundreds of generators to children hiding in safe houses and orphanages throughout Ukraine. More than 1,100 children have attended youth mental health retreats, learned coping skills, created networks of support, and received group and individual trauma counseling. We want to keep building and sustaining our capacity for offering food, warmth, and trauma counseling.



"They become creative and open themselves up, and their health improves."

Ryszard Lucyn, Zamosc Ordynacki Rotary Club [Poland]
Program Coordinator, Health Retreats and Food Program



Now we are turning our attention to a fundraising campaign to sow **Seeds of Hope** for the future of Ukraine with the following key investment areas:

- ☀ Continuing monthly trauma counseling retreats
- ☀ Continuing monthly food and supply convoys
- ☀ New alumni counseling program for children's retreat participants
- ☀ New online portal for peer and professional mental health support for children and their caregivers
- ☀ The Rebuild Ukraine Fund

In response to the challenges Ukrainian children face, CMFU has committed to raising \$6M in 2025 for:

- ☀ Monthly trauma retreats for Ukrainian children for 2025 **(\$500,000)**
- ☀ New alumni program for children who have attended any retreat since 2022 to come together once per year with counselor facilitation to renew friendships, share their stories, and process together their experiences since their retreat participation **(\$500,000)**
- ☀ Partnership with Ukrainian-based UCare for telemental health services for children and families **(\$500,000)**
- ☀ Monthly food and supply convoys to safe houses and hard-hit villages in Ukraine for 2025 **(\$1M)**
- ☀ Endowment campaign that will support these programs for as long as Ukrainian children need them **(\$1.5M)**
- ☀ An established Rebuild Ukraine Fund for support and rebuilding needs for families in war-ravaged regions **(\$2M)**

After the current Russian/Ukrainian war ends, the media, politicians, and crisis response organizations will move on. But the Ukrainian children and their families will still be there, needing to recover and rebuild. CMFU will stay as long as needed to help them process their trauma and rebuild their futures.

**SEEDS OF
HOPE**



Campaign

"Kids are growing up without their parents, like me. My family and I are praying for Ukraine and for the war to end quickly so that more people do not die. My mom, my brother, and I are really missing [my dad] because he loved us so much and we really loved him."

Alina, age 11, writing to President Zelenskyy while attending a CMFU retreats



Steve Rand, Susan Mathison, Alex Ray, and Lisa Mure (L to R)
Cofounders, Common Man for Ukraine

OFFER YOUR TIME

- ☀️ Host a fundraiser or make calls for donations
- ☀️ Write and submit opinion pieces to news organizations and blogs that promote the project
- ☀️ Acquire high-value items for on-line raffles
- ☀️ Help with administrative tasks

To share your time, please email: info@commonmanforukraine.org



FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

For 2025, our goal for interested donors includes:

- ☀️ 100 donors of \$5,000 each
- ☀️ 50 donors of \$10,000 each
- ☀️ 25 donors of \$100,000 each
- ☀️ 10 donors of \$250,000 each



To make a cash, credit card, stock, or donor-advised fund donation, please visit: commonmanforukraine.org/donate



THANK YOU FOR READING OUR STORY!

**PLEASE JOIN US IN SOWING SEEDS OF HOPE
FOR UKRAINE'S CHILDREN OF WAR.**

