

# There and back Again...

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A Pediatrician's Journey to Ukraine and  
How to find adventure and experience



February 2022 we watched 8 million refugees flee from Ukraine to neighboring countries as Russia Invaded Ukraine...





**Their Minister of Health told me, “Just come”...So I did...**

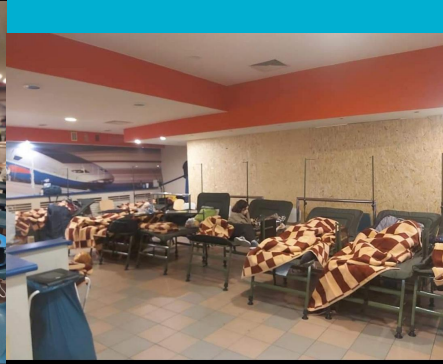
**Denver-Frankfurt-Warsaw-Lublin...**

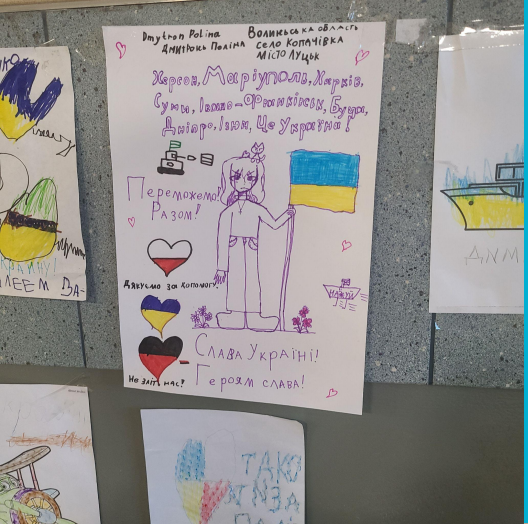
**So rented a car and was going to drive into Ukraine, go down main interstate looking highway from their border to Kyiv...**



# What could go Wrong Driving in?

Rental Cars aren't allowed into a war zone. Oops. so now 3 days in, one day late and discouraged and heading back to Lublin. Scheduled a train to Kyiv. Meanwhile Met Agata at the Lublin Train Station Refugee Center...

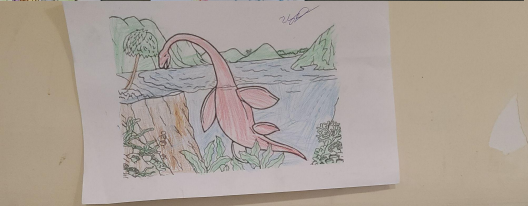




# Lublin Refugee Center...

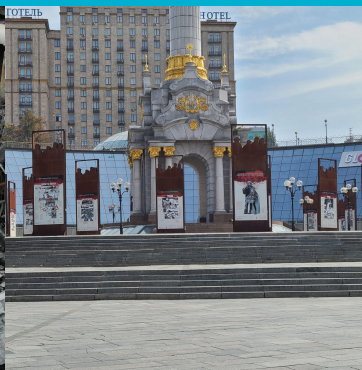
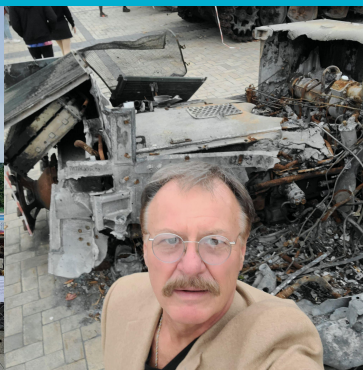
At start of the war processed 2,000 refugees a day...

Currently process 200 a day. Offer shelter, food, transportation, public assistance and medical referral. Has internet connection for children to do school and email family and friends. Today 5-6 million refugees still outside Ukraine who will likely never return to their country...

