

And then there was **nothing**.





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nothing.

February 23, 2022...She had friends, family, and a quiet neighborhood. She had a career. She and her husband were saving for a larger home for their children, and perhaps her parents would move in with them. She had dreams.

February 24, 2022...and then she had nothing.

Invaded by Russia. Homes destroyed. Entire cities demolished. Friends raped and killed. Her husband called hundreds of miles away to fight for their homeland against the invaders.

As the bombs exploded, the tanks rumbled down her streets, and the invaders advanced by foot, she made the decision to leave. Leave her life behind, take her children, into the unknown, but away from this hell. She is among the five million women and children who packed their suitcases and backpacks with only a few of the possessions they had accumulated over a lifetime. They have nothing to return to...no home, no family, no neighbors, and in many cases, no husband.

To Poland, Slovakia, Romania, they continue to descend - by car, on foot, and by train. In Warsaw, they are greeted by a variety of charitable organizations and government officials.



BEDS IN A COMMUNITY CENTER.

The women and children are directed to gymnasiums and shelters – 20 beds to a room, several rooms to a building. 10-foot-by-10-foot kitchens feed 100 people. In many instances, three bathrooms serve up to 60 people. But no matter; the women and their children are safe. In some cases, it is the grandmother with her grandchildren.

Many of the refugees - they are called guests in Poland - are staying in houses opened to them by the Poles. Such a gracious and compassionate showing by these people. But it has now been several months and resources are naturally growing thin in this poorer nation. Longer term solutions need to be developed, as now they have nothing.



KITCHEN SERVING REFUGEES.

The beginning of **hope.**

One of the first long-term solutions is being constructed in the town of Oltarzew, just a 15-minute train ride from Warsaw.

A 100-year-old academy, located in a lovely rural setting, has been donated to permanently house guests from Ukraine. The academy, set on ten wooded acres and once occupied by the Germans in WWII, will house 200 people or 70 families. Though small, the two-room units with a bath and small kitchenette will provide dignity and a sanctuary for those who have nothing.

This is the first of many permanent housing projects to be undertaken by the Polish Pallottines. In addition to the current project (now called the Center for Ukraine), future projects are being planned in Ukraine once the war ends.

Retrofitting work on The Center is already underway with a completion date scheduled for early 2023, as the winter closes in. The Pallottines have donated \$800,000 (all of their reserves), the Polish government has donated \$800,000, and the City of Oltarzew has built a recreation area and donated a school to the Ukrainian children.

This leaves a balance of \$1.4 million to complete the first renovation.



ONGOING WORK ON ACADEMY APARTMENTS.

Donor Recognition

Donors' names will be prominently displayed throughout the converted spaces.

All Donations	All donor names will be inscribed on a plaque inside reception areas
\$1,000	A brick to be placed in outdoor reflecting parks at the facilities
\$5,000	A plaque inscribed on a bench placed on the grounds serving the center
\$10,000	Reflection garden named for the donor
\$25,000	A lecture room named for donor
\$50,000	Administrative area named for the donor
\$75,000	Reception area named for the donor
\$100,000	A hall housing apartments named for the donor

If not now, **when?**

Now, we can help those who have nothing, start a new life. Our donations will allow the Center for Ukraine to not only service those Ukrainians in Warsaw, but throughout Poland and ultimately in Ukraine, once the war ends. The Pallottines, ever humble, have used all their reserves to start the Center for Ukraine in Oltarzew. They have the knowledge and will to provide long-term support throughout Poland and Ukraine, if provided the resources.

If you are interested in donating to the Center for Ukraine, please visit irishpallottines.org/donations or click the donation button below and select the **Ukrainian Refugee Project** option.

All of our donations are tax deductible as the Center is a 501(c)3 charity.

For additional information, please contact Rich Pluta at (203) 912-3360 or Leo Stevenson at (734) 678-0321.

Donate



THE BEAUTIFUL ACADEMY OUTSIDE WARSAW, POLAND BEING CONVERTED TO REFUGEE APARTMENTS.



INFRASTRUCTURE WORK AT THE CENTER FOR UKRAINE.



