



ABOVE: A man carrying supplies through a devastated area east of Odesa, Ukraine, as part of the New Dawn Rotary project.

New Dawn Rotary Ukraine Crisis Project

Rotary District 9510 is lending a hand to Ukraine, with the help of friends, fellow Rotary members and The Rotary Foundation.

AT the heart of Rotary is fellowship and service. The Rotary District 9510 New Dawn Ukraine Project demonstrates the power of this in difficult circumstances in villages around Kherson, east of Odesa, Ukraine, that

have been severely impacted by the conflict and remain 'forgotten' by aid agencies. When Russia invaded Ukraine, South Australian man Maurice O'Connell decided to travel to Ukraine as a volunteer to help

civilians impacted. Although not a Rotarian, Maurice shares Rotary's values and has many Rotarian friends. Maurice connected with some Ukrainian volunteers who had formed the non-government organisation 'New Dawn' to help the forgotten villages with food, electricity, clean water and other basic supplies they had been living without following extensive destruction of their villages.

Maurice returned to Adelaide in October 2022 and reached out to his Rotary friends. With the leadership of District International Services Chair Tim Mee and support from District Governor Paul Thomas, a multi-club committee was formed and a project to support the forgotten villages through New Dawn and Rotary District 2232 (Ukraine) commenced. The committee has representatives from New Dawn, Rotary District 2232, and the Rotary Clubs of Northern Yorke Peninsula, Adelaide, Gawler, Gawler Light, Mount Barker and Morialta.

The first step was to apply for a Rotary Foundation disaster response grant. The initial response was a setback – awarding grants to Ukraine had ended. While disappointing, this did not stop the project.

The second step was to form a RAWCS project. A project launch event was held on February 16, 2023 and the project was promoted through Rotary clubs within the district. Through the reach of RAWCS the project received donations throughout



Australia and to date has raised over AU\$120,000.

Then the project received great news – Rotary Foundation disaster response grants were re-opened and the application, which was already in the system, was approved. US\$25,000 to help the forgotten villages was now available. As the original application was for winterisation, the need for which had passed, New Dawn developed new projects to meet current needs on the ground and the new projects were rapidly approved by The Rotary Foundation.

Implementation of the first of these projects – repairing windows in a hospital and a bathroom and shower block in a mental hospital in Odesa – occurred in August 2023.

The project scopes are led by New Dawn as they know what is needed most at any time.

The first project completed with RAWCS funds was a medical centre for a village of 10,000 people that had no access to a medical centre. The location was chosen after consultation with Ukraine Department of Health. The transportable facility was purpose-built in Kyiv and New Dawn managed the project to an extremely high standard. A second medical centre for the same site was delivered in August. Thanks to a significant donation from the Rotary Club of Victor Harbor the third and final element of this medical centre was completed and opened at

the end of December 2023. Projects to refurbish three schools in the area have now commenced. Some children are currently going to school in tents, which is very uncomfortable during a Ukraine winter.

The need in Ukraine is immense but, like the starfish on the beach, this project makes a difference for the Ukrainians in Odesa and the forgotten villages around Kherson.

"It is our intention that this project will continue into the reconstruction phase," said District 9510 Ukraine project team member Marie-louise Lees. "Not only have we helped with facilities, but we have formed bonds with New Dawn and Rotary District 2232. Rotary in Action."¹⁰⁰

CLOCK FROM LEFT: volunteers unloading RAWCS medical supplies. The medical centre items building second centre. construction in Odesa District Governor Steblija (third from left) volunteer O'Connell and New Dawn founder Pogreb from the opening of the first centre. large were Region Berezna using from a Foundation disaster grant.



If you would like to support the New Dawn Rotary Ukraine project, donations can be made via donations.rawcs.com.au/58. All individual donations are tax deductible.