

CHESHIRE MARK MASONS DELIVER MUCH NEEDED SUPPLIES
TO A UKRAINE
MIKE ROSS AND HIS TEAM SUPPORTING UKRAINE



AFTER
2500K
DRIVE
THE TEAM
OF
CHESHIRE
MARK
MASONS
FINALLY
ARRIVED

Mark Masons of Cheshire support Ukraine

When the end is only the beginning?

In May 2022 Mike Ross, supported by Paul Stevenson, decide that they needed to do something to support the people of Ukraine who had suffered so terrible over many months.

They decided that the best way forward was to purchase and deliver an ambulance to Ukraine to assist the already depleted health service there.

The fund raising started and as soon as Gary Horstman heard that Mark Masons were involved, he approaches the Mark Benevolent Fund to ask if there was any way that they could support to idea.

To our great surprise they immediately donated £10,000.00 which covered to cost of the ambulance, this meant that all other monies raised by Mike Ross and Paul could be used to purchase medical supplies which were in very short supply in the Ukraine.

Once the ambulance was purchased, they then set about organising the route into Ukraine together with all the necessary paperwork and permissions.

In May, Mike and Paul set off on their journey travelling across France into Germany and Poland and then into Ukraine where they dropped of the medical supplies and the ambulance.

However, Mike surprised us all by telling us that not only had he managed to get the medical supplies, but he had also filled any spare space with TLC bears and food for a local orphanage who his contact in Ukraine had told him about, so, “on the way” he dropped into the orphanage and delighted the children with the gifts of bears, food and sweets.

Mike and Paul then returned back to Poland to fly home.

This should have been the end of story, but not with Mike Ross & Paul Stevenson, immediately on their return they started to think about those poor people in the orphanage, which consisted of not only orphans but mothers & children who through no fault of their own have been forced to flee their homes with little more than the cloths on their backs to the relative safety of the orphanage.

While at the orphanage he was told they had no form of transport and that they had rely on local volunteers for their transport needs this was at best hit & miss and posed great difficulties when arranging hospital appointments.

So, Mike and Paul decided they would change this and buy them a vehicle, they started to raise money and once again told Gary Horstman what they were doing.

When the Mark Benevolent Fund team found out what was happening, they immediately supported us by donating another £10,000.00.

Mike and Paul were then able to move forward and buy a 16-seater minibus, they also arranged for a transit van to be purchased by Eddy Sharp to help the orphanage move goods as well as children.

Not happy to stop at this Mike then called round local Charities and friends and was able to fill both vans with must needed medical supplies together with food and beds for the orphanage, a total of £30,000,00 in goods plus the two vehicles were then taken over the continent to Ukraine.

This time Gary Horstman Joined Mike and Paul on the trip and they were further supported by Eddy Sharp and Kelly Derkatsch who drove the transit van.

Having left England, the route this time took us through Holland into Germany, Poland and into Ukraine, on arriving at our hotel in Krakow we spoke to a couple of people in reception, only to find that they were Masons from Las Vegas, she was a lady mason, and he was a member of several Lodges in the USA, what a small world.

Having entered Ukraine we headed for our 1st drop which was in Lviv to deliver the medical supplies.

The following day we left Lviv and headed for Orphanage in Chernivtsi, where we delivered the mini-bus, transit van and all the aid, on arrival we were greeted by the volunteers, mothers and children, the children were delighted when they received the letters from the children in the UK and reciprocated by giving us letters to take back.

The orphanage they arranged to transport 4 of us to the Romanian border and to transport Kelly Derkatsch to the train station as she was returning to Lviv to volunteer as a first responder medic.

There was one problem with this trip, having left both vehicles at the orphanage we had no way to get 5 people out of Ukraine, however as we know, masonry is universal, so after some phone calls from Gary via Mark Grand Lodge we were put in touch with the Provincial Grand Secretary of Romania, who in true masonic fashion organised for Mark Men to collect us from the Romanian side of the Ukraine border.

A member of staff at the orphanage then offered to drive us all to the border, where we crossed on foot taking only one hour instead of the three hours it took for us to get into Ukraine.

After crossing on foot, we were met by Sabin Murariu, Alex Anti and wife Catalina, who had travelled 100 kilometres to help us, not only had they booked us into a hotel, but they stayed with us a paid for our evening meal, drinks, and our hotel rooms, what a generous gesture.

However, our trip was not yet at an end, we then had to travel by train to the airport, after a delay of an hour and a half we finally arrived back in the UK six days after leaving the UK.

We met so many fantastic people on the way and made so many friends as well, but more importantly we made a small difference to the lives of those in Ukraine who were in need.

My thanks go to all those who helped us on the way and to the members of the Mark who by their support of the Mark Benevolent Fund made it all possible, the Magic of The Mark is alive and well in every Mark Masons heart.

A big Thanks to:

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Neo Community Humanitarian Aid donations

The children of St Werburgh's School who made letters of support many written in Ukrainian & English as well as food donations

J Mitchell trading as Grosvenor Properties for a £1000 donation

Cheshire Development's Ltd for a £1000 donation

Barry J Fogg Electrical Services Ltd for a £1000 donation

Ultra-Service Agency for a £1000 donation

Jason Holland local businessman for a £1000 donation

Numerous donations given on just giving by friends, family and Cheshire brethren and their Lodges