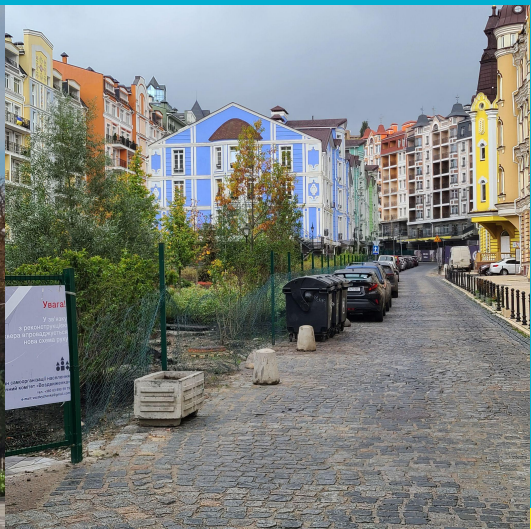


# Signs of war are everywhere...

In the courtyard of St. Michael's cathedral is an exhibit of russian destroyed vehicles. A cage in Freedom Square showing the cages of Mariopol survivors in a show trial. Monuments of Heros from the defense of Kyiv early in the war...



**Kyiv is an intensively beautiful European City dating to Medieval times covered in domes, pastel colors and parks everywhere you turn...**



# Freedom Square is the epicenter of Downtown Kyiv



The blue and yellow flags have names of Ukrainians killed in the current Russian Invasion...I watched a woman buy two at the little table and write names and plant them in the park....

Every Newscaster has done a story from the "I love Ukraine" sign in the square...had to do mine







# What about patients?

I actually did see patients, lots of them. But was asked not to take pictures of patients, hospital or surrounding areas because of Russia using tracking to locate where to send missile attacks. GPS coordinates were used to send missiles to civilian targets...These are “stock Photos of kids from Ukraine”





# Lost Generation of Children

Estimates of 60% of children have PTSD, depression and anxiety problems and their parents are much worse. Overall, majority still doing schoolwork and staying up with academic learning. Major cities providing counseling for children and parents. BUT...1/3 of medical care also left the country so there is a huge shortage of doctors, nurses, counselors and health care staff..





# Time to head back home....

Bus Kyiv to Lublin, Airport 6 hours, Frankfurt and another 6 hour layover then Home....total time traveling was about 20 hours. But time sitting in airports was almost 24 hours. So it took about 2 more days to return home.



# Lessons learned about this first trip...

1. Sometimes ignore the voice in your head telling you, "are you crazy? Why would you do this?"
2. Ukraine and it's people are totally deserving of our help, support and interest. It is an amazing country and it's people the most kind and beautiful I have encountered in any of my travels in Europe.
3. I immediately set out to raise money for them...We raised \$8,000 for the Lublin refugee center in half a year.
4. Right away planned a trip back to bring education, connection to us and some supplies and protocols for them...

(My office Manager was wanting to Kill me for planning another trip.....)

# Second trip to Ukraine: 5/27-6/12

Our AAP declined to offer educational support ("Bylaws") so the AAP of Wyoming offered education, and connections to Peds of Ukraine. Denver Children's offered their video Library as has Harvard. Goals of this trip: see kids, lecture and discuss education opportunities for physicians..





# I went back to the Regional Hospital

I met with Oleg Valenshuvoskiy, MD, PhD who is head of The Kyiv Region's OB/GYN. We spent two days working out details to set up a Medical Exchange Program...

Then he became a tourguide for the city.....



