

CONNECTION

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Showing Love For Ukraine

PAGE 4

With help from Harrison, 6, and Jackson, 4, the Wise family shops regularly for items that will be transported weekly to the Polish border to help Ukrainian refugees. They also stock church aid stations visited by hundreds of refugees daily.

Plans for Affordable Housing

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Mayor Meyer Honored

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Beloved Cancel Culture

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PHOTO COURTESY OF LINSEY WISE

MARCH 31 - APRIL 6, 2022

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



The Wise family, Linsey, Jackson -4, Colby, and Harrison -6, formerly of Falls Church, now reside near Ramstein Air Base in Germany.



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Americans Show Love For Ukraine

Northern Virginia family in Germany assists in aid to refugees.

By SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

In the weeks since Russia began its invasion of Ukraine, friends see, share, and respond to social media posts and other appeals for humanitarian support of Ukraine. Responding to the crisis conditions in Ukraine and in Ukrainian refugee areas, major charity organizations are delivering support, including UNICEF, Save the Children, the United Nations World Food Program (UNWFP), the Ukraine Red Cross, International Medical Corp and CARE.

Other groups whose mission is animal welfare are also at work, including the International Fund of Animal Welfare (IFAW), and the International Humane Society.

Feeling the call to add to the international efforts, many individuals are displaying the blue and yellow Ukrainian colors, or sharing personal efforts, inviting others to join them. There are many stories of local people giving, including the yogi who once lived in Kyiv pledging class proceeds, and candle makers, cheese sellers, and restaurateurs, with ties to Ukraine, holding special events, sending proceeds.

One Northern Virginia family now working at Ramstein Air Base in Germany also feels the call to help the refugees. Colby and Linsey Wise and their two young sons have called on their state-side friends and family, and joined their German neighbors, to donate supplies for Ukrainian refugees fleeing to nearby Poland or Germany. The Wises honed their aid activities supporting



One group of seven Ukrainian women returns to the aid station day after day — not to shop, but to help organize, sort and assist as a way of giving back for the help they are receiving.

Afghan refugees who were transported to the air base when the United States military ended operations in Kabul in August 2021 (See Connection, Springfield, Nov, 25, 2021, page 4-5 or www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/nov/24/northern-virginians-aid-afghan-evacuee-family/)

This month, raising well over \$15,000 at the time of this writing, the Wises are shopping for those donors who are not geograph-

ically close to those with need; purchasing sleeping bags, fresh fruit and vegetables, diapers, first aid kits, pet food and other essentials.

Contributions from the Wise effort are adding to the efforts and donations of others collected by a nearby church in Germany, Agape, which makes twice weekly bus runs to the Polish border to deliver aid.

“The Agape Church store is 100% fund-



Hearing one aid center had only disposable blankets instigated a shopping run to buy more blankets.

ed by donations, and I can tell you that the refugees that have come through are so gracious and humbled by our efforts,” says Linsey Wise. “There is a group of about seven Ukrainian women refugees that keep coming back to the store day after day – not to shop, but to help organize donations, restock the shelves, and do anything they can to repay the kindness our community has extended to them. How incredible is that?”

The list of needed items changes as groups seek to meet the needs of those still in Ukraine and those who have made it out. Those at the border or still in Ukraine need sleeping bags, food, medicine, and pain relievers. The most requested items by Ukrainians there: canned meats, hard salami, and protein bars. Those who make it to Germany, but with few possessions, look for fresh food and clothing; also backpacks for children starting into German schools.

German village grocery stores have drop boxes for food staple donations. German churches near the Wise’s village have 80 to 200 refugees per day come for food, clothes, and even crayons and coloring books to occupy the youngest refugees. Germans are

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LINSEY WISE



A colorful array of basic clothing items await needy Ukrainians who were forced to leave their homes with only a few possessions.



Hallway sorting and storage for relief items at Agape Church in Germany soon became too small an area to accommodate donated items

Americans Show Love For Ukraine

FROM PAGE 4

offering housing in their homes, registering refugees for temporary residence in Germany to work and for school.

While Germany and Poland are doing much in the way of humanitarian support, Americans love Ukraine and the Ukrainian people too. According to the United States Department of State, "Historically, the United States

is the largest humanitarian donor to Ukraine." The US has provided nearly \$405 million in humanitarian assistance over eight years; and \$2 billion for security assistance since 2021, including \$1 billion in March 2022.

