



Postcards to the Front

International Newsletter

November 2023

Ukraine
Australia
Canada

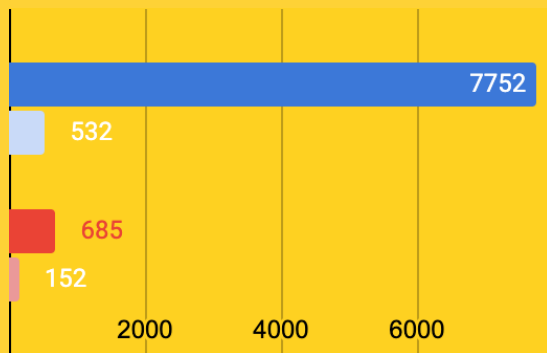
From everywhere ...



... to Ukraine

Volume 1, Issue 4

A Month in Postcards



This month our postcard warriors from Australia sent 532 cards and from Canada sent 152 cards. Australia's total (including the Christmas cards) sent is now 7752 cards and Canada's total sent is now 685.

Please keep the cards coming; the Defenders will treasure them!

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About

Postcards to the Front International Newsletter is a monthly publication of the project **Postcards to the Front**. Founded by three Ukrainian women shortly after Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the idea of sending messages of support and encouragement to the frontline Defenders of Ukraine spread out on [Postcrossing.com](https://www.postcrossing.com) – an international postcard exchange platform. Branches of *Postcards to the Front* have been established in Australia and Canada.

Defender personnel, including medics, mechanics, drivers, cooks, etc., receive postcards in their care packages. While each bit of happy mail makes a huge difference in the psychological well-being of the front line Defenders, messages and pictures from children are especially heartwarming.

Your support makes a difference. Thank you!

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This issue is dedicated to children

By Helen

A lot of cards have been written by children from all over the world for Ukraine's Defenders. Children demonstrate a sensitive understanding of the need for extra kindness, love and support.

Ukrainian children who are sheltering in Canada, in Italy – as noted in this issue – and elsewhere around the world have written cards to the women and men who are protecting their homeland. They miss home. They want to go back. And they want the Defenders to know that they are proud of their heroes.

And then there are the children and youth *in* Ukraine. Such as Ukrainian YouTuber, @annapostcard, who has featured *Postcards to the Front* on her YouTube channel (see [article below](#)). All are trying to survive during a war that is coming into its second year. The second hard winter. Their lives are touched daily by sorrow and loss. Loss of home. Loss of friends. Loss of family. Loss of childhood. And halted dreams. And yet, they are doing amazing things!

A uniquely creative and inspirational project for *Postcards to the Front* evolved after Marichka, team member in Ukraine, connected with Lina, both of whom work with Ukrainian youth through the NGO *Foundation of Regional Initiatives* (FRI). Their work with youth, ages 11-19, includes training and professional development that lead to internships.

Lina also works as a teen accelerator at Ampli, where youth participants develop IT and design skills then put them to work in projects that support career objectives. They build professional portfolios that they then take into internships arranged by Ampli. You can read more about Ampli [here](#).

Initially, the youth that Lina and Marichka work with wrote cards to the Defenders. Then, Lina had the idea of merging the organizations through a real-world project for the youth.

Et voilà, the youth participants began their work designing images that could be printed on postcards for Defenders. In other words, they could do more for Defenders than simply write cards. They would create cards that they and others could write on and that had very particular meaning to them; as young Ukrainians.

How's that for communicating love and support in a very personal way? Which is what we do at *Postcards to the Front!*

In August, students studying illustration and graphic design (ages 11-19) were invited to participate in a design competition. Entries came from the 13-16 year-old range.

Lina explained, “we decided to call it a competition rather than just an initiative. The competitive vibe and the possibility of rewards usually get teens motivated. So, participation was key, followed by the skill to create designs according to the technical requirements, crucial for our designers as they learn to handle customers' briefs during their studies.”

A competition with powerful buy-in to motivate: creation of meaningful and personal messages of support to the women and men who are Defending them, and the opportunity to amplify their portfolios with postcards featuring their design! Demonstrating their creative war-time contributions to support Ukraine's Defenders. Win-Win-Win!

