

# Postcards to the Front

## International Newsletter

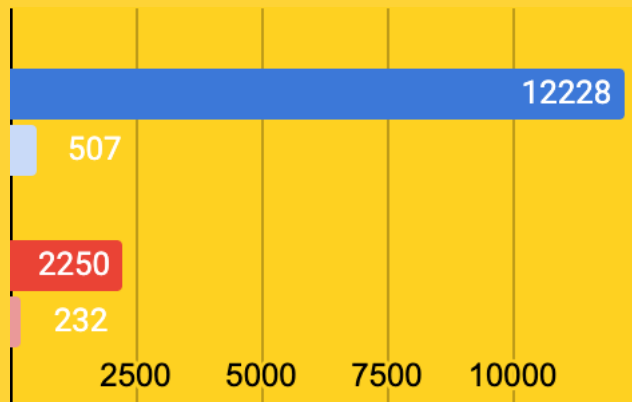
June 2024

Ukraine  
Australia  
Canada



Volume 1  
Issue 11

### A Month in Postcards



This month our postcard warriors from Australia sent 507 cards and from Canada sent 232 cards. Australia's total sent is now 12,228 cards and Canada's is now 2,250.

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

### In this Issue

<b>About .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Ukrainian orphans write to Defenders .....</b>	<b>3</b>
By Tamara	
<b>It's so hard to cope with all the sorrows ... a postcard makes you feel that you are not alone .....</b>	<b>5</b>
By Helen	
<b>How one postcard warrior transformed shock and dismay into action .....</b>	<b>10</b>
By Jane	
<b>Flag and Postcards from Oshawa, Ontario Reach 93 Brigade in Ukraine .....</b>	<b>12</b>
By Helen	
<b>Canada Branch News and Updates .....</b>	<b>13</b>
By Helen	
<b>June Defenders' Gallery .....</b>	<b>23</b>

# 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://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!

The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author, and not the opinion of this newsletter nor affiliated websites. Authors take responsibility for correct citations of sources and references, both oral and text.

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# Ukrainian orphans write to Defenders

By Tamara

Hello there!

As you may recall, I founded this project in Ukraine, first organizing people here to write postcards to our Defenders from the beginning days after the full-scale invasion.

Today, I want to share with you an amazing story, and some photos, about Ukrainian kids writing cards to our Defenders.

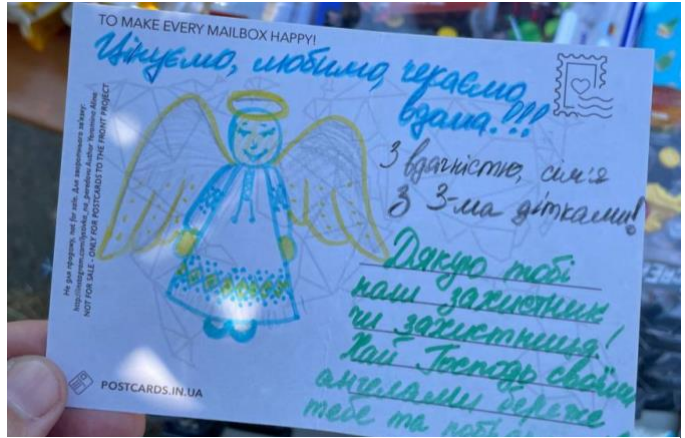


Figure 1: Messages by Ukrainian orphans to Defenders.

There is one [volunteer organization](#) in Ukraine that has a goal to help provide joy to children in orphanages. For example, they buy McDonalds meals (expensive in Ukraine; but we love it). They also organize really fun holidays and parties for the kids.

When the full-scale war started in February 2022, they started to focus more attention on sending supplies to the frontline. However, one guy, Oleksander, continued to work with the kids.

Oleksander and I met when I was sending them some Postcards to the Front to include in their care packages. Oleksander loved the postcard messages and asked for blank cards for kids to write to Defenders. He then decided to organize an event where kids received candies and participated in fun activities. As well, kids and school staff wrote cards to Defenders. Also, Oleksander sent candies to another orphanage in Smila where children there have been regularly writing postcards to the front for two years already.