The Wise family effort with Agape Church may not be at the level of the \$35 million contribution by celebrity couple Mila Kunis (born in Ukraine) and Aston Kutcher, which prompted a thank you call from Ukraine

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

However every contribution, regardless of the size, matters to the Ukrainian families they touch when their homes, possessions, and livelihoods, even the very certainty of their futures, have been taken from so many. Wise tells donors, "Donations keep on growing and we are beyond excited to be doing good things on your behalf. Thank you all for your generosity and your trust to help

support the people of Ukraine."

Wise explained she's helping because of the enormity of the need right now. "Major charities are meeting immediate needs and helping right now, and their missions will also serve to help during the years and years of getting the country back to some semblance of order." She worries that too many will forget how very very long it takes to recover from losses as large as these.

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Injured Ukrainian Soldiers Treated Locally

PAGE 10

Anatoliy Kirda had the biggest catch of
the day, a 39 pound Blue Catfish.

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PHOTO COURTESY VFA

66 Express Lanes Open Early

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Down the Drain? Then What?

PAGE 14



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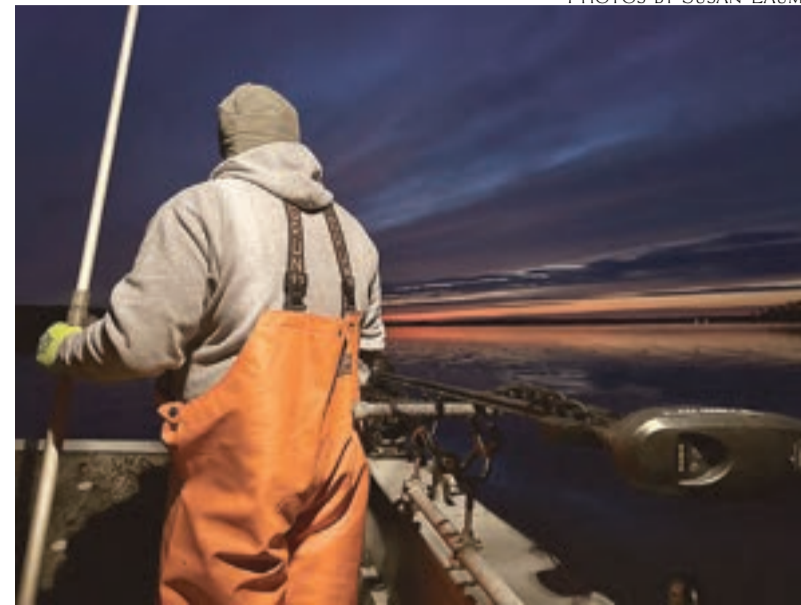


PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME

Before dawn, three Ukrainian soldiers board the specially equipped Veterans Fishing Adventure boat, Knot4gotn, as the crew prepares to leave the dock. The Ukrainian men have had limbs amputated because of wounds of war.



Capt. Ed Moore poses with his passengers for the day, (seated) Ruslan Tyshchenko, Alex Fedun, (standing) the Veteran's Success Resource Group representative, and Anatoly Kirda.



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Volunteer crew member Scott Cole watches the net buoys for signs that bait fish have swum into the nets.

Injured Ukrainian Soldiers Enjoy a Fishing Adventure

Assistance goes beyond prosthetics.

BY SUSAN LAUME
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When retired Marine Ed Moore found out that three Ukrainian soldiers with amputations would be in the area to be fitted with prosthetics after injury on the battlefield, he did what any Marine would do ... he offered to take them fishing.