Tamara has informed us that a batch of these cards is traveling to both Australia and Canada so kids from other parts of the world can connect *through* Ukraine's children to Ukraine's Defenders – *on Ukrainian-kid-designed cards!*

All this is to say that a LOT of amazing things are happening in Ukraine during this war time with many volunteers utilizing creative strategies to support children and youth, and to help prepare them for their future.

Nobody is sitting around waiting for the war to end. But, everybody wishes it were so! Until then, please ... send more postcards. They do matter!



Youth Postcard Designers

Hreben Kate –
sunflower girl

Zahatska Svitlana –
Defender illustration in the middle

Vykhopen Kateryna –
Patron illustration

Yeromina Alina –
top and right Ukraine minimalistic art cards

Try to write some Ukrainian

By Tamara

It's really great to receive cards from all over the world that include a bit of writing in Ukrainian!

On your next cards, try some of these phrases –

Ways to start your message

Greetings! - Вітаю!

Hello! - Привіт!

Good day! - Доброго дня!

Ways to connect personally with a Defender

You defend your country and the democracy - Ви захищаете свою країну і демократію

We didn't forget about you - ми не забуваємо про вас

We are thankful - Ми вдячні

Postcards for defenders were signed by children of the Ukrainian Saturday School "Flowers of Ukraine" in Bergamo (Italy)



Celebrating Christmas in Ukraine

By Tamara

If you're wondering what Christmas would normally look like in Ukraine, Tamara shares with us some of the more typical traditions.

Sviata Vecheria / Holy Supper - The table is set with 12 dishes, symbolizing the 12 apostles or the 12 months of the year. These dishes are meatless (at least by tradition but I never seen any Ukrainian table without meat myself - maybe because my family is not religious) and often include kutia (a sweet grain pudding), borscht (beet soup), mushrooms, pickled vegetables, and a variety of fish dishes. By tradition, you should wait for the first star to shine in the sky.

Kutia is a traditional Christmas dish made from cooked wheat berries, poppy seeds, honey, and sometimes nuts. It is a symbol of unity and shared blessings. So tasty for me! Here is the recipe: [Kutia Recipe \(Sweet Wheat Berry Pudding\) - NatashasKitchen.com](https://natashaskitchen.com/kutia-recipe-sweet-wheat-berry-pudding/).

Trash. You can't put your trash out of the house during Xmas - it's a superstition and if you do, it will lead to a bad year.

No one is doing it in my region (South Ukraine) but in the West of Ukraine they have a decoration called **Diduch**. It is a sheaf of wheat. It symbolizes the spirit of the ancestors and the importance of the harvest. By the way, we don't like when someone says Western or Eastern Ukraine because it separates us. We say on West, on East etc.

Koliadky and Shchedrivky: Groups of carolers go from house to house singing traditional Ukrainian Christmas carols. They are often dressed in costumes and receive small gifts or treats in return. Specifically, I was doing it with bandura so everyone was giving me some treats as it is so national!

Divination: Some people in Ukraine engage in divination rituals on Christmas Eve to predict the future. For example, they might pour molten wax into cold water and interpret the shapes it forms. Me and my mom are burning a newspaper and looking at a shadow so we see the prediction for the next year in a shadow. I am not sure how we got this ritual in my family.

Before Xmas - we have **St. Nicholas Day**. It is celebrated on December 19th, and children receive small gifts and treats from Sviatyi Mykolai, a Ukrainian version of Santa Claus.

In my family we put gifts under the Xmas tree.

An old family photo of a New Year's Eve –



UA Postcards – Donate, and get a postcard from a Defender

By Helen

You think you can only *send* postcards to Defenders?

Maybe you'd like to *receive* a postcard from a Defender?



Figure 1: [Every life is a whole universe](#) on UA Postcards

[UA Postcards](#) is a group of volunteers with a goal to get what Ukraine's Defenders need. Vital supplies like tourniquets, first-aid kits, or bulletproof vests. Helmets. Drones and even vehicles. This tiny organization donates ALL profits for the purchase of non-lethal supplies for frontline Defenders.

