

HUF Fundraiser Dinner

Hosting Ukrainian Families is planning a major fundraising event for April 15 – that’s also a thank-you to the community from the families themselves.

The three Ukrainian families – the Odemchuks, Strezhyborodas, and Tysiachnas – have expressed their gratitude for the help and care provided by HUF and they want to pay that goodwill forward by cooking an authentic Ukrainian meal for the community, HUF Director Jerry Nay told The News-Gazette.

“The main purpose of [the fundraiser] is a celebration. The Ukrainians are thanking the community for their support...The other half of the purpose is for the community to show their support of the Ukrainians,” Nay noted.

Aside from the three-course seated meal served by volunteers of Hosting Ukrainian Families, they will conduct a raffle, a silent auction, and a live auction. Regarded as donations, tickets covering admission to dinner and a raffle entry will be \$50.

For those who cannot attend the dinner but would still like to make a donation to HUF and participate in the raffle for a chance to win a quilt handmade by a HUF member Joanne Roblee, they have the option to buy a \$20 ticket, Nay said. Tickets can be purchased online by scanning a QR code, which will be accessible on HUF fliers distributed at a later date. Alternatively, those interested can call Hosting Ukrainian Families during their office hours or access a link through the HUF website.

All funds acquired from the evening will go towards creating a “reserve” fund in the event that something untoward were to happen to the families. “For example, if a wage earner were to become incapacitated, we are responsible for helping,” Nay explained.

“Also, looking way far ahead,” Nay continued, “talking about the moral responsibilities, a lot of us feel a responsibility to help them at the end of their tenure here to get them back to Ukraine, to get them back home with some substance in order to start life over again, because they are living hand-to-mouth right now.”

Located at Lexington Grace Episcopal Church, the event will feature 12 available tables accommodating 96 diners. Throughout dinner, the three Ukrainian couples and a translator will join community members at their tables to introduce themselves, indulge in conversation, and embrace the Lexington community, Nay said.

Nay exuded excitement for the upcoming event and expressed his gratitude to a few individuals who have already made significant contributions towards the event’s success. Rosanne Facciolo made a major donation to cover the cost of ingredients for the meal, which will be purchased at an authentic Ukrainian grocery store located in Harrisonburg, Nay said. He was also extremely appreciative of Matt Fogo, who has graciously donated beer and wine to be served prior to dinner.

Nay recommends wearing casual attire and he encourages participants to bring cash or checks to participate in the silent and live auctions, which have many big-ticket items, such as a several-day vacation getaway.

Children are allowed to join in the evening’s festivities and mingle with the eight Ukrainian children, but they will all be served dinner in a separate location within the church, Nay noted.

As Nay and the HUF team nail down specifics of the April 15 event, those interested can stay updated by visiting the group’s website, hostingukrainianfamilies.org, or by calling during their office hours Monday through Friday from 2 to 6 at (540)463-4981 ext. 2107.