Veterans Fishing Adventure was started by Moore and his daughter Haley. They've been offering veterans and their families fishing and boating trips on the Potomac River and Occoquan River for four years. With up to four boats, they offer as many as three trips per week. Veterans Fishing Adventure specializes in offering those with physical limitations an opportunity to participate and allowing those with disabilities to take their children fishing. Their non-profit, volunteer organization with specially fitted boats is able to offer this opportunity to be on the water at no cost to U.S. service veterans, to enjoy a pastime that many of us enjoy without much thought for the logistics. <https://veteransfishingadventure.org/>

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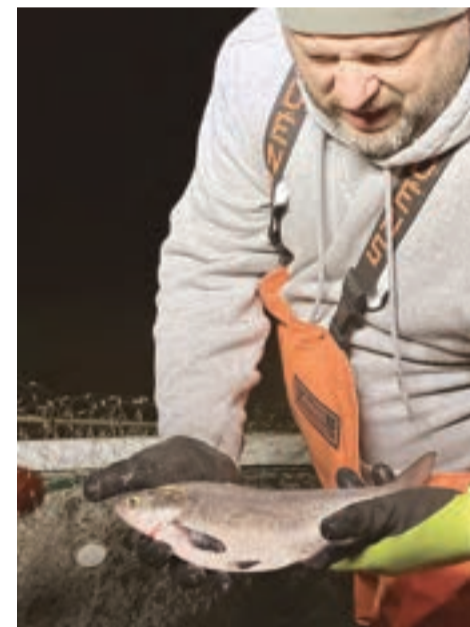
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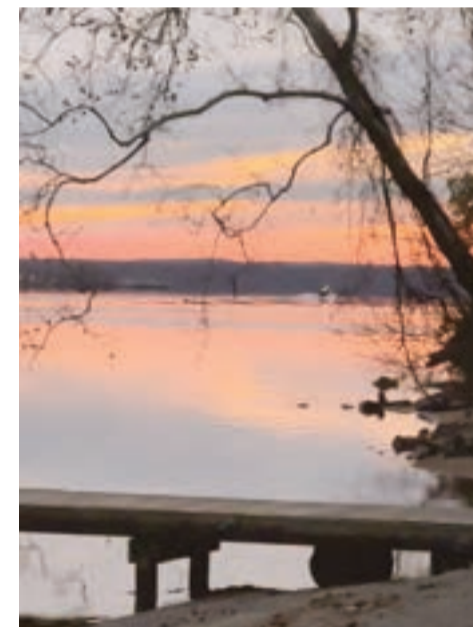
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Bait caught and the boat secured, the Knot4gotn motors east into the dawn, perhaps symbolic of brighter days ahead for the trio of Ukrainians.



PHOTO COURTESY VFA

Ruslan Tyshchenko smiles at the size of his catch, held by translator Boris



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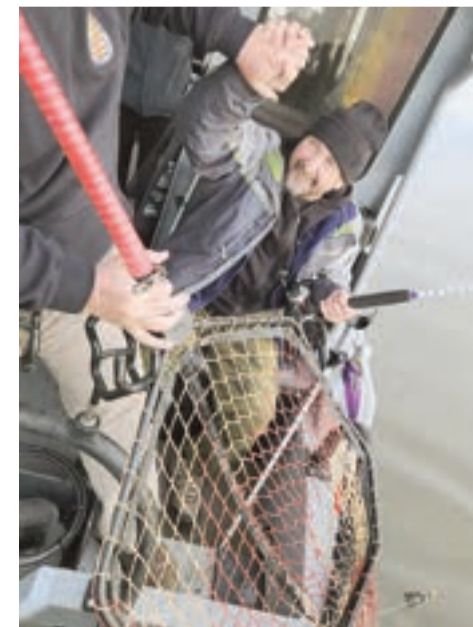


PHOTO COURTESY VFA

Anatoly Kirda celebrates his catch with Moore giving a high five and a huge smile

War Takes Heavy Toll on Ukrainian Women

United Nations warns of war impacts to women globally.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

As the war in Ukraine continues with brutal shelling of civilian targets, humanitarian catastrophe mounts in a war not confined to soldiers or distant battlefields. For millions of women and girls, the ongoing war continues to take a heavy toll as it grinds on. Whether joining the fighting at the front, remaining behind, or fleeing, the United Nations warns for women "access to livelihood opportunities and basic services, including life-saving sexual and reproductive health care and information, has been severely disrupted."

Two Ukrainian women share their experience of the war. For the past three to four months all their time has been spent in hospitals supporting their husbands who lost legs while fighting for Ukraine. Iryna Kirda and Iryna Tyshchenko, are now in the Washington metro area temporarily, while accompanying their husbands, who are being fitted for prosthetic devices in Silver Spring, Md.