Having a life-long love for postcarding, and wanting to add to my efforts to support Ukraine, I decide to purchase a card, written to me by a UA Postcards volunteer, "Every life is a whole universe".

The online process was simple and the card arrived in reasonable time (given the war), and in great shape. No bullet holes through the middle. The handwritten message was personal and meaningful to me.

When I mail a postcard from Canada to Ukraine, the cost, including postcard and postage, averages \$5.00 (Cdn). For a \$10.00 donation, I received a card from a Defender knowing that my donation goes directly to much-needed supplies.

And, I have to be frank. Who can resist the cheeky invitation from UA Postcards to buy cards written by Defenders? Here's what their website says –

What can your postcard buy? A simple piece of paper can transform into a bunch of cool and useful things. And most importantly, you can do it at any time from anywhere in the world.

HELMETS

Unlike Russian soldiers, Ukrainians have brains that need to be protected.

BULLETPROOF VESTS

Ukraine fighters don't like getting shot since it distracts them from defending our homeland.

TACTICAL MEDICINE

Ukraine has great fighters, but unfortunately not always equipped with first aid kits.

DRONES

To save more lives during the fight we need to use more drones and robots.

CLOTHING

Russian soldiers surrender in order to get a better look at the beautiful uniform of our soldiers.

VEHICLES

A pickup truck is not an armored car but it's cheap and easy to buy. It's used on the battlefield to evacuate wounded soldiers and deliver supplies.

And, there's more!

You can purchase cards to be sent to Defenders by the UA Postcards volunteers.

You can also purchase powerful postcards with Ukrainian themes, sent to Russian embassies, all over the world. These messages remind Russia that the world is watching, and that we support Ukraine.

Your small postcard can save lives. Really!



Figure 1: [Do what you have to do](#) on UA Postcards

Take a look at [UA Postcards](#) website.

Maybe buy a postcard written to you, or one written to someone you know. Or, have one written to a Defender or to a Russian Embassy. There are many.

All are excellent choices for a creative way to communicate your support for Ukraine. Like this one, “ ... Do what you have to do.”

A love letter from Annie – Part 1

By Annie

Dear Postcard Warriors,

In February, 2024, I will travel to Ukraine to volunteer. I didn't arrive at this decision quickly or easily.

And I hope you will be interested in my journey, which I will write about and share with you in upcoming issues of the *Postcards to the Front* newsletter.

As I'm not a journalist and this is my first ever article, I wondered how and where to start.

First, I was outraged in 2022 when Russia invaded Ukraine. Then I read so much about the atrocities and the devastation. I remember walking home from work each night, and thinking how I wanted to be a part of something bigger than my own little world.

In April 2022, during a visit to Warsaw, Poland – neighbour of Ukraine – I went to one of the refugee camps and donated a couple of bags of clothing. I guess that's when the desire to do more began, but I didn't know how. I thought if it was to happen, God would answer my prayers and make a way.

Well, about a year later, a website inviting volunteers to Ukraine passed my way. I decided to apply and to my surprise, I was accepted!

I am headed to Kharkiv, where I will help package and deliver food to bombing victims and to soldiers on the front lines. I'm happy to do whatever I can to help.

After two weeks in Kharkiv, I will travel to Kyiv to volunteer with a Christian organization helping wherever and however I can for another couple of weeks.

On learning that my application to volunteer was accepted, I immediately booked flights to Warsaw via London. Most people enter Ukraine through Warsaw either by train or bus as the country is under a no-fly zone.

It's about a 20-hour bus trip from Warsaw to Kharkiv, and I will be traveling with other volunteers.

Volunteers are happily accepted but each volunteer is, of course, responsible for their own upkeep which includes accommodation, meals, etc. Volunteers sign up to work a certain amount of hours or days. The volunteer coordinators for each organization or business help and advise individuals interested volunteering.

Next time I write, it will be from within Ukraine. Not just with words, but with pictures, too.

