



Moments of pleasure: Ukrainian children enjoy toys delivered to them by the Driving Aid to Ukraine team

Ukraine aid: 26 deliveries done...

By Lynn Winton

It was just over two years ago that Michael Byrne vowed he would dedicate his abilities and energy to helping the people of Ukraine. From his family home in Lynmouth Road, N2, he followed the rapidly unfolding horrors of the Russian invasion on the news and wasted no time in putting together humanitarian aid transports.

Fast forward two years, and the non-profit organisation he founded, Driving Aid to Ukraine (DATU), has now completed a staggering 26 massive articulated truck deliveries to the bombed-out regions of Ukraine, liaising with organisations on the ground to find out what the most-needed items are for each journey.

Current priorities

I asked Michael about the current priorities and they are "to help protect the 4.1 million children affected, support healthcare facilities to function and supply general humanitarian aid".

A generation of children have spent more than 930 days engulfed by violence, fear, loss and tragedy. The situation is especially acute for the millions of people who are currently

displaced within Ukraine. DATU bring them medical aid, educational supplies, clothes and toys.

Emergency conditions are a daily reality in many parts of Ukraine and DATU brings supplies to cancer, acute, rehab and children's hospitals including a recent delivery of 56 new hospital beds directly to Kyiv and Kharkiv.

Michael's mission also delivers a vast selection of requested children's clothing, food, and camping equipment as well as new blankets, heaters, tools, generators, hygiene products, and other specific requests to selected organisations, who distribute aid according to their priority lists.

Wish list

Springcroft Avenue resident Nicola Cousins has been

volunteering for DATU since its inception. I asked her what was on her wish list from her local community. She said: "At the moment some of the things we are focusing on collecting are sleeping bags and mats, mobility aids, heaters, baby food, school stationary and hygiene items but there's a full list online.

"Another huge help would be a storage space large enough to load an articulated truck within easy reach of north London. Maybe someone reading this could give us a lead? And lastly, we would love to hear from someone with some social media expertise that could lend us a hand."

Get in touch with Michael on 07791 912389 or Nicola on 07762 096551 and find out more at drivingaidtoukraine.org

Swirl of interest as school plays host to a different kind of globe

St James Primary School in Muswell Hill was chosen last term to host one of 103 works of art created to recognise Black History, the slave trade and how the world might look or be reimagined with this part of our past.



The St James globe was created by British-Trinidadian artist Bryony Bengé-Abbott, a British-Trinidadian and called 'Tributaries of Knowledge'. It was inspired by Kenyan Nobel peace prizewinner Wangari Maathai, who encouraged women to think locally but act globally by planting trees to replace the ones cut down by large companies.

The school was chosen to host the World Reimagined globe because of its work on racial justice and equality, including the Unicef Rights Respecting Award projects, developing class champions and holding an International Week.

Head of School Annie Moore commented: "It made a beautiful addition to our playground. I hope the children of St James have been inspired to be advocates for positive change."

Striking: One of the World Reimagined globes at St James Primary School

Musician seeks fees help to follow her dream in life

By Sue Sutherley

Some of you may remember the talented young Ukrainian accordionist Yuliia Humeniuk, who gave a wonderful recital at All Saints' Church in Durham Rd, N2, in October 2022, shortly after she arrived in London.

When Russia invaded Ukraine, she made the painful decision to leave her family in the Russian-occupied zone north of Crimea and make the difficult journey to a new life here in the UK.

Against all the odds, she carried on studying online with Kharkiv National University of the Arts, and she has just been awarded her Bachelor of Arts degree. She has also been thrilled to hear recently that she has been accepted on the MA course at the Royal Academy of Music in London, starting in September, which is a dream come true for her.

The professor there was very impressed by her musical ability when he heard her audition and told me he "has exciting plans for her".

Yuliia has been living with me in Lincoln Road under the Homes for Ukraine scheme since June 2022. I admire her resilience, her inner strength, her thoughtfulness, sensitivity and humour, as well as her musical talents.

The tuition fees for her two-year course at The Royal Academy of Music are £14,000 a year. She has managed to raise over half of the fees for the first

year of her studies and now needs to raise the rest, about £6,600, for this coming year and more for the second year.



Talented: Yuliia Humeniuk

All Saints' Church are generously allowing her to use the church for a fundraising concert to help towards this goal. On Saturday 26 October at 6pm, please come along and support Yuliia in the next stage of her courageous journey and hear her musical talents for yourselves.

In the meantime, Yuliia has also begun a fundraising campaign for the rest of this year's fees with Go Fund Me. If you wish to contribute the link is <https://gofund.me/a5a13079>

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