

## INFORMATION BULLETIN

**Bulletin #:** I2022-031  
**Date:** April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
**To:** Ontario Soccer; District Membership, Club and Associate Members  
**CC:** Ontario Soccer Board of Directors, Staff  
**From:** Johnny Misley, Chief Executive Officer  
**Subject:** Ontario Soccer community rallies in support of Ukrainian refugees

With tens of thousands of Ukrainian refugees escaping the war in their homeland and finding a safe haven in Canada, Ontario Soccer and its members are proactively showing their support. We commend all members and communities that have stepped up already to welcome these families and give them renewed hope through our beautiful game.

Ontario Soccer would like to showcase a few particularly compelling examples of unselfish community leadership, in hopes that it may serve as an inspiration for other member groups looking for ways to get involved.

1. Toronto Soccer Association's Executive Director, Alan Gould completed a four-day 83 km walk, over the Easter weekend, along a carefully planned route passing by every one of the TSA's 21 youth club registered offices to raise funds for Ukrainian children devastated by the war in their homeland.

The route finished to a joyous welcome by the grateful members of USC Karpaty, one of the TSA's two youth clubs founded by, and serving, Toronto's Ukrainian and local communities. The occasion was recognised with TV interviews by both CBC News and CP 24 broadcasting them on their evening programs.

With an initial target of \$2,000, Alan Gould has so far raised over \$7,000, with the funds to be sent to UNICEF CANADA for their UKRAINIAN CHILDREN SUPPORT FUND. You can pledge your support [here](#).

2. Soccer4Ukraine is a support group created in March by Ontario-based soccer coach Nick Shlepov, to assist Ukrainian people, who were forced to flee to Canada due to the humanitarian crisis in their homeland.

Like other leaders in the Ontario Soccer Community, Nick realized the massive need for support this influx of newcomers would create, based on the Government of Ontario's estimate of

40,000 people to arrive from Ukraine in the next few months. With that, the vision for Soccer4Ukraine was born.

The initiative is focused on providing all Ukrainian children moving to Ontario with free access to soccer programs. Its fundamental premise is to restore a sense of hope, joy and a normal life for these children, while helping them to make friends and learn English. Beyond that, Soccer4Ukraine also banks on the fact that the extensive network of the Ontario Soccer community can assist to further integrate affected families into our society.

From its inception, Soccer4Ukraine has received overwhelming support from the soccer community, including help from the YRSA and TSA and many of their member Clubs, who have embraced the organizational support (information, translation, logistics, etc.) that Soccer4Ukraine is extending to them. Together, these groups are building tremendous momentum to support Ukrainian families newly arriving in Ontario including plans to organize a number of free soccer events for Ukrainian children and their families in Toronto and York Region this spring and summer.

For more information on how your organization can collaborate with and support Soccer4Ukraine, please visit their [website](#), [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#) pages.

3. Ottawa South United (OSU) launched its “Help the Kids Play” Fund to support Ukrainian settlement efforts by local community organizers to assist individuals and families as they relocate to Ottawa. This initiative is driven by the Club’s belief in the power of sport as a positive mechanism of inclusion for newcomers to our communities. OSU will sponsor up to twenty youth or adults, who wish to play soccer in its catchment area this year, and will actively engage the community to support further participation, should greater demand for these spots require it.

Similar to other peer organizations across the province, OSU embraces its responsibility to give back to those in need within the larger community and help their integration with providing access to quality soccer programming.


To learn more about or support this initiative, please see “Ukrainian Settlement Helpers Ottawa” on Facebook or [contact OSU](#) to make a donation or provide soccer equipment to these Ukrainian children and families.

Ontario Soccer is proud of and grateful for these efforts within our membership to **Play. Inspire. Unite.** and use the power of our sport for good.

If you have a story to share with Ontario Soccer about how your organization is supporting Ukrainian families at this difficult time, please [e-mail Ontario Soccer](#).



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