Before the war, Kirda, who has four adult sons, was working as a nanny. She supplemented her income by leading a 'health group' — what we would call women's exercise classes. After Russian bombardment of her Kiev suburb, she was evacuated from her home for a time. Once she could return, she spent her time holding charity events to support the war effort.

Before the war, Tyshchenko was an anchor for a television news station. On the first day of the war, all the television stations closed. From the first day, food disappeared from shelves, and they could not withdraw money from the banks. Her apartment in Kharkiv was heavily bombed. The Russians were close by, but not where she was. So friends came to hide in the basement of her building, though rockets flew overhead and a plane was shot down just a kilometer away. As the Russians were eventually pushed farther away, their rockets and drones remained a threat. True to her journalism profession, she has been taking videos to document the destruction of her apartment building and other devastation. Her adult daughter evacuated to the Czech Republic.

Both women speak of the difficulties and how hard life has become. Both talk



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Iryna Tyshchenko and Iryna Kirda support their husbands on a safer day safely within the borders of the United States

about how very scary it is to wait for a call with news of their husbands. Kirda says she doesn't know how God gave her the strength to survive. But she knew she had to be strong when that dreaded call did come saying her husband was wounded so badly. She knew he would look in her eyes for her reaction and she would be ready to show her support for him.

For the moment, life is a little easier. They said they feel so lucky to come here and love the United States, calling the opportunity to have the help a blessing. While their husbands enjoyed a day of fishing on the Potomac, a Ukrainian friend took them shopping at T.J. Maxx and Nordstrom Rack. They described doing more looking than buying, but hoped to find small gifts for those waiting at home.

What's next for them is hard to know. They will remain here while their husbands are under medical care until mid-December. Tyshchenko is videoing the care to show American cutting edge procedures to doctors at home.

They expect to return to Ukraine where life continues to be difficult and dangerous in the coming winter without reliable power, water, food or safety. And while their husbands are determined to overcome their wounds, the women are likely to take on additional continued responsibilities to assist in their care and recovery.

In a policy paper released in September,

the United Nations outlined the devastating impacts on women and children. "The war in Ukraine has led to more than 4.2 million refugees and over 7 million internally displaced people, most of them women and children. The war contributed to growing risks, including trafficking, gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and forced labor. ... The war has widened gender gaps in food insecurity, malnutrition, energy poverty, and increased gender-based violence inside Ukraine and around the world. Women-headed households in Ukraine were already more food-insecure prior to the war, compared to male-headed households. Rural women in the territories occupied by the Russian military are increasingly unable to perform agricultural work due to high insecurity and lack of resources. Certainly a disproportionate share of the responsibility to accommodate, feed, and care for internally displaced people is adding to the burden of Ukrainian women, multiplying their domestic responsibilities."

The U.N. includes a need to "prioritize women's and girls' voice, agency, participation and leadership in conflict response, recovery, and peace building," among their recommendations for dealing with this humanitarian crisis. They have names like Anastasia, Boyka, Daniela ... and Iryna.

ADVENTURE

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME



After the day's fishing, the fisherman received a police boat escort for their return to the dock



The fisherman, draped in the Ukrainian flag, had smiles and waves for the crowd waiting at dockside to welcome their return.

Injured Ukrainian Soldiers Receive Treatment Locally

FROM PAGE 10

Ruslan Tyshchenko, age 44, a sapper commander, served in the National Guard of Ukraine for 25 years as a combat engineer. Since the beginning of the war, he led a group of sappers, involved in removing mines in liberated Ukrainian territories. A sapper is a combat engineer with duties such as demolitions, bridge-building, preparing field defenses and road repair.

On June 8, while performing a combat mission near the city of Balaklava in the Kharkiv region, he came under fire from an enemy tank. Shrapnel hit a vital artery. With major damage to his artery, he lost his left leg and severely injured his right.

Oleksandr "Alex" Fedun, age 23, an entrepreneur in the Zaporizhzhia region, left his business and family at the outbreak of the war to defend Ukraine. On May 14, during a combat mission, Fedun's car was ambushed by the Russians and he received serious injuries to both legs caused by a mine explosion. He was able to save his own life by applying tourniquets to stop the bleeding, but when he was evacuated to the hospital, both legs had to be amputated.

