

Momentum

Jan 24

In this edition...

This month we seek volunteers to help at the Centre after a big increase in the number of language students on Thursdays and Sundays. We also learn about the famous Ukrainians who have spent time in Switzerland. And we meet volunteer Des De Souza who organises the volunteers at the Centre.

Extra language classes to meet rush in demand

More than 40 new students have flocked to our language classes since Christmas. There are basic French and English classes on Thursdays and intermediate classes on Sundays. We have now hired extra space at the nearby Maison de Femmes. Thanks to all our teachers for responding to the surge in numbers.

Free to use

The Centre de Jour Ukrainian organises a broad range of activities thanks to the hard work of volunteers who provide them. The classes and activities are all free for members registered at the Centre. We pay for materials used in craft classes and the refreshments provided. Any donations to fund the Centre are very welcome. Bank details are on page 2.



Mariana Schvets and her class take to the floor again

On the trail of celebrated Ukrainians in Lausanne

Ukrainians have long been attracted to Switzerland and among them some very prominent figures who have chosen to spend time in Lausanne. Centre member Alla Kyrda-Omelian has been retracing their footsteps.

Author, Mykola (Nikolai) Gogol was born in the Poltava region of Ukraine in 1809, his political satire, *Dead Souls*, is considered to be his greatest work. It is a social commentary telling the story of a swindler who buys dead serfs in order to acquire an estate and join the landed class using a tax loophole. It was published in 1842 and the writer was working on the novel when he visited Lausanne. He died a mere ten years later aged just 42, but there is a monument to the author in Vevey, where he also visited.



Gogol Monument, Vevey

He was born in the Kyiv region in 1905 and was director of the Paris Opera Ballet spanning three decades before moving to Lausanne where he helped found a Ballet school. In 1985, the city awarded Lifar a Gold Medal and he bequeathed part of his collection of books, paintings, and documents to the Lausanne archives before his death in 1986. In 2003, a monument was unveiled to him at Ouchy.

Currently, Ukrainian musician, Alexandr Grytsayenko, has been leader of the second violins at the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra since 2008. He also works as a soloist with various orchestras of Ukraine. He studied at the Kyiv Conservatory, the Sion Higher Conservatory, and the Zurich Opera Orchestra Academy. He has won many international competitions. Kyiv-born mathematician Maryna Viazovska came to Switzerland in 2016. At 33 she became a full professor and Chair of Number Theory at the Institute of Mathematics at the EPFL. In 2022 she was awarded a prestigious Fields Medal, often considered equivalent to a Nobel Prize in Mathematics, for her breakthrough work on the sphere packing problem. At the ceremony she paid tribute to Yulia Zdanovska, a 21-year-old mathematician who had been killed by a Russian missile attack in Ukraine.

The Swiss have learned a lot about Ukraine since the start of the war in 2022 when thousands of refugees sought sanctuary here. But often they are unaware of the many pre-eminent Ukrainians who have preceded them. Before Gogol, the geologist, mineralogist and biologist Hryhorii Rozumovsky settled in Lausanne in the 18th century. He was the son of the last hetman, or political leader, of Cossack Ukraine and he founded the Society of Connoisseurs of Natural Sciences. His scientific research saw him become a member of the Academies of Sciences in Stockholm, Munich and Turin, the Zurich Physical Society, the Basel Physico-Medical Society, among others. The Ukrainian ballet dancer, Serge Lifar, was one of the greatest male ballet dancers of the 20th century.

Today's Ukrainian Refugees are well-educated

According to statistics, of the 65,000 Ukrainians who are currently in Switzerland due to the war, almost 70% have a university degree. Competent and experienced researchers and doctors, teachers and translators, engineers and musicians, singers and choreographers have begun to write a new chapter of Ukrainians in Switzerland, and in particular in Lausanne.



Who we are

The Ukraine Day Centre is a not-for-profit association opened on April 28th. It is an ecumenical initiative between Our Lady of Faith, Christ Church and the Scots Kirk. We support those fleeing Ukraine irrespective of language, race, faith or gender. The Centre's services are free.

Children's Christmas party hits the right note



Up to 300 children attended the Ukrainian Christmas Party organised by Ukraine Reborn, ivALife and the Centre du Jour Ukrainien. It featured the children's choir led by Centre volunteer Viktoriia Golosna.

War Anniversary

It is nearly two years since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The Russians launched their campaign on February 24th 2022. It was expected to be over in a matter of days or weeks. The Ukraine resistance has withstood despite the odds. The Centre will mark the anniversary on Sunday February 25 during the opening hours 1400 to 1700.

How can you help ?

Please help with our new French and English conversation classes.
Contact: 076 558 6805 or e mail ukrainecentrelausanne@gmail.com

Donate

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Meet the volunteers

Des (short for Desdemonia) De Souza has been involved with the Centre since the very beginning. Of all the volunteers, she is the person you are most likely to have exchanged messages with but perhaps never met. She is a key organiser with the essential task of organising the rotas and rallying help.

When the war broke out in the Ukraine, Des knew she wanted to assist in some way. Des is a parishioner of Our Lady of Faith, and when the church mentioned the day centre project, Des signed up immediately. She is a member of the Centre's core organising team and responsible for setting up and overseeing the volunteer rotas. Many of you may have been emailed or in contact with Des over the last two years.

Des is married with two girls, Amélie (14 years old) and Ella (13 years old), who are also regular volunteers at the centre. Of Indian origin, born in the UK, Des has lived in Switzerland since 2007. She works full-time in pharmaceutical marketing. Apart from volunteering, in her spare time she loves to be in the mountains, walking in summer, skiing in winter.

Des is passionate about the work the Centre does. She has been extremely moved and inspired by the many

Ukrainian stories she has heard. 'Our Ukrainian friends are so courageous and meeting the other volunteers has also been an extremely wonderful part of this journey' says Des.

With increased demand for French and English lessons, Des has been busy over the last couple of weeks putting new rotas in place

for teachers and also for refreshments on Thursdays. Yes you read correctly, we are again looking for volunteers on Thursdays. Two volunteers are needed from 1.30 pm till 3.30 pm each week. If you are interested in helping, please sign up [here](#). If you have any questions about rotas, don't hesitate to reach out to Des. She loves to hear from you.



Des with Ella and Amélie (1 to r)

Volunteers: we need you

As you have read above in this newsletter, we again require regular volunteers on Thursdays. We were overwhelmed with students this month after launching a recruitment drive. If you can help please use this link to sign up.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0A4FADAC29A2F49-47356525-thursday>

