

NOVEMBER 2023

# RAISING CHRISTIAN LEADERS AND RELIEVING SUFFERING IN UKRAINE

*Dear Friends,*

The aroma and taste of fresh bread is a universal sign of nourishment. Perhaps that's why Jesus told us *"I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry."* (John 6:35)

Olena first heard these words at the **Rivne WeCare Center in Western Ukraine**, after fleeing her home in Kherson when the region was occupied by Russian troops. **The 400-mile journey with her husband and 8-year-old son left her fearful, traumatized, and uncertain about the future.** But at the Rivne WeCare Center, Olena found hope – in the food she was served, the help she received, and the gospel message she heard.

**Olena became a Christian** and gained a new perspective and purpose for her life. She became an eager volunteer at the Center – desiring to serve others as she had been served.

In Ukraine, bread is a particular symbol of welcome and hospitality. So Olena shares her faith with other women as they gather to make bread that is distributed to others in need. As they sift and knead and bake, they share their stories of loss and trauma and find strength and encouragement in the fellowship and caring that surrounds them.

*"I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry."*

(John 6:35)



*"The Sharing Bread project became the starting point in my ministry in God's field. The bread and other products we baked with children and adults were shared with the military in hospitals, and our cakes and cookies were sent by volunteers to the guys at the front. And all this was done for the benefit of other people, and in this*

*way our bakers also had their own therapy: joint and useful work, a warm atmosphere, the aroma of fresh baking. Such moments teach us to care about our neighbors, to believe in the future and to do our best for those around us who are waiting for our support and love."*



– Olena

# WeCare Centers: community hubs of help and hope

## *Filtering truth with coffee and conversation*

One hundred and seventy miles south of Rivne, the **WeCare Center team in Ivano-Frankivsk** has created a different kind of outreach to the 45,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) who have surged into that city. A unique part of their ministry is *Filter*, a “pay what you can” coffee shop that hosts lectures and discussions about civic, economic, and environmental concerns. It is managed by Dima, a young man who relocated to the area from Kharkiv when the war began.

As people engage with coffee and conversation, they realize that everyone’s world view influences their values – **opening the door to deeper discussions about God and the claims of Christianity**. The Center augments this approach to sharing the gospel with other critical services needed by IDPs, such as employment, education, and counseling. Income from the coffee shop helps support these other operations.

These creative programs illustrate how each of the **17 WeCare Centers located throughout Ukraine** is using the unique resources available to them to meet the particular needs of its own community. Together they are **sowing seeds of faith and resilience** that are essential for the future of Ukraine.

**Thanks to the support of compassionate people like you**, WeCare Centers can provide food, clothing, medicine, trauma counseling, child care, education, vocational training, and spiritual guidance to Ukrainians who are trying to rebuild their shattered lives and families. **You make it possible for Olena and her bread makers, Filter’s patrons, and over 20,000 people find new life and hope each month.**

**Your support also enables us to provide a skilled U.S.-based administrator who is delivering expert guidance and management assistance to the WeCare Centers.** Tim Wishon has career-long experience in financial management and logistics for large, complex organizations. His on-site visits to every WeCare Center and continual contact with each leadership team **assure that all resources are acquired and expended with maximum effectiveness, efficiency, and integrity.** WeCare Centers are required to submit monthly financial and outcomes reports that demonstrate accountability for their mission and finances. **So you can be confident that your gifts are being carefully stewarded to achieve the greatest impact.**



Why Filter? Because we love to drink this coffee, and over a cup of coffee we communicate and share our values. We talk to people about how important it is nowadays to filter all the information that comes to us from different sources. It can be both positive and negative and can destroy us. Every visitor who buys a coffee automatically donates to social projects or to the sewing shop. In this way, we encourage people to be selfless.”

– Dima





# Forming future leaders

## *Today's students are tomorrow's leaders*

Your support means the **Institute for Leadership and Coaching (ILC)** is able to train every **WeCare Center leadership team** – infusing biblical, missional, and accountable values into people and operations. And ILC enrollment this year is expected to reach over 2,000 – as more Ukrainians seek to fill the leadership vacuums in their communities with excellence and integrity.

The UPF Board regularly consults with UBTS President Dr. Slavik Pzyh, who also leads the ILC and the separate *WeCare Ukraine* nonprofit organization that certifies and supports each WeCare Center.

Even as UBTS has expanded its mission in service to Ukrainians, **its core purpose – to educate and equip servant leaders for the church** – continues. This year's **UBTS graduates recently celebrated completing their studies and 1,275 students are expected to enroll in this academic year.** In an economy that has been wrecked by the war, your gifts help students pursue these life-changing studies.

Ukraine's future leaders – for the church and for communities nationwide – are being formed today at UBTS with beliefs and values that can uplift and transform the nation.



*Slavik Pzyh with ILC students*



# Help us continue to bring the bread of life to Ukraine

## *Another year, another winter*

As this year draws to a close, it is heartbreaking to realize that Ukraine has been at war for nearly two years. **Over five million people – most of them women, children, and seniors – are still internally displaced** throughout Ukraine. Many are not sure if or when they will be able to return home. No one expects to resume the life they once knew.

**And as another winter looms, the need to provide warm clothing, heat, food, and shelter becomes especially urgent again.**

There are many needs in the world at this moment and **we are grateful to have earned your trust and support for the work of UPF and UBTS in Ukraine.** We humbly ask you to consider making the most generous year-end gift that you can to help us continue bringing **the bread of life – physically and spiritually** – to tens of thousands of war-weary Ukrainians.

Thank you for your prayers and gifts. Please continue to pray with us for a miracle in Ukraine.

With warm wishes for a blessed holiday season,



Joe Privott

President, UPF Board of Directors

## Raising Christian leaders and relieving suffering in Ukraine *through support for:*

**UBTS • Institute for Leadership and Coaching • WeCare Centers Ukraine**