Anatoliy Kirda, age 59, was a career seaman, away working on Israel's offshore oil rigs when Russia attacked Ukraine. He left immediately to volunteer at home. He first fought in Kiev. After that city was secured he moved on to Izum in the Kharkiv region. He was in his trench when a Russian mine flew it causing his injuries which resulted in the loss of his right leg.

The three men, among the most severe-



A crowd of dozens of well wishers who gathered to greet the Ukrainians included retired Cmdr. Kirk Lippold (center), police and fire personnel, veterans and avid fishermen.

ly wounded, are here in the U.S., two with their wives, receiving medical care thanks to assistance from three non-profit organizations: Veteran Success Resources Group, United Help Ukraine, and Medical Center Orthotics & Prosthetics.

Veteran Success Resources Group is dedicated to facilitating access to professional and personal resources for veterans and their families. United Help Ukraine was started in 2014, after the initial 2014 Russian attack on Ukraine, by a small group of people who met at a protest in Washington, DC. Most, but not all of the founding members have a personal connection to Ukraine. Along with other avenues of support for the country, the group sponsors dedicated fundraisers for the

Ukrainian wounded, including those who are being treated in American hospitals, and support for their families. They are covering the non-medical expenses to bring the three soldiers and the wives of the two who are married to Silver Spring, Md. for prostheses and physical therapy.

Medical Center Orthotics & Prosthetics recently announced "Operation Renew Prosthetics," providing care to the most severely injured Ukrainian soldiers who have had amputations. They previously assisted a hip disarticulation amputee, donating time and expertise, and are assisting the three soldiers with complete leg prostheses this month. They expect to assist two more patients who will visit their facilities in the

coming months.

A day of fishing on the Potomac River provided a break between medical appointments for the three Ukrainian men. Fishing is an activity that many Ukrainians once had time to enjoy in their county filled with lakes and rivers. There the main fish species caught is the Common Carp (*Cyprinus carpio*). The catch for this day on the Potomac was Blue Catfish. A large fish, but not as large as Ukraine's Wels Catfish, the largest freshwater fish in Ukraine which can attain a weight of 100 kg (220 pounds) at the age of 80-100 years.

Kirda had the catch of the day on Saturday, pulling in a 39 pounder. The boat did well according to Moore, with most of the fish released back into the Potomac. Two were saved for the soldiers to sample. As Moore explained that the mercury levels limit the amount

of fish recommended for safe eating, the soldiers broke into spontaneous laughter. Telling Moore that food scarcity in wartime Ukraine had sometimes forced the soldiers to eat dogs, frogs and snakes as they held positions in the forest, doubting that a little mercury would be an issue.

When the boat returned to the dock on Saturday afternoon, dozens of community members were on hand to greet and applaud the fishermen. Police and fire trucks stood sentinel. Retired Cmdr. Kirk Lippold, who commanded the USS Cole when the ship was attacked by al-Qaeda in 2000, presented the men with copies of his book,

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WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

ADVENTURE

Injured Ukrainian Soldiers Receive Treatment Locally

FROM PAGE 12

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME

“Front Burner” which captures a critical moment in America’s battle against terrorism.

“Catch the Fever” presented each man with a new high-end fishing rod. Even Santa and Mrs. Claus were on hand to show support. And many photos were taken to mark the day.

Although it may be traditional to enjoy a fish fry after a day of successful fishing, Moore didn’t want the Ukrainians to leave without experiencing an American Thanksgiving feast. He hosted a meal at his house on Sunday, serving the fresh caught fish on the side, along with the usual Thanksgiving fare. Five turkeys, two hams, stuffing, gravy, green beans and pies fed bellies, and sustenance for the soul. With ongoing deprivations and food scarcity in Ukraine, it may be a meal they will remember for the food, but more significantly, a reminder of what can be accomplished after injury.

All those that encountered the men during their visit no doubt hope that their morning sail toward the bright dawn sky will be symbolic of the start of brighter days to come for these determined Ukrainians, and the Ukrainian people, though they face contin-



Even Santa and Mrs Claus (Ryan and Shannon Riegel), who arrived by motorcycle, were on hand to welcome the soldiers.

ued daunting struggles.

