



**Ukrainian National  
Women's League  
of America, Inc.**

203 2nd Avenue  
New York, NY 10003  
212-533-4646  
unwla.org



# Annual Report 2021

**ADVOCATE, EDUCATE, CULTIVATE, CARE**



## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Dear Friends,

This year, the Ukrainian National Women's League of America celebrates its 97th year of commitment and service to the Ukrainian community, both in the United States and abroad.

As we emerge from two years of a global pandemic, we see the effects it had on our organization: our ability to respond to the needs of the communities we serve, to raise funds, to encourage membership growth, and, most important, to experience the warmth of our in-person meetings and events. However, the challenges we faced also gave rise to new capabilities and an appreciation for electronic communications, and for the preciousness of the sisterhood connection that is enhanced when we are together, in person. The pandemic also afforded us the time to consider our future and how we need to evolve to be even more effective in fulfilling our mission.

This is our first time producing an annual report that takes a broad look at the activities and impact of our organization during a year in which all organizations grappled with how to maintain momentum despite the pandemic. We are committed to being accountable and transparent in all we do. Our membership, from New England to California and everywhere in between, is devoted to and passionate about the organization and its mission. We hope this love for Ukraine and all things Ukrainian shines through in this report.

If you are interested in learning more and joining us as we continue on our path of advocating, educating, cultivating, and caring, you can find us at [unwla.org](http://unwla.org).

Sincerely,  
Natalie Pawlenko  
*President, UNWLA*



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## MISSION AND VALUES

Established in 1925, the Ukrainian National Women's League of America (UNWLA) is the longest-running and largest Ukrainian women's organization in the U.S. Throughout the years, our mission has been to promote and develop educational and cultural initiatives and provide humanitarian assistance to Ukrainians worldwide. Specifically, we:

- 1** preserve Ukrainian national identity and cultural heritage by supporting the research and study of Ukrainian history, literature, art, culture, and traditions;
- 2** inform the public about Ukraine and its culture: Ukrainian history, language, literature, and art, as well as Ukrainian social and national ideals and aspirations;
- 3** provide financial assistance to persons of Ukrainian descent within and outside the U.S., specifically for education and research into Ukrainian history and culture;
- 4** initiate and maintain ties with other Ukrainian organizations, as well as with American and international organizations that have educational and charitable objectives, especially women's organizations;
- 5** support The Ukrainian Museum in New York, founded by the UNWLA;
- 6** participate in Ukrainian, American, and international women's movements.

In this mission, UNWLA members are guided by principles of Christian ethics, religious tolerance, political non-partisanship, and universal respect for human rights.



## 2021 AT A GLANCE

2021 marked 96 years of the UNWLA's activism in the United States – over nine decades dedicated to advocating, educating, cultivating, and caring on behalf of Ukraine and the Ukrainian American community.

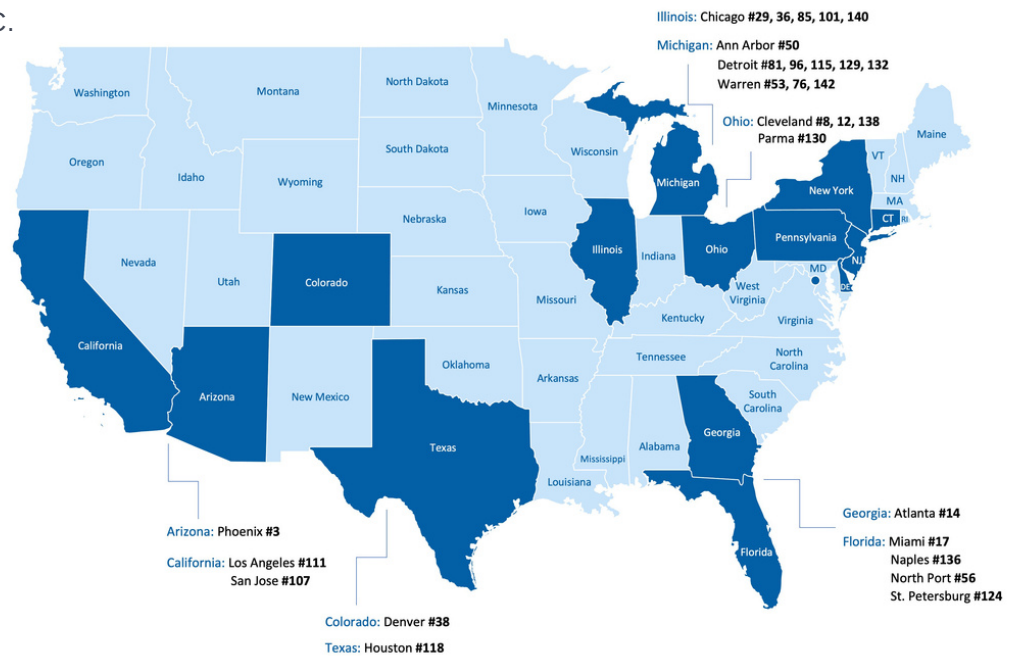
The membership of the UNWLA is diverse, both geographically and demographically.

However, what unites us is our dedication to our mission and a belief that together we are stronger. Here is our story from 2021.