Oleksander organizes everything using his own money as well as some donations from the volunteer organization. I asked him how people may help and he said that you can learn more on the [kozaks legion facebook page](#).

We all want victory (and after that, peace) so that Oleksander and his organization may return to their work of only bringing joy to kids; not buying army stuff.





Figures 2-5: Children from orphanage attend a fun day and write postcards to Defenders.





# It's so hard to cope with all the sorrows ... a postcard makes you feel that you are not alone

## Interview with Svitlana

By Helen

Twenty-five years ago my family sponsored two *Canada World Youth* (CWY) participants. Paul, from Newfoundland, and Nataalka from Ukraine. That's when I met Svitlana, then Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, at [The National University of Ostroh Academy](#), and the Ukrainian organizer for CWY. As I recall, Ostroh University has historical roots dating to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, and that Ukraine's book-publishing roots similarly trace back to the same city, in the same era.



Figure 6: Map of Ukraine.

Svitlana and I have been friends [and colleagues] ever since.

For more than 50 years *Canada World Youth* worked to enrich the lives of young people – ages 15-35 – through international learning exchanges. It saddens me that CWY closed operations in 2022.

Paul and Nataalka lived with our family for three months, then lived at the Ostroh University campus for three months. Those six months with CWY informed the life paths both would take.



Figure 7: National University of Ostroh Academy, Ostroh, Ukraine (est. 1576).

I, too, was impacted by the experience, which forged life-time connections with Paul and Nataalka, as well as a special friendship bond with Svitlana. For several years, I traveled to Ukraine to teach in a democracy education project, working with students at the university, as well as with educators working with children of all ages. Those many happy times in Ukraine are part of the reason that I have dedicated time and resources to the establishment of *Postcards to the Front Canada*.

Communication by letter and postcards has been one way that we've maintained our friendship all these years. So, naturally, when the full-scale invasion of Ukraine began in February 2022, I contacted Svitlana to assure her that we wouldn't forget her and that we would do what we could.

Svitlana lives in a small village in Rivne region in Ukraine's west. They don't experience the constant bombing that Ukrainians along the eastern front face daily, but there are times when they must shelter following air raids that signal that somewhere nearby is under attack.

Aware of the struggles experienced by those living along the front lines, not forgetting the challenges and horrors that Defenders face daily, Svitlana, her family and her colleagues have joined the masses of Ukrainians doing all they can to support their sisters and brothers.



Figure 8: Volunteers in Ostroh preparing care packages for Defenders.



Figure 9: Care packages of food, love and spiritual support for Defenders.

For example, both Svitlana and her husband are retired educators. Like so many pensioners in Ukraine, they have been called back into service. He, at a nearby high school. Svitlana is back at the university where all too often students are sent to defend their country, some returning home either badly wounded, or to be buried.<sup>1</sup>

“It’s so hard for us to cope with all the sorrows. It hurts us painfully when every single day we hear and watch how people are murdered ... especially, children. Homes are destroyed. Terrorists conduct genocide of our population ... they want to destroy Ukrainians and our state. But, we are resistant, defending our land.”

This is an old story, as one finds when traveling across Ukraine where one will see in most cities, towns and villages monuments that have been erected to remember lives lost in past conflicts. Ukrainian sons and daughters killed while conscripted by former Soviet rulers.

Wages and resources of Ukrainian civilians support Defenders. For instance, they donate for the provision of necessities to Defenders, such as military equipment, medical supplies, and even food for civilians trying to survive in Ukraine’s west.

The fact is that Ukraine’s army is largely made up of Defenders; ordinary individuals doing what they can to defend their homeland. Not professional soldiers that would be well-trained and well-equipped.

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<sup>1</sup> Figures 8 – 10 taken with written permission from the article published in [Волонтерський фронт: «Великодній кошик для захисників України»](#), [Соломія Костенкова](#), 18 April 2022.



With her brother and nephews defending their homeland, Svitlana knows well the importance of postcard messages of support that Defenders receive.

