



GREATER LOS ANGELES DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

LENDING A HELPING HAND: A RED CROSS UKRAINE EXPERIENCE

By Samantha Stryke, PTA, CBIS, CSRS

February 20, 2022: Russia invades Ukraine. After years of aggressive behaviors from Russia, they launched a full invasion. This would cause one of the largest humanitarian crisis since World War II.



Every day, every hour, I would watch or read about the new updates coming from Ukraine. Watching with absolute horror at the monstrosity and evils being done. I couldn't just sit back and do nothing. I HAD to help. I wanted to do more than just donate money. Donate, then sit in my happy little home like nothing is happening just because it's on the other side of the world. I couldn't do it. What could I do though? I'm just 1 person.

I spent 3 weeks scouring the internet looking for a way to physically help. The call came, and the Polish Red Cross in Lublin, Poland said yes! I spent the next 3 days preparing. This meant finding a place to stay, flights, transportation, safety issues, and gathering supplies (physical and monetary). My flight ended up taking 2 days, through Zurich, Warsaw and Lublin. As I moved through the airports in my travels, you could tell something big was happening in Europe. The terminals were empty. By March 25, 2022, I was in Poland, met with a coordinator from the Red Cross and received my vest and headed to my first assignment.



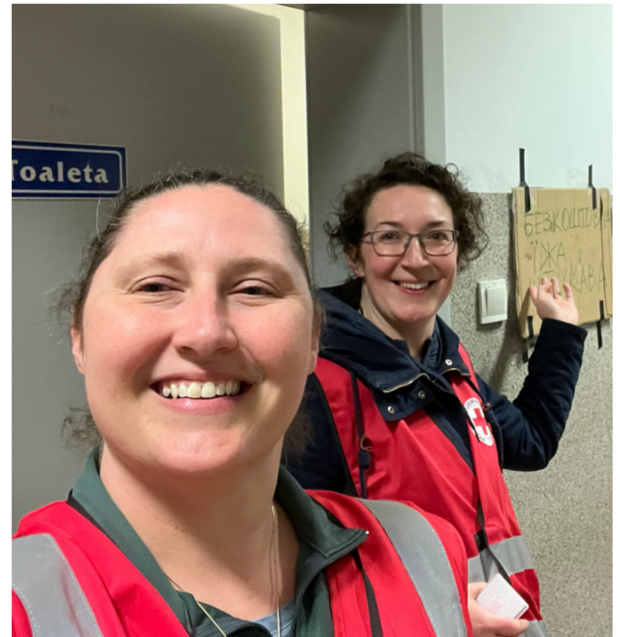
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Being a healthcare worker, they wanted my assistance with 2 of their Ukrainian shelters' overnight shifts to start with. One shelter was more adults and young kids, the other was adults and older kids. Back rooms held medications, extra food, clothes, toiletries and more. Both shelters had the same feel, kids up and running during the day, the moms and adults up throughout the night...crying. In the early morning hours when the electric trams started running, a woman would run out to us scared and reporting that the guns were firing and they weren't safe any longer. A couple of us went out with her and stood with her and talked. She finally calmed down and came back in.

I also had the opportunity to travel to a small town, Hrubieszow, and work 2 of the Polish/Ukrainian border crossings and a shelter. The first crossing point I was at was the foot traffic side of the Polish border. I was set up in tents with the Polish Military, medics, and a couple other Polish Red Cross people. We stood out in the cold, wind and rain for hours to help. Half way through the night, we succumbed to the cold rain and huddled in the medic tent. The rest of the time I was at another crossing as the buses came through. I would spend the nights watching person after person getting off a bus, going through a checkpoint.



So many sights and faces I will never forget; the gentleman with 4 kids who tried his best to hold back tears when we handed him and the kids free food and drinks, the older lady traveling with her cat and dog and needing help to repack her items after the search and the kisses and hugs she gave me, the older generation who have lived through these types of times before. They took their time shuffling through the checkpoint not feeling any rush.