I look forward to chatting with you soon!

Meanwhile, lots to do to plan for my trip to Ukraine.

Annie in Australia

Postcards to the Front interview with YouTuber Ana Byo (@annapostcard)



Ukrainian YouTuber, [Ana Byo](#), reached out to *Postcards to the Front* Ambassadors in Ukraine, Australia and Canada, to interview us about our global project to collect postcard messages of support for Ukraine's Defenders. She released [Part 1](#) November 25th. Stay tuned for Part 2, coming to your screen soon!

What an honour to have the opportunity to share our project with Anna, a young woman who has a passion for creative postcarding. And, good news: our interview time was not interrupted by bombing!

Excerpt from the Australian Hansard of 14 November 2023

Below is what the Senator for Tasmania, Catryna Bilyk, has spoken about Postcards to the Front project in the Parliament of Australia on 14 November 2023. For the complete Hansard in a downloadable pdf file, please [click here](#) (top right corner).



Tonight I want to provide the Senate with a brief update on the Postcards to the Front campaign, which I've spoken about in this place previously. To remind senators, Postcards to the Front is a global campaign aimed at sending messages of support and encouragement to brave Ukrainians on the front line of the war with Russia. In the last couple of weeks, the Russia-Ukraine war has been knocked off the front pages of the newspaper, which I find a bit unfortunate. The issues there have not changed; they have not improved. It's really important that we don't forget what Ukraine is going through at the moment and we don't let the issues there become overshadowed by recent events. It's really important that we remind people that the war is ongoing.

The messages in the Postcards to the Front campaign are a reminder that the world does stand with those at the front in Ukraine and has not forgotten their struggle. Australia and Canada have been the most active national branches of this initiative, and I'm really pleased to report that the Australian branch has so far sent over 7,500 postcards, which is a phenomenal achievement, to the front. I congratulate the Australian coordinator, Peter Ramadge, on his huge efforts, as well as the campaign's Ukrainian founder, Tamara Levit.

A postcard may sound like an empty gesture, but the feedback from the defenders of Ukraine have been so overwhelmingly positive. One person said, 'Nothing warms the soldiers' hearts like a handwritten letter,' and another said, 'The postcards make us calm and motivated. The darkest day would be a bit brighter because somebody handwrote their sincere support to us.'

It's not hard to do. As senators would be aware, I've written to all parliamentarians to encourage their participation, and I sincerely thank all members and senators of the parliament, including the Prime Minister, who have contributed. Anyone can send a postcard to the front. You can also send more than one. In fact, you can write regularly. For guidance on what to write, visit postcardstothefront.com.au, where you can also find the Australian address to forward them to. If you live near my electorate office in Kingston, in Hobart, or work in the parliamentary building—it's open to staff as well, not just politicians—feel free to drop by my electorate or parliamentary office, pick up a postcard, write a simple message and leave it with my staff, who will forward it on.

I don't think I can reiterate enough tonight how welcome these postcards are to those on the front line. It's not just professional soldiers but also civilians who've joined up to protect their country against the immoral invasion by Russia. I've had a lot to do with Ukrainians over the 40-odd years that I've been married to my husband, and they're a very strong people. They're a very dignified people. They want to support their country. They believe—as do I and I think most people in this parliament, if not all—that the Russian invasion was immoral and illegal. They're such a strong national group of people. I really find it hard to put into words exactly how strong they are, but they will defend their country to their deaths. You can be sure of that.

All I'm asking is that people write a simple postcard to these people. It can just be, 'We are thinking of you in these awful times.' It doesn't have to be an essay. It doesn't have to be a book. It's simply a postcard. So I would encourage people to do that. As I stated earlier, the message reminds those people that the world stands with them. In this geopolitical landscape that we've got, with the issues involved in other countries that have conflict going on, I would just ask people to remember those Ukrainians that are supporting their country.