“All the soldiers who receive your postcards are thankful. We see the messages and reports from them about letters and postcards, and little presents from children ... they are happy to receive, keep them always with them. They say that ‘such things are dear’, and that they [help them go on to] fight bravely, to defend all Ukrainians from the terrorists.”



Figure 10: Messages of love and support from the citizens of Ostroh to Defenders.

Svitlana emphasized that the postcards that Defenders receive from outside Ukraine are “so nice and warm, so caring ... the Defenders make videos and send out thanks for such support. They say that the small things they get from time-to-time bring fresh air. They are dear to them, so human, terrific. They inspire soldiers to fight and believe in victory in the awful battle without rules. The postcards make their fight easier ... .”

I must admit that each time that I interview a Ukrainian about this project, I get a tremendous sense of purposeful accomplishment for all that every little postcard does to cheer someone, to give a bit of ‘fresh air’ during terrible times. I admit to feeling pride in all that each postcard warrior – that’s you! – has done to send a bit of sunshine where there is darkness and sorrow. So many beautifully crafted cards, and so many heartfelt messages have passed through my hands on their way to a Defender.

And it’s not just how I feel.

“We are very lucky to have wonderful friends who support Ukraine,” Svitlana told me. “The postcards are amazing, the people are warmhearted, and we feel the care. A postcard makes you feel that you are not alone; you feel happy. It’s a precious gift.”

Svitlana has also been grateful for the emotional support that she and her family have received from those Canadians, from across the country, met all those years ago when she was involved with *Canada World Youth*. She cites a long list of gratitudes to CWY Canadian



friends, some of whom have “donated money to buy drones and medical supplies for the front.”

When asked what she would tell you, dear reader, face-to-face, Svitlana has a clear response.

“I will describe the genocide of Ukrainians. It’s awful! The rushists are destroying our country. It’s unbelievable how cruel they are ... fighting without any rules, breaking human rights, not speaking about the right of the people to life.”

And, she continued, “the world shouldn’t be indifferent.”



Figure 11: Recent batch of care sent to the front by Svitlana and her family and other volunteers.

Meanwhile, Ukrainians “are grateful for the support we have got from many countries,” that has made it possible for Ukraine to stand for so long against the invasion. But, she added, “... we need help with weapons to fight; heavy weapons, aircrafts, as we are defending our democracy, freedom and human rights.”

When asked what she sees in Ukraine’s post-victory future, Svitlana recognizes that there will be many demands on Ukraine to restore all that has been destroyed. She also noted that a lot has already changed, “for the better, in our society.”

Until then, she remains fiercely optimistic about the resilience of Ukrainians, stating that “our people are brave historically and will cope with hardships.”

But, she would like it all to end soon, so they can get on with their lives.



*Dear friend, Svitlana ... I send you best wishes for good health, for daily calm, for freedom for Ukraine, and a HAPPY CANADA DAY!*

*We do not forget you! ми не забуваємо про вас!*

*Your Canadian sister, Helen*

# How one postcard warrior transformed shock and dismay into action

## Jane's story

**By Jane**

*Editor's note: Jane lives in Australia and has been a dedicated postcard warrior since the Australia branch launched its operations in spring 2023.*

I joined *Postcards to the Front* because I read an article on the ABC News app about it and thought it was such a great idea to support others who were suffering so much.

I live in a small village in country New South Wales, Australia, and when I thought about Russia invading Ukraine, I imagined what it would be like to suddenly have an army or bombs or artillery fire burst onto my lovely village and community, out of nowhere, attacking us. And the concept was just awful.

The shock and dismay, the disruption to our lives, the injuries and deaths of friends and family, the fear and worry and uncertainty, the destruction of all that we hold dear and of value ... and why? Just because *they* could! Russia.

During the Black Summer of 2019-2020, I joined most of my village evacuating several times in order to remove ourselves from the raging fires. So, I had a slight experience of what it must be like to quickly grab what I could, just as the Ukrainians have had to in order to escape dangerous war zones. Only, unlike me who could return home, they've had to leave and stay away from their homes, family, and friends. And they've had to watch loved ones sign up to put themselves in danger as they defend their land and their people.