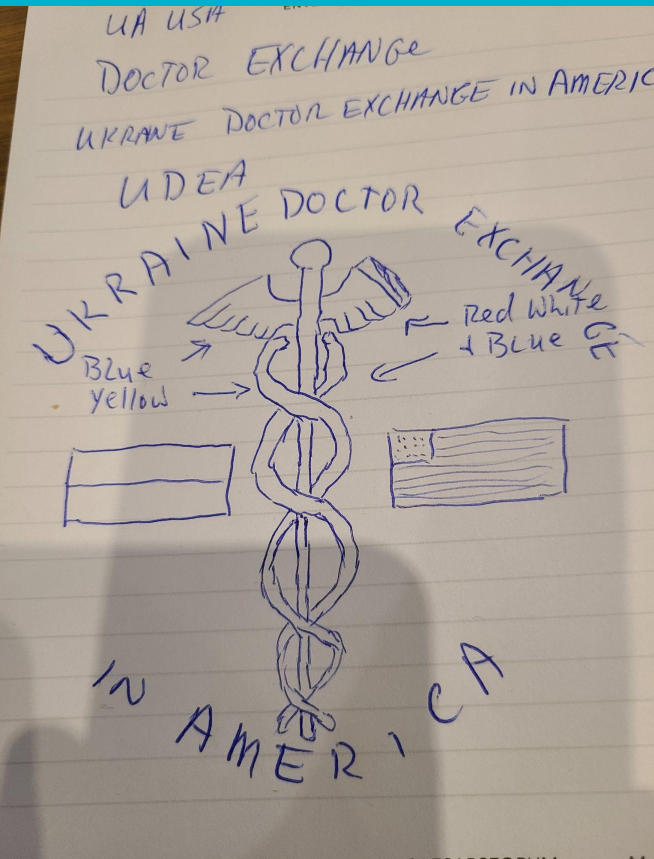


# Tour of the City..Friendship

I got to spend two days working out details of a medical exchange and touring the city and history and culture of Kyiv with Professor Oleg.. Amazing man. Extremely courteous and personable. Very able to be in charge but still treat you as an equal...very amazing experience...



# Ukraine Medical Exchange Program in America



1. Bring doctors over here for intense specialized training 2-4 week sessions. Live with sponsor physician families so they see culture and a good side of our country.
2. They return and teach others what they have learned
3. When the war is over and it is "safe", we will bring small groups of doctors over and teach residents, faculty and others.
4. Overall idea is accelerate the rebuilding of their medical system and bring them up to speed



# A personal View of the war...

Anastasiia, 30yrs and Sasha 7yrs. Lived in Kherson. When the war started watched russian tanks drive past their house. A week later fled to Odessa then to Lviv in Western Ukraine. She was a Lawyer. Her Husband died in the war when a wall fell on him. Sasha saw dead bodies as they left Kherson. During nightly air raids they sit in the hallway of their apartment. Sasha's Karate School was destroyed by a missile June 18th. Anastassia was one of my translators while I was in Kyiv. She also works for an Insurance company adjudicating claims. Sasha does school on line now.

His dream is to see a dinosaur. Hers is to sleep through the night in peace.



# You cannot unsee the War in Ukraine once you see it

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What can you all do???

1. Travel to Ukraine and “Just help”
2. Donate money to a valid cause in Ukraine
3. Offer to set up a visiting Ukrainian Doctor to be exchanged here for 2-4 weeks
4. Bid on the silent auction flags...all the money will go to Adam's cause in Kherson and Kviiy Rih oblast medical support
5. Call your national legislators and tell them do not waver on their support for Ukraine
6. Someday after the war visit Ukraine and it's people....

# Ukraine Doctor Exchange Program



We are currently setting up a doctor exchange program, where Pediatricians and other doctors from Ukraine will come here to learn specific skills then return and teach them. A way of improving their educational; system quickly and easily.

We're also discussing groups of Pediatricians going to Ukraine and teaching residents and students to improve their education...Interested?  
Contact me: [Klep@LaramieKids.com](mailto:Klep@LaramieKids.com)

# Last comment....

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Someday you will get an urge to do something crazy like go to Ukraine or something else equally crazy for a life Adventure.

Whatever it is, jump in before the rational next voice comes in to tell you to be rational. If you hear that voice, ignore it or you will regret missing out.

Enjoy the adventure, whatever it is. Do good without wanting paid in return. Be thankful you have the ability to be on this adventure and never apologize for doing it.

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