THE GROUNDS ONE OF THE CENTERS IS SITUATED ON.



RECREATION CENTER BUILT BY CITY OF OLTARZEW.

Working **together** for those with nothing.

The City of Oltarzew will reopen an old school next to the center to teach Ukrainian children the Polish language so that they can one day be assimilated into the newer school next door.

Career counselors and trainers have been secured to help the mothers adapt to a new environment.

Some will return to Ukraine, but the goal is to help those who have nothing to assimilate themselves and their children into a safe environment while providing dignity.

These centers located in retrofitted structures will feature small apartments, cafeterias, kitchens, large commercial laundries, and conference centers.

The Polish Government has committed to pay for the Ukrainians' meals prepared by Center for Ukraine organizers. Several foundations, such as the EduCare Europe Fund and PATRIZIA Foundation, have agreed to pay operating expenses such as utilities and maintenance. The Polish health care system is offered free to the Ukrainians.

Most importantly, world renowned psychiatrist Beatrice Rutishauser Ramm and her team have volunteered to provide mental health support to the new residents in the newly created centers. These victims, who had their dreams crushed, their husbands and friends killed, who have nothing, need not only physical support, but mental support.



A note of support from the **Mayor** of Oltarzew.

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Burmistrz
Ożarowa Mazowieckiego

Ożarów Mazowiecki, 20.06.2022r

As the Mayor of Ożarów Mazowiecki Borough and Municipality I confirm that for many years we have conducted a lively cooperation with the staff at the academy in Oltarzew in many areas of social and cultural activities.

During the last several years it has been possible to organize many cultural events in the academy, serving the integration of the local community. One expression of great openness and foresight is the agreement on cooperation in the sphere of activating children in sports. In cooperation with the Borough and Municipality of Ożarów Mazowiecki a multi-functional playground and tennis courts have been built on the territory of the academy, which are used by children from the nearby school.

I received the information about the project of creating the Center for Ukrainian Refugees in the local academy in Oltarzew with great joy. Since the beginning of the outbreak of war in the Ukraine, the Borough and Municipality of Ożarów Mazowiecki has been giving help to the refugees from the country. Many of them have been accommodated in private homes, and a special Help Center has been created in the Sports Hall. It hosts 80 people on a rotating basis. There is a great need for a professional center to help refugees in the Municipality of Ożarów Mazowiecki. That is why I express my gratitude to the Center for Ukraine organizers for taking the trouble to establish such a center. I think that it is a very good and promising project.

As the Mayor of Ożarów Mazowiecki Borough and Municipality I realize that this is beyond the capabilities of the academy itself. That is why I declare further cooperation and possible logistic, legal, and financial help, so that such a Center can be created and properly function as long as there is such a need. A common activity will certainly be the education of children, who, with time, will be integrated into the state education system in a nearby school. The Borough and Municipality of Ożarów Mazowiecki offers a wide range of employment opportunities, which will foster the integration of refugees into our community.

I thank the Organizations and people of good will for their support of the noble project of the Center for Ukrainian Refugees in Oltarzew.



With best regards

Paweł Kancierz
Mayor of Ożarów Mazowiecki Borough and Municipality

An interview with **Zenon Hanas**.



A word about the organizer.

Zenon Hanas is one of the many individuals leading the charge to bring the Center for Ukraine to fruition.

He is the author of several publications on the use of modern communication media and earned his doctorate in social communication at the Institute of Media and Social Communication at the Hochschule für Philosophie in Munich.

What's it actually like in Poland at the moment?

For many Ukrainians, Poland is the preferred port of refuge, and Warsaw is already bursting at the seams. Normally, two million people live there. The population of the capital has risen by about 20% in recent weeks.

There is virtually no official infrastructure in place to support refugees in Poland. In other words, the majority of people are put up in private accommodation.

What sort of support will the Center for Ukraine offer?

Apart from putting roofs over people's heads and providing meals, the organizers at the Center for Ukraine ensure everything is in place to settle in quickly in the new environment. Their starting point for this is the children, so they ensure there are ways for the children to attend a Polish school. Even if the two languages use a different writing system, they do share the same origins.