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While both there and before leaving, I was able to coordinate with a friend of mine who had contacts at an orphanage in Eastern Ukraine. All the children were disabled and unable to evacuate. They spent their days and nights in the basement. I collected items for them and was by some miracle able to find a beautiful soul to ferry them across the border to Ukraine where someone was waiting to pick them up and bring them. There were items like blankets, warm clothes as the basement was freezing, cleaning supplies and even laundry soap. The few last days before returning home was assisting in the shelters again in Lublin. They were now used to seeing my face. I took blood pressures, assisted with anxiety attacks, fear and even a little violence. I found a sweet 12-year-old Ukrainian boyfriend in the shelter who would fill my pockets with candies. I was able to help a young mother with a small toddler. She was able to escape with just a shirt and a dress on. She played on her own as she didn't trust any other adult other than mom. I went into the closet and found her some underwear and a warm outfit to put on and gave an extra sweater. By the end of the night, she was sitting in my lap playing and being introduced to Snapchat. Her laugh was music to my soul. I befriended a young girl having massive anxiety attacks after she watched a video of Russian soldiers in her hometown dragging girls by their hair down the road. The video was jarring.



I must admit, I loved being there, with all of those people, Polish and Ukrainian. My host family that took me in while there, the Red Cross personnel and Polish Humanitarian Aid. If I had the chance, I would go back in a heartbeat. My time there has inspired me to help with the American Red Cross. I just signed up to volunteer with them in my area for Disaster Management. I'm so excited.

PT PUB NIGHT HIGHLIGHTS

June 9, 2022

Bar Louie in Northridge, CA



The Greater Los Angeles District hosted its first PT Pub Night for the 2022 year. It was a great way to connect with new and familiar faces. Thank you for all of those who attend the event! We can't wait to see you all again soon!

CONGRATULATIONS
CLASS OF
2022

**Congratulations to all the PT and PTA
students who recently graduated!**

GET INVOLVED WITH GLAD!

Greater Los Angeles District of CPTA Nominating Committee Wanted

What is the Nominating Committee?

The GLAD Nominating Committee is responsible for facilitating nominations for your districts elected leadership and conducting the elections process, including the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer/Secretary, Chief Representatives, Nominating Committee members, Representatives to the Assembly of Representatives and PTA Representatives to the Assembly of Representatives. The Nominating Committee is unique in that the members are ELECTED by the district membership.

The current Chair of the GLAD Nominating Committee is Celeste Le.

There are currently two vacant positions on our GLAD Nominating Committee.

How can you help?

If you are interested in becoming a member of the GLAD Nom. Comm. Please contact our District Chair, Lisa Barnett, at lurb17@msn.com to submit your name for consideration. Eligibility to serve must be verified before an appointment can be considered.

You can also help by submitting nominations for the above noted elected offices to the GLAD nominating committee at anytime throughout the year and/or when there is a call for nominations electronically or at an upcoming in person GLAD District meeting.

Remember that the APTA/CPTA is your member driven professional organization whose local, individual membership needs will best be known and addressed by individual members coming together and working together at the local district level.



The Greater Los Angeles District would like to wish you all a safe and healthy 4th of July Weekend!



Experience the

Magic!

2022 CPTA Annual Conference

Topics Include:

Movement Analysis Language

Opioid Crisis

Public Health in Rural America

The Intersections of LGBT+ & PT

Treating Post-Mastectomy Pain

Innovations in Telehealth

Neurorehabilitation ...and more!



What a blast!
Disneyland, Anaheim

Anaheim, CA
September 24-25

CPTA
CALIFORNIA
Physical Therapy Association

Physical Therapists
IMPROVE
the Way You *Move*

SAVE THE DATES

APTA House of Delegates

July 30, 2022

Virtual

August 14-15, 2022

Washington, D.C.

CPTA Assembly of Representatives

September 23, 2022

Anaheim, CA

CPTA Annual Conference

September 24-25, 2022

Anaheim, CA

APTA Combined Sections Meeting

February 22-25, 2023

San Diego, CA

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Newsletter Chair: Rhoda Bea Hernando, PT, DPT, ATC



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