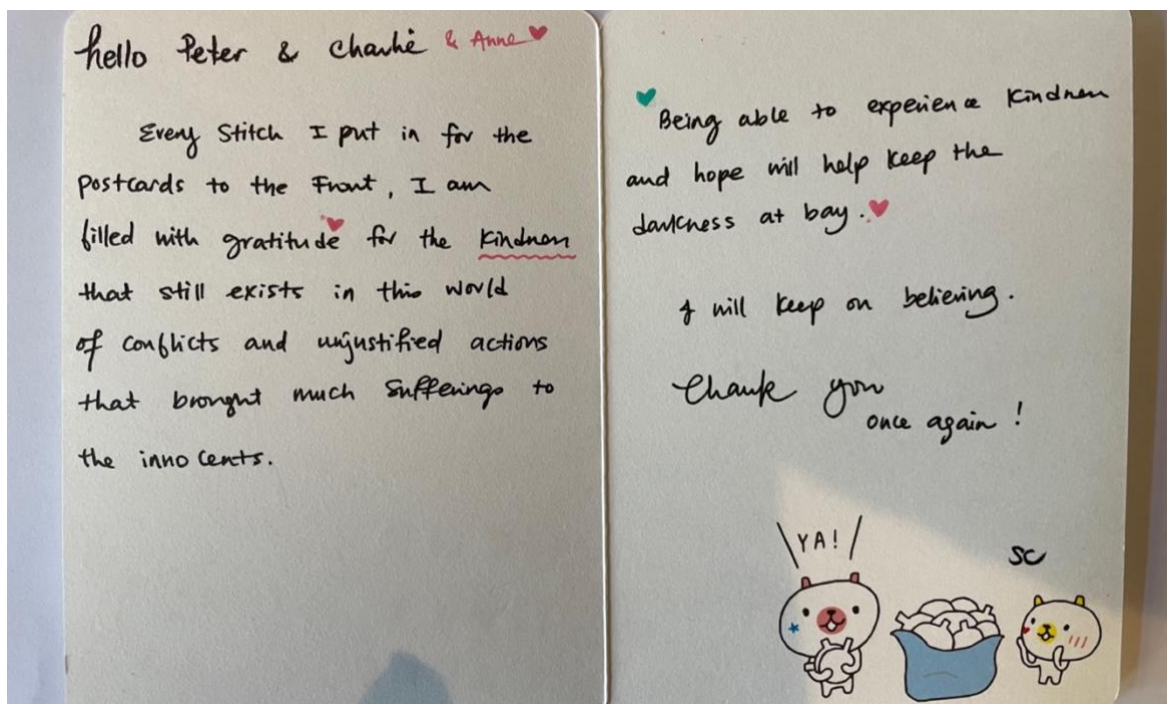
Australia Branch News and Updates

By Peter

> Singapore Representative for *Postcards to the Front Australia* Appointed

We are happy to announce that **SC Chua** has agreed to represent *Postcards to the Front Australia*, in Singapore.

SC is an enthusiastic Postcrosser and skilled card maker and writer who will give us a higher profile in Singapore.