Since the February 2022 full-scale invasion, I try and keep up-to-date with news from Ukraine as it comes to hand, and I tell others what I am doing. That is, writing postcard messages of support to Ukraine's Defenders.

Basically, I try to encourage others to participate as well, to support those in Ukraine who are experiencing such hardship.

A recent visit to the Baltic countries, where I saw and learned a bit about the many different ways they are standing beside Ukraine, has inspired me to keep on going with my postcard writing.

I am not young and do not have any useful skills to actually go to Ukraine to lend a hand, but I feel so glad that I can do one small thing by encouraging and supporting the Defenders. Each postcard that I write lets them know THEY ARE NOT FORGOTTEN.

Our tour guide in Latvia said she probably knitted a pair of socks for the Ukrainian Defenders every day or two, which I thought was extraordinary, not really being a knitter myself. So, I am glad that I do one small thing each month by writing postcards. And I will keep on writing as often as I can.

When I was in Estonia I added a small sign from *Postcards to the Front - Australia*, to a protest on behalf of Ukraine that was held outside the Russian embassy in Tallinn.

In the first few months after the invasion of Ukraine, our church held an outside vigil for Ukraine. We had blue-and-yellow ribbons outside our church for over a year, and I still have blue-and-yellow ribbons on my front door. They remind me every day what the resilient and resourceful Ukrainians are doing to protect their land and their people.

I am very glad that *Postcards to the Front* exists as it facilitates our efforts to support Ukraine. And, I think Peter has been doing an amazing job, encouraging us all at every step of the way.



Figure 12: Sign in front of the Russian Embassy, Riga, Latvia.



# Flag and Postcards from Oshawa, Ontario Reach 93 Brigade in Ukraine

By Helen

During the **February 24th Global Day of Action** to support Ukraine, residents of Oshawa, Ontario and area participated in their weekly rally on the Albert Street bridge over Highway 401 as well as signed a Canada/Ukraine flag. Of course, they also wrote many postcard messages of support to Ukraine's Defenders.

After a three-month long journey, the signed - *with love* - Canada/Ukraine flag and postcards have arrived at the 93 Brigade. The outpouring of love and support from Canada so warmed the hearts of Defenders that some tears flowed.



Figure 13: Signed flag from Oshawa, Ontario arrives at the 93 Brigade in Ukraine.



Figure 14: Supplies arrive at front lines in Ukraine; Oshawa postcards on front left side.

Thank you all in the City of Oshawa, Ontario who have done so much to support Ukraine! Especially, the hard work of the Oshawa Ukrainian community, and the generous support of the Dnipro Oshawa Fund.

*[See Volume 1, Issue 7, p. 15 of our newsletter for more details about this event.]*

Your caring and supportive postcard messages matter!

Thank you!

# Canada Branch News and Updates

By Helen

## Did you know ... ?

July 1<sup>st</sup> is Canada Day. On this national holiday we celebrate the anniversary of our *Constitution Act, 1867*. In other words, it's our birthday!

On Canada Day, we enjoy time with family and friends. Picnics. Barbeques. Camping. Cottaging. Summer sports. Swimming, canoeing, boating, fishing. Parades. Fireworks.

We're a young country; still a work-in-progress. That's why it's another good day for us to engage in conversations with each other about reconciliation with the original peoples of Canada – the Indigenous Peoples. As well as on June 21<sup>st</sup>, which is *National Indigenous Peoples Day*. On this day, Canadians recognize and celebrate the many contributions made by the different cultures of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada.

Here are some fun facts about Canada –

1. The name *Canada* was a misunderstanding on the part of French explorer Jacques Cartier in 1535. When he encountered the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), they



Figure 15: Child celebrating Canada Day in his parents' backyard.

Figure 16: Proud Canadian celebrating Canada Day.





pointed out the route to the village Stadacona, which was later named Quebec City. The Iroquois used the Huron-Iroquois word for “village”— “kanata” — to show Cartier the way. He kept using “Canada” to describe the surrounding land and, by 1547, the word *Canada* appeared on maps denoting the lands. In other words, we’ve been stumbling along since the beginning.