For more information about the Veterans Fishing Adventure or to inquire about a trip: info@veteransfishingadventure.org. For more information on or to donate to the organizations mentioned in this story, see <https://unitedhelpukraine.org/>; <https://vetresourcegroup.org/>; and <https://mcpo.com>

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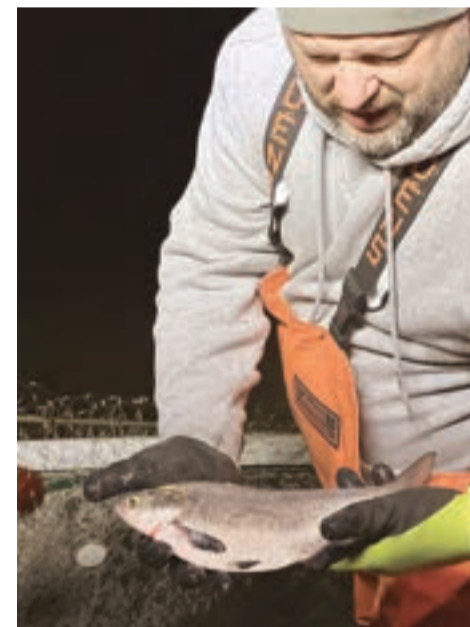
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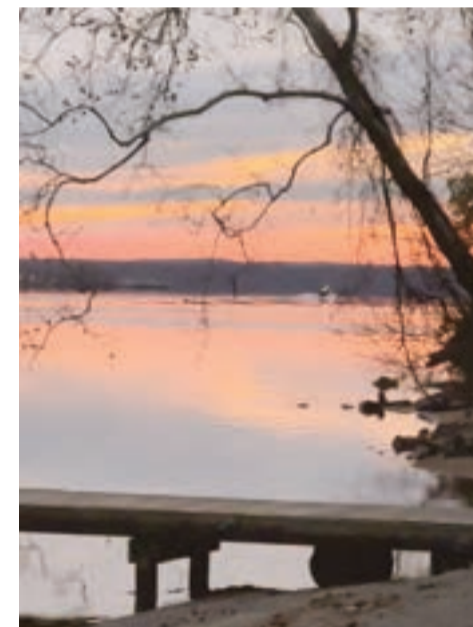
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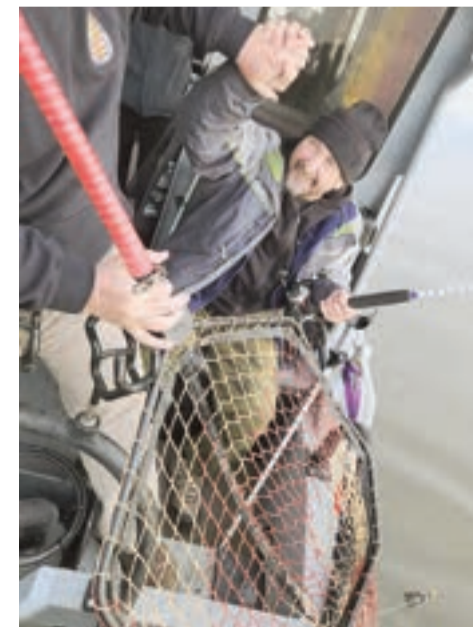


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In a policy paper released in September,

the United Nations outlined the devastating impacts on women and children. "The war in Ukraine has led to more than 4.2 million refugees and over 7 million internally displaced people, most of them women and children. The war contributed to growing risks, including trafficking, gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and forced labor. ... The war has widened gender gaps in food insecurity, malnutrition, energy poverty, and increased gender-based violence inside Ukraine and around the world. Women-headed households in Ukraine were already more food-insecure prior to the war, compared to male-headed households. Rural women in the territories occupied by the Russian military are increasingly unable to perform agricultural work due to high insecurity and lack of resources. Certainly a disproportionate share of the responsibility to accommodate, feed, and care for internally displaced people is adding to the burden of Ukrainian women, multiplying their domestic responsibilities."

The U.N. includes a need to "prioritize women's and girls' voice, agency, participation and leadership in conflict response, recovery, and peace building," among their recommendations for dealing with this humanitarian crisis. They have names like Anastasia, Boyka, Daniela ... and Iryna.