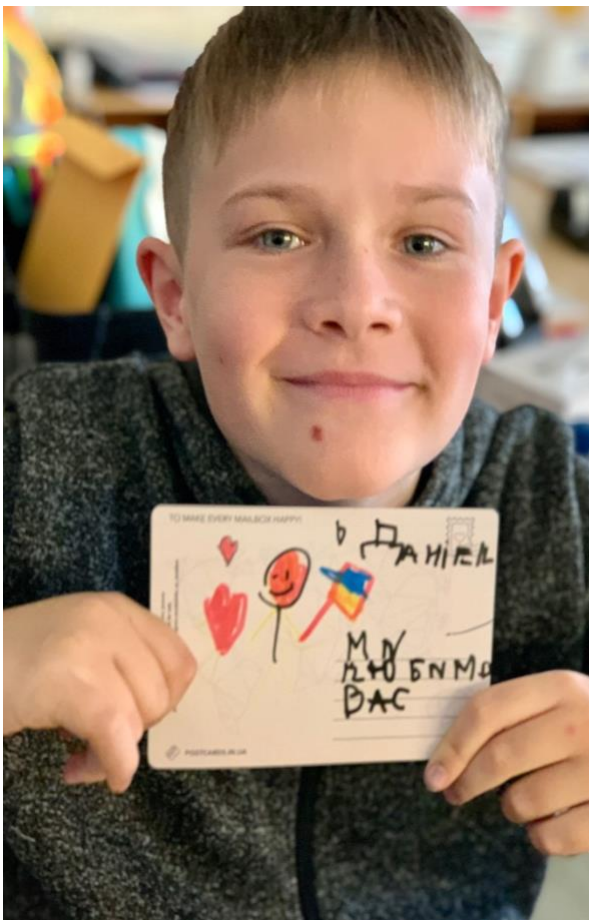


Canada Branch News and Updates

By Helen



Children and youth writers have shone this month, with more cards written by youth than adults. Imagine the Defenders' smiles when they receive messages of love and care from young people! If you're an educator, or a youth leader, please consider introducing a group of children to the empathetic art of writing messages of support to Ukraine's Defenders. Need postcards or ideas to help you get started? [Contact us](#) and check the section of this newsletter, [How to run a postcard-writing workshop](#).



1. We facilitated two postcard-writing workshops in a Grade 5/6 class at our local elementary school. In the first workshop, we explained how mail systems work, and we introduced the students to the Cyrillic alphabet, following which they wrote postcards to Defenders of Ukraine. Two Ukrainian students who are sheltering in Canada helped their peers write messages in Ukrainian. It was quite touching to observe the two Ukrainian boys Daniel and Andrii, guide their classmates with confidence and joy. At the second workshop, students discussed the meaning of Remembrance Day in Canada, then wrote postcards to Canadian veteran members at the Millbrook Legion Branch 402 and to Canadian Armed Forces troops stationed abroad. Great job kids!



2. We met with a group of Polish high school students who traveled across Canada this month for leadership training through the [Polish Academy of Canada](#). Each year, Jean-Michel and I meet with two or three such PAC groups to discuss Canadian history, education, and the arts. This year, we included a postcard-writing workshop. After all, Poland has taken in the most Ukrainians since Russia's invasion. Therefore, each of the students could relate to the hardships presently faced in Ukraine through personal interactions with Ukrainians sheltering in Poland. Poles and Ukrainians can be considered cultural brothers and sisters in some ways. Not just because of a common love for borscht! It was gratifying to watch these soon-to-be-adults, who have great hopes for their futures, engage creatively and personally while writing their messages to Ukraine's Defenders. In English, Polish and in Ukrainian! Awesome! Wspaniały! Чудово! They exemplify the typical reason given to us by those who write postcards to Ukraine's Defenders. That is, a basic human desire to reach out and offer a hand of friendship, and a heart that cares, to someone in need of support. Particularly, someone who is suffering greatly through an injustice.





3. Two young brothers from Costa Rica reached out to *Postcards to the Front*, as they had learned about the invasion of Ukraine from [Postcrossing](#). Wanting to do something meaningful and personal, they have written nearly 100 cards to Defenders this month! Yes! A hundred!!! The guy at the shop where they buy their cards actually just ***gave*** the cards to them. ***No charge, for a good cause!*** This is an example of the many ways in which people all over the world want to do something personal to support Ukraine. The boys' cards feature colourful and beautiful tropical flora, fauna and Costa Rica landscapes, and will surely bring smiles to Defenders as they will arrive in Ukraine's winter. Each card is a love letter to nature, and expresses gratitude for Defenders doing "a great job". They are also decorated with fun child-centred colourful stickers. Plus, at least one sentence is written in Ukrainian. Kudos to these amazing boys! I imagine a Defender's eyes and heart overjoyed by the layers of beauty, kindness and love that each card offers.



4. Siblings Anya and Caleb from Montreal, Canada, sent a beautiful batch of their art cards that will surely bring smiles to Ukraine's Defenders. Such joyful kindness and care!





