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Rotary Helps Provide Medical Supplies to Ukraine

For immediate release March 30, 2022

Rotary clubs in Eastern Nebraska and Western Iowa combined efforts with dozens more scattered across the upper Midwest to airlift medical supplies to Poland and ultimately Ukraine. The effort was initiated by members of the Ukrainian Medical Association of North America (UMANA) based in Chicago and resulted in 50 tons of medical supplies and proved that when people of all types and backgrounds work together, good things result.

“I am so proud of the nearly 2,000 Rotarians in our area,” noted Rotary District Governor Carol Horner. “They helped answer the call to provide this airlift. And, they’re responding to the need for even more medical supplies by reaching out to hospitals, doctors offices and other medical facilities to collect donations of supplies for the next shipment.”

Horner called clubs in her district together when she was contacted by a Rotary colleague in Illinois. There were dozens of clubs in the upper Midwest who responded to the call and raised the money for the airlift. “Rotary is an international organization with more than 1.4 million members,” noted Horner. “At the international level we have a very large foundation that provides funds for projects all over the world. Our clubs in this part of the country got together and with the foundation’s help, provided for the medical supply airlift.”

The UMANA members in the Chicago area responded to pleas from Ukrainian doctors pleading for medical supplies for hospitals and clinics in Ukraine. The effort started small, among doctors in the Chicago area. Because of their connections with Rotary International in Chicago and clubs in that area, the effort soon spread to multiple Rotary clubs and members helping collect the supplies. What was first stored in a UMANA member’s garage soon became a warehouse full of nearly 100 tons of supplies donated by hospitals, pharmaceutical companies and other medical operations.

“We’ve launched our own medical supply donation effort,” added Horner. “I was so impressed with what I saw happening in the Chicago area that I challenged the members of the 39 clubs in our area to collect supplies. We’re seeking to fill very specific needs including several types of gauze, Neosporin or other topical creams, slings, tourniquets and splints, chlorine tablets for clean water and emergency kits.” Anyone with medical supplies they can donate is asked to contact their local Rotary club for details or send an email to:  [District5650Projects@gmail.com](mailto:District5650Projects@gmail.com)

Many clubs in Nebraska and Iowa have also responded to other challenges. Horner asked for donations for the Rotary International disaster relief aid and members donated $50,000. Steve Glenn owner of Executive Travel and a member of the downtown Lincoln club is donating $25,000 toward emergency housing for Ukraine refugees in Poland. The head of the International Quilt Museum in Lincoln has connected with Rotary members in Ukraine and is fostering a special project.

Rotary is a 117 year-old organization first established in Chicago. The organization involves people of all ages, genders, ethnic backgrounds and religions showing that professionals with diverse backgrounds could exchange ideas and form meaningful, lifelong friendships. Over time, Rotary’s reach and vision extended to humanitarian service by working to positively help and impact people throughout the world. Today there are more than 46,000 clubs around the world.

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Photos of the airlift and related details are available in this Google Drive folder:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1wBzWzN_NQABtcUu0wI9hJd8VRGoEssNi?usp=sharing>