2. After a year of intense national debate, Canada adopted the red-and-white maple leaf flag in 1965. Just in time for our 1967 Centennial celebrations. Yes, we’re a young nation. Still inventing ourselves. And what flag did we use before then? From 1867-1965, we had the British Union Jack as we were – and still are – part of the British Commonwealth.
3. There are over 630 First Nations communities in Canada, representing more than 50 Nations and 50 Indigenous languages. Canada has been working through the 94 *Calls to Action* that emerged from a *Truth and Reconciliation* process with Indigenous Peoples begun in 2008. Still young and still learning.



Figure 17: Issued in 1978 in Canada, this stamp reproduces a pair of the 10-penny Jacques Cartier stamps issued in 1854.



Figure 18: Issued in 2015 in Canada, this stamp commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Canadian flag.



Figure 19: Presentation on Indigenous ritual at Ojibwe Cultural Foundation on Manitoulin Island, Ontario.



4. Hockey is our national winter sport and lacrosse is our national summer sport. Borrowed from the Haudenosaunee people, lacrosse originated as a game to help prepare for war. Sometimes, the game was used to settle disputes. Gathering for the game was also a social event and provided opportunity to trade. Now, it's just fun!
5. The beaver is our national animal.
6. We don't have a national flower. Because the landscape is so diverse it would be hard to pick just one flower that says 'this is Canada'. So, each territory and province have their own flower.
7. Ten of the 150 known species of maple tree are native to Canada, with the *sugar maple* the most well-known; especially, as it accounts for nearly 85% of global maple syrup production. Every household surely has some maple syrup! In Ukraine, I enjoyed birch sap syrup.
8. Poutine – pronounced *poo-teen* – made with French fries [chips] that are topped with cheese curds, then covered with gravy, is a popular comfort food for many Canadians. It originated in Quebec. An artery-clogger!

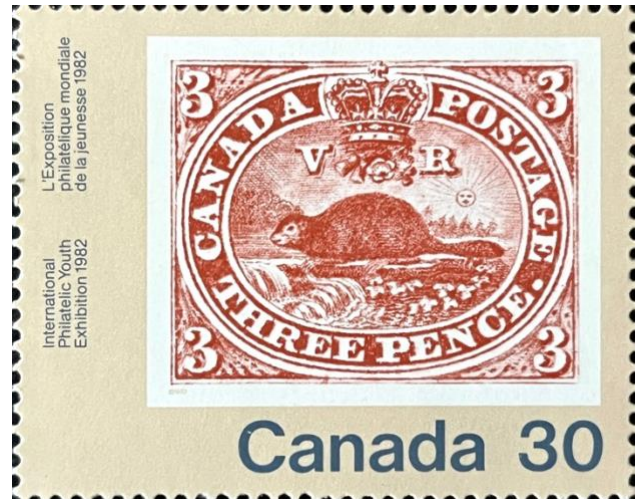


Figure 20: This 1982 stamp reproduces the 3-penny beaver stamp of 1851, which was the first postage stamp of the Province of Canada.



Figure 21: Homemade maple-shaped cookies.



Figure 22: Sugar maple leaves.



Figure 23: Classic poutine.

9. Say what? We have a national beverage? The *Caesar* is made with vodka, Clamato (clam broth and tomato juice), Tobasco hot sauce, Worcestershire sauce, and lime. Served chilled, over ice, with celery salt on the rim, it's one cool summer choice to celebrate Canada Day. Beer is another, more typical choice.
10. Some communities celebrate Canada Day with bathtub races. Clothing optional. ;-)
11. Canada's north is actually a desert. Mighty dry and cold!
12. Any child, from anywhere in the world, can write a letter to Santa Claus, and will get a response. Just be sure to mail your letter in November because ... well, you know, Santa's a bit busy in December! ;-)