This month, we launched a **Postal Hug campaign**. Every envelope, with three or more cards, postmarked by November 30th and received in our mailbox by December 10th, qualifies the sender for a [written] postal hug from Ukraine. Five winners will receive a Postal Hug written by Tamara, and sent from Ukraine. *Have you mailed your cards?* Winners will be announced December 11.

If you are a forward planner, please consider writing a batch of cards expressing affection and care to Defenders, so we can get them to the front lines for February. You know ... *Valentine's Day*. 💙💛 February 24 also will be a sobering 2nd anniversary since the invasion. Your cards should arrive in our mailbox by the end of December if they are going to make it in time for Valentine's Day. Let's send a lot o' love to Ukraine! 💙💛

Linda, who designed and manages our newsletter layout, is hosting several lotteries for Postcrossers. Don't forget to write your Postcrossing ID on the back of the envelope.

1. For the person who sends the largest number of written cards for Ukraine's Defenders – that land in our mailbox by January 31, 2024 – the prize is a box set of 100 Ghibli Movie postcards. [This offer](#) closes January 31, 2024.
2. [3:1 Postcrossing lottery](#). You send three or more cards in an envelope to our Millbrook, Ontario post box, and each one will be entered to win cards purchased directly at the Ghibli museum. These cards can't be bought anywhere else. So, Postcrossers, check out the lottery details and guidelines in Postcrossing. This lottery will close January 31, 2024.
3. A [\[Special Lottery\]: Five \(5\) written cards for Defenders for One \(1\) rare Ghibli pop-up card](#) closed November 15, 2023. There were seven winners for this campaign. Congratulations. All cards are on their way!

Remember, you have to be a member of Postcrossing to access these particular lottery details.



We're Excited to take *Postcards to the Front* to a Museum!

Oshawa Museum, Sunday, January 21, 1-3pm

Many Canadians feel a need to do something that is personal and meaningful to support Ukraine. This is why we go out into the community to share about *Postcards to the Front* and to facilitate postcard-writing workshops.

We're excited to be invited to [Oshawa Museum](#) where area residents can learn about this important global project and write messages of support and encouragement to Defenders of Ukraine.

This workshop will have three parts:

1. Introduction of the project; impacts of postcards at the front lines.
2. Introduction to the Ukrainian alphabet, along with some practice and provision of helpful phrases in Ukrainian for use in writing messages of support.
3. Postcard writing.

Registration is Free. All ages welcome.

We provide postcards, writing and drawing tools, samples, and paper crafting supplies



Need some cards to write to Defenders? We can send you an envelope with five blank *Canada supports Ukraine* cards for you to write back. Design by Ukrainian artist, [Viktoriiia Shepel](#). [Email us](#) your request.

And, please ... share [our website](#) as widely as you can. Ask family and friends to write cards. Maybe you want to organize a postcard-writing bee? Check the section of our newsletter, [How to Organize a Postcard-Writing Workshop](#).



Recapping our gratitudes:

- Thank you to Mrs. Nelson, Grade 5/6 teacher, for inviting us share with her class about mail systems and *Postcards to the Front*. What a wonderful group of caring students who wrote many heartfelt messages of support to Ukraine's Defenders!
- We are grateful for every single card that comes to our mailbox. *High Fives* to postcard warriors in Canada, Costa Rica, Poland, and in the United States.
- Thank you to Diane for your postage donation which covered the cost of three packets of postcards to Ukraine.
- We are grateful to all of you who have spread the word about *Postcards to the Front* to others ... these connections help our efforts to support Ukraine.



Remember: your cards do make a difference ... as Danylo tells us from the front lines in Ukraine –



Nothing warms the soldiers' heart as a handwritten letter.



– Defender Danylo

Do you have questions? Do you have unused stamps to pass along to our team (we could use some!)? Or blank cards? Be in touch: postcardstothefront.Canada@gmail.com

And if you have a batch of written cards ready for us to send on to Ukraine, see the [contact section](#) for our address.

Thank you for your continued support of Defenders of Ukraine!

How to run a postcard-writing workshop

By Helen

If you're thinking of gathering a group of friends or family for a good-old-fashioned group effort, here are some ideas to help you organize, based on our experience with such groups.