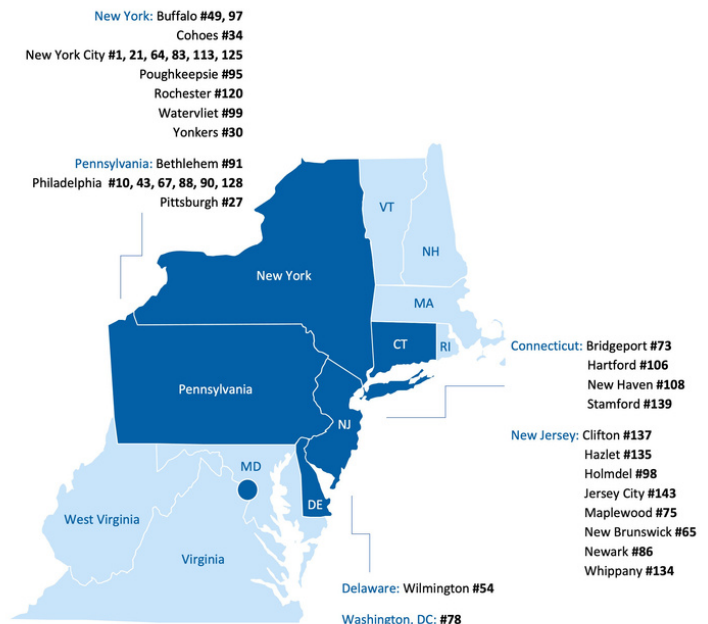
## Where We Are

From coast to coast, the UNWLA community comprises **63 Branches** with nearly **1,700 members** in **14 states** and Washington, DC.



## We Are Growing

In 2021, 29 Branches welcomed **90+ new members** and **13 Members-at-Large**. Branch 143 was newly established in Jersey City, New Jersey.





## OUR PROGRAMS

### 90+ UNWLA Events Hosted in 2021\*



Educational events promoted Ukrainian historical and current events.

UNWLA Branches organized gatherings to commemorate the **Holodomor**, hosted **guest lectures** on a variety of topics related to Ukraine, showed films on Ukrainian historical events, and participated in **political advocacy** at the local, state, and federal levels.



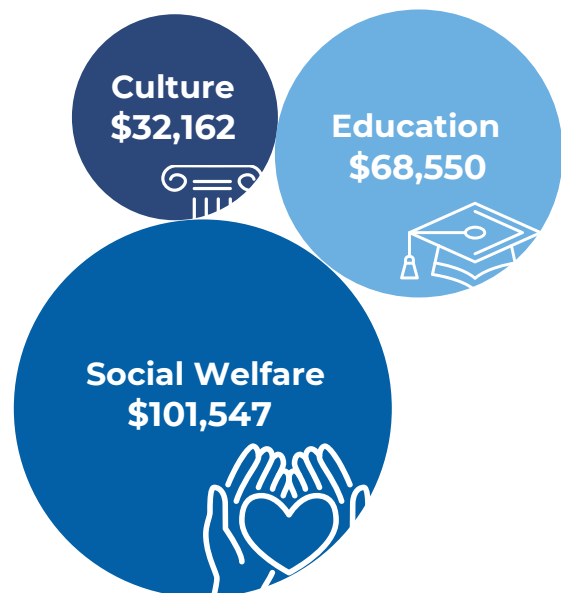
Cultural events showcased Ukrainian music, literature, folk art, and traditions.

UNWLA Branches organized workshops on **Ukrainian Christmas carols** and the art of Ukrainian **embroidery** and **pysanky**, celebrated Ukrainian literary icons through **poetry readings**, and mounted exhibits of **Ukrainian folk costumes and artwork**.

\*This report is based on information received from 49 Branch Annual Reports for 2021.

## \$202,259 Dedicated to UNWLA National Projects

Despite a worldwide pandemic in 2021, the UNWLA was still able to generate and allocate funding for initiatives in three key areas: promoting Ukrainian culture, educational programs in the U.S. and Ukraine (including the UNWLA Scholarship Program), and social welfare programs.





## OUR GRANTS

**\$1,500**

### **Monument to Honor Olena Stepanivna, city of Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine**

Popularly known as the first female officer in the Ukrainian army during World War I, Stepanivna was also an economist, teacher, and devoted Ukrainian patriot.

**\$2,000**

### **Ukrainian Institute of America: Music at the Institute (MATI) Concert Series "Songs My Mother Taught Me"**

Focusing on women performers and composers, this special event was co-sponsored by the UNWLA.

**\$3,000**

### **Rodyna Rehabilitation Center**

To support a system of medical-social-psychological support for parents of children with mental health and physical disabilities.

**\$5,000**

### **Women's Bandura Ensemble of North America**

The WBENA is unique – the only ensemble of its kind outside of Ukraine. Drawing women from across North America, the WBENA nurtures young performers as well as composers and conductors. This one-time grant also supported commissioned works written by female composers for the WBENA.

**\$10,000**

### **Arizona State University Ukrainian Studies Program**

This seven-week program provides beginner- and intermediate-level students with immersion in the Ukrainian language. The UNWLA's funding supports scholarships for students enrolled in the program.





## HOW WE CULTIVATE



### The Ukrainian Museum in New York City

Founded in 1976 by the UNWLA, The Ukrainian Museum is the largest museum in the U.S. committed to acquiring, preserving, exhibiting, and interpreting artifacts representing the rich cultural heritage of Ukrainians. Today, the UNWLA retains 51% governance in the museum. Donations from all quarters support many of the museum's exhibitions, lectures, and workshops, and everyone is encouraged to become a member of this exceptional institution.



### The Lesya Ukrainka Museum in Kolodyazhne

Prominent writer and playwright Larysa Petrivna Kosach (pen name Lesya Ukrainka) inspired generations of Ukrainian women writers. In 2021, celebrating the 150th anniversary of her birth, the UNWLA contributed \$8,000 to the Museum Estate of Lesya Ukrainka. Located in her childhood home in Kolodyazhne in the Volyn region, this small museum aims to preserve her memory and draw attention to her legacy.



## Support for Ukrainian Authors

Lesya and Petro Kovaliv