Santa Claus  
North Pole, Canada  
HOH OHO

13. Something about groupings in Canada –
  - a. A group of beavers is a *colony* or a *family*.
  - b. A group of Canada Geese is called a *gaggle* (when on land) and a *flock* or *skein* when in flight.
  - c. A group of polar bears – *nanuk*, in Inuktitut – is called a *celebration* [because these normally solitary bears gather only to breed].
  - d. On land, a group of puffins is usually called a *colony*. Other terms are a *puffinry*, a *burrow*, a *circus*, or an *improbability*. In the air, a group of puffins is a *whirl*, and when at sea, they could be called a *raft*. Oh, such lovely poetic terms!
  - e. A group of lynx is called a *watch*. Yup. They're watching you.
  - f. What is a group of Canadians called? A *sorry*. Apparently, we're polite. Sorry.

 **Happy Canada Day**  **July 1<sup>st</sup> !** 



## Where we've been this month

One of the perks of this project is that we get to meet many interesting, creative and caring Canadians.

For example, the residents of **Millbrook Manor**, a local community apartment for seniors. A keenly interested group of postcard warriors wrote messages of support to Ukraine's Defenders, most trying to write phrases in Ukrainian! As well, they wrote some cards to members of Canadian Forces serving abroad.



Figure 24: Child writing cards to Defenders.

We also set up a table at **Odesa Pavilion**, during Oshawa *Fiesta Week*. For 50 years *Fiesta Week* has been an annual celebration of community cultures through the fusion of many cultural traditions, music, food, and entertainment.

Visitors to Odesa Pavilion wrote postcards to Defenders while feasting on Ukrainian dishes that included buttery varenyky (pierogi), patychky (meat shishkabobs) and borscht (beet soup), while also watching the Odesa Dancers perform. A week of music, dance, food, and postcards. And, Yes! We ate too much this week!

The Odesa Dancers performed three shows each night, each ending with a whole-troupe finale performance, "The Heart of Ukraine". Drawing on contemporary and folk music, "The Heart of Ukraine" is dedicated to Ukraine's Defenders. Powerfully emotive.

Every person that we meet reminds us that concern for Ukraine has not waned. Indeed, it remains strong as does the desire to do something; such as, write postcards.



Figure 25: Members of Oshawa City Council: Tito-Dante Marimpietri, Mayor Dan Carter, Bob Chapman, and Jim Lee join resident Marucia to write postcards to Defenders.





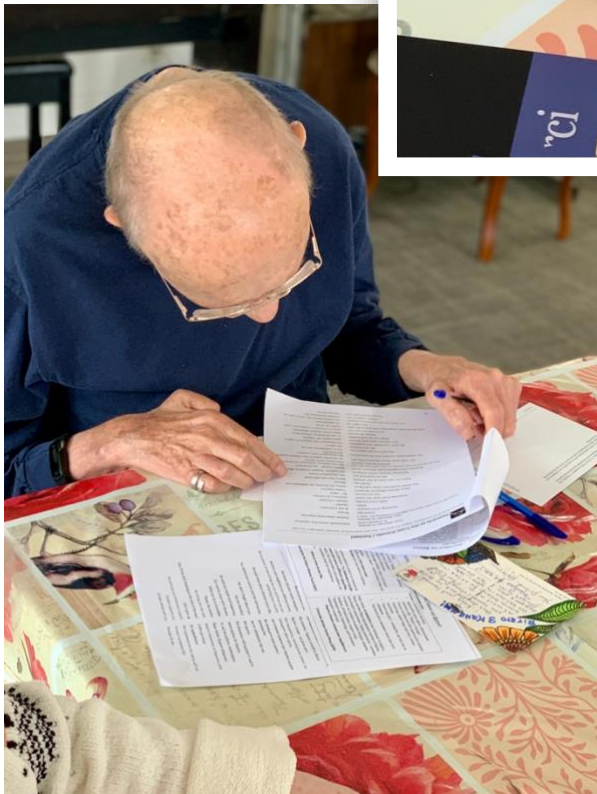
Figures 26-30: Odesa Pavilion, Oshawa, Ontario.  
Centre image: Odesa Dancers perform "Heart of Ukraine".







Figures 31-35: Residents of Millbrook Manor write postcard messages to Ukraine's Defenders.





## Remind Members of Parliament of your support for Ukraine

Now into the 3<sup>rd</sup> year since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, we can remind Parliamentarians that Canadians continue to support Ukraine, and that we wish our government to continue to stand in solidarity with Ukraine's battle for democracy, freedom, and preservation of culture.

*How?* Write to your local Member of Parliament asking for their continued support of Ukraine.

Not sure what to write? Try a clear, direct and brief approach explaining why you support Ukraine, and why Canada should continue to support Ukraine.

You can find your MP by postal code here: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/members/en>

MPs email addresses are Firstname.Lastname@parl.gc.ca

### Sample email, or phone message –

Dear [NAME OF YOUR MP]

As your constituent, I urge you to stand with Ukraine, as I do through such actions as [describe how you support Ukraine].

For over two years, the Ukrainian people have courageously defended their country, and freedom in Europe, from Russian aggression.

We need to stay united and to strongly support Ukraine.

**As your constituent, I urge you to stand with Ukraine.**

I look forward to hearing from you where you stand, in relation to Ukraine.

[YOUR SIGNATURE]





**Recapping our gratitudes:**

- Thank you to those who have sent us postage stamps and postcards. You have made it possible for us to do all that we can from home base in Millbrook, Ontario.
- We are grateful to all of you who spread the word about *Postcards to the Front* to others. These connections help grow our efforts to support Ukraine. We're happy to hear from you if you have suggestions. Please share!
- Thank you to the schools, church and community groups and individuals who have invited us to conduct postcard-writing workshops. Everyone has been welcoming, kind and generous. These workshops have generated many thoughtful, caring and meaningful messages of support for Ukraine's Defenders.



Do you have questions? Do you have unused stamps to pass along to our team? Or blank cards? Be in touch: [postcardstothefront.Canada@gmail.com](mailto:postcardstothefront.Canada@gmail.com)

Have some written cards ready for us to send on to Ukraine? Please see the [contact section](#) for our address. You can get up to five cards in an envelope for the price of one domestic stamp (currently, 99 cents). Maybe add one or two unused stamps to help us get cards to Ukraine? ;-)

***Thank you for your continued support of Defenders of Ukraine!***



***Need cards?*** We have ***lots!*** Drop us a line at [postcardstothefront.canada@gmail.com](mailto:postcardstothefront.canada@gmail.com), and we'll be happy to send you a batch of postcards that you can write to Defenders. FREE! And please ... invite family and friends to write cards. Maybe you want to organize a postcard-writing bee? Check our website for tips, [How to Run a Postcard-Writing Workshop](#).

**Share and Subscribe!** The best way to stay informed about *Postcards to the Front* is to subscribe to our website. Click [here](#), and scroll down to the bottom. It's easy and fast. And please ... share our website as widely as you can – [postcardstothefrontcanada.com](http://postcardstothefrontcanada.com). Sharing helps others connect with this project.

**We need your help!** We've been fortunate that a number of individuals and organizations have sponsored packages of postcards to Ukraine by donating stamps. Our stamp stocks have run out. Any number of unused stamps that you can send along – any denomination – will be much appreciated! Maybe include a couple in your envelope of written cards? Don't forget to let us know your email address so we can thank you.

Please ... share our website as widely as you can – [postcardstothefrontcanada.com](http://postcardstothefrontcanada.com). Such sharing helps others connect with this project. Please, also ... click Subscribe to our website! This is the best way for you to stay up-to-date with us.



**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

And as Svitlana in Rivne Region, Ukraine reminds us –



***It's so hard to cope with all the sorrows ... a postcard makes you feel that you are not alone.***

— Svitlana

## June Defenders' Gallery



*Figures 36-38: Postcards for Defenders from around the world.*







Figure 39: Camouflage nets and postcards arrive at the front lines.



Figure 40: Millbrook Manor postcard warrior supports Ukraine with this poster outside her door.



Figure 41: Photo taken by Plathy in the UK at a skatepark in Leeds. One visual example of support for Ukraine seen all over the world.