1. Who is coming to your workshop? Consider ages and skill levels with writing, and with expressing feelings. Some 10-year-olds have demonstrated more confidence in writing messages; particularly, when trying to write in Ukrainian, than adults.
2. You need pens, fine coloured markers, crayons. Some fun stickers are nice. Postcards or postcard-size and thickness cards (you can get these at craft stores).
3. Need cards? We have them. Free to you for this project. Send an email to your nearest *Postcards to the Front* branch letting them know how many people will be writing cards, ages, and when you will be gathering. Be sure to give us enough time to get the cards to you in the mail.
4. Bring several samples of postcards that you have pre-written. Some could be very simple examples for children. Some could be more sophisticated examples for adults to draw from. Tell people they can 'borrow' ideas from your examples. And ask them for their ideas. *What are you thinking you might write? Is anyone planning to draw something? What?* Ideally, your samples should show that it's okay to KEEP IT SIMPLE. And print only. Not cursive writing as it's more difficult for Ukrainians to read. Starters: A 'hello' (maybe in Ukrainian). Two or three simple sentences. A 'goodbye' (again, maybe in Ukrainian). And maybe a simple colourful drawing. Please be sure to read our [Tips for Writing your Card + Samples](#) page. If you can, print off a copy for your gathering.
5. Once your group is assembled at your kitchen table, or wherever you have gathered, take a few minutes to remind them why they are there. Remind them of the purpose of the cards. Share your examples. Ask them to consider trying to write something in Ukrainian? Either bring several copies of our Ukrainian phrases page to share amongst participants, or direct people to open our [Ukrainian phrases page](#) on their cell phones. The act of trying to write in Ukrainian imparts to the Defenders a high level of empathy for Ukrainian culture. The effort matters. It doesn't have to be perfect.

6. A little snack is nice.

The greatest obstacle to getting started is the blank postcard. *What do I write? How do I say what I feel?* That's why it's a good idea to bring several pre-written cards, demonstrating how you approach the task.

You won't have a lot of time to write many cards yourself as you might be busy helping participants.

We have found the list of [translations](#) to be **the most powerful tool**. People are quite intrigued by the very different alphabet and form for each symbol. Most worry about 'getting it perfect'. But, they try to write in Ukrainian, after I set the stage –

Imagine ... you are stuck in a dark, uncomfortable, cold and dirty place. It's noisy from shelling. You've been there for months, and you miss your family and good food and a warm bed. Then, the mail service brings some postcards. And you see that somebody somewhere far away on the planet tried to write to you in Ukrainian!

Wow! Imagine, that someone cared enough to try. And even though the Ukrainian bits of writing are a bit wonky – and might make the Defender laugh – it doesn't matter. The smile for the Defender comes from the connection you made by showing them that you value their struggle to defend and protect their culture. You have tried. For them.

I suggest they try at least one or two phrases in Ukrainian.

Then, all you need is another one or two sentences to express how you feel about their situation, and then, if you are inspired, add a bit of colour.

Many people, of all ages, are drawn to write "you are heroes" in Ukrainian. It's the simplest to copy and it expresses a genuine feeling. As they peruse the list of translated phrases, they will often add a statement inspired from the translations, but in their own words, about their concern for the Defenders; e.g., *I hope you are warm and safe, or you must miss your family.*

My sample cards always have some very basic drawings, like a blue/yellow heart, a simple sunflower, or some vines or other design along the edges. Or even, I create a fake stamp for the top right corner. After all the cards do not need a stamp or an address. Just all text

and/or pictures. Sometimes, people search for ideas for something to draw on their cell phone.

Once there are offerings of ideas for filling in a bit of the space, as mentioned above, people get talking amongst themselves about ideas they have. The sharing of ideas at the writing space really gets things going. And then, it's quiet and creative. 😊

For those who don't feel that they cannot express themselves creatively, a sampling of motivational, joyful, colourful, fun stickers are welcome.

Please let us know when you host a postcard-writing bee. Let us know if you need cards. Share some photos that we can include in our newsletter and on our website. You can inspire others!