Another option is for the Ukrainian children to do online lessons in their mother tongue. The groundwork was already laid for this over the past two years during the corona virus pandemic. Schools have also now been set up in the bigger towns and cities in Poland; they are run by Ukrainian teachers. Whichever form of schooling they receive, in the afternoon all Ukrainian schoolchildren have Polish language lessons. The children are coping quite well with the situation. It also helps that most of them are well educated and can fall back on their language skills and understanding of computers.



What would your wish be for the future?

The most important priority is to offer the refugees from Ukraine the best possible care and integration options here in Poland, although we also need to prepare for the time after the war and help Ukrainians rebuild their country. This is exactly the sort of thing people need to look forward to. It makes them feel more confident about the future and helps them come to terms with the present.

Organizers rely on donations to finance their support of the Ukrainians in Poland and ultimately in Ukraine, once the war ends.

If you are interested in donating to the Center for Ukraine, please visit irishpallottines.org/donations or click the donation button and select the **Ukrainian Refugee Project** option.

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Donate

World-renowned therapist donates teams' time: An interview with **Beatrice Rutishauser Ramm**.

A word about the therapist.

Beatrice Rutishauser Ramm is a trained educationalist with a master's degree in Global Education. After ten years of teaching in the classroom, she worked as an emergency educationalist for Caritas Switzerland. The international projects she has worked on were affected by both chronic and acute crises.

For more than 20 years, she has worked in Kosovo, Chechnya and Syria. In refugee camps, hospitals or prisons. Whether it's an area ravaged by conflict, natural disaster or poverty, as an emergency educationalist, Beatrice Rutishauser Ramm has worked in a variety of regions of the world struggling with crisis, not only training teachers but also accompanying them in their work with children, in some cases for many years.



What is an emergency educationalist?

Emergency educationalists build bridges. They come into play whenever there's a sudden and unforeseen situation and things start going wrong. For example, they take care of things if there are no school books. Or they show teachers how to teach without books, particularly in places like refugee camps, because they don't have 'official' schools. They make sure children can continue learning, despite difficult circumstances. Emergency educationalists ensure that emphasis is given to the right teaching methods and that the content of teaching is based on the right processes.

How do emergency educationalists work with children?

One of the most important things is to establish a secure framework for children. This provides a setting for positive experiences with others and mainly involves physical activity to lighten the load on the nervous system. And activities are organized to allow children to express themselves. The conversations they have with the children take place in such a way that they don't actually have to answer questions. So they decide for themselves what they want to say, or whether they want to say anything at all. They have to allow the children to join the conversation with the educationalists as if they are going on a walk in their thoughts, so they can make new connections.

One tried and trusted approach in such situations in life is to use fairy tales, as the images often reflect the situation of loss and fear you have experienced yourself, either good or bad, in a way that's easy to grasp. And a really important point is that at the end of the story, good always prevails. We also show children how learning aids can be used to get back in touch with the things they lost because of the trauma they experienced – whether that be math or a foreign language.

What's the difference between an everyday situation and an emergency?

Even if children find themselves in extremely stressful situations or they have had traumatic experiences, as a rule they still want to learn. But they don't want to learn the same way as they do under normal circumstances, and educators still have to achieve something. The problem is that traumatized children don't want to look for answers. They suppress things; they don't want memories to pop up about things they want to forget. This has a fundamental impact on learning. The usual way to deal with this is to work through things, on a practical level, rather than think through things. Emergency educationalists work alongside teachers to shed light on the situation children find themselves in and share learning techniques with them that children can actively use themselves.

What kind of help do children need after receiving emergency support?

During the second phase, children start to process what's happened on a much more conscious level. This will happen sooner or later, depending on how old they are. What is important at this point is that they are accompanied, so they acquire strategies for coping with the new challenges they face. So now teachers have to rely on the inherent curiosity of children and arouse the innate satisfaction they derive from learning. It can be quite challenging, all the more so when – as is so often the case – they have to do it in a language they haven't learned yet.

It's only when you get to the third phase that you start helping children regain their sense of self-esteem and resilience, and help them take control of their lives again.