

## Please help this Ukrainian refugee family start a life in USA

My name is Iryna, and I am asking for your assistance in helping a Ukrainian family of four start a new life in USA. The family includes Roman, his wife Iryna, and their daughters, Liliya and Viktoriya.

I have known Roman, the father, for over 27 years. We studied at the Ukrainian State University of Forestry and Wood Technology together. We always found ways to support each other through the school years. When my husband asked Roman to be his best man at our wedding in Lviv, Roman did not think twice. Roman and I stayed in touch after I moved to the United States. He shared stories of traveling the world and it seemed as though he was living the dream, when in fact he would have to travel to far-off countries to make money to support his family. When Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014, Roman did not hesitate and joined the army. The girls said those were the hardest months in their lives. They know what war brings. So, when Russian troops invaded further in February 2022, the family decided to pack what they could and seek shelter in the European Union. They ended up in Netherlands.

Liliya is a second-year student studying international relations in Ivan Franko National University of Lviv. Viktoriya is a junior in high school in their small town. With the frequent bombings, the online classes that teachers try to put together are few and far between. The girls tried enrolling in schools in the Netherlands, but soon realized that they need to know Dutch to do so.



I begin every morning since the invasion with checking my phone with the hope of finding good news. Yet, every morning there are more atrocities, more pain, more destruction. I call my friends and family to offer support and encouragement. During one of those calls, Roman mentioned the despair his daughters were experiencing — being away from their home, friends, and school. He felt helpless. I spoke with my husband, and after a cup of coffee, he came up with an idea to give these two young ladies something to look forward to — an opportunity to study in the USA. We learned about a launch of the 'Uniting for Ukraine' program and decided to open our home to this family. The 'Uniting for Ukraine' program allows



US citizens to petition for Ukrainian refugees to come to USA. We were thrilled when the whole family was approved to travel to America. So far, Viktoriya has been accepted to La Salle High School, Liliya passed her English proficiency test, and we are awaiting her acceptance to Yakima Valley Community College.

It is a huge move for the family. Roman and Iryna are preparing for the many challenges that they know they will have to face to provide continuing education for Liliya and Viktoriya. Roman and Iryna will apply for work permits as soon as they arrive in Yakima. I hear the process can take anywhere from 3-9 months. It will be hard, but the safety of their girls means the world to their parents and our family.

We will be providing room and board for this family until they can afford their own accommodations. We are hoping to raise money to help cover some of their other expenses: airplane tickets - \$3,500, tuition and health insurance - \$30,000 per year, and a car - \$15,000. They are hardworking and I am sure they will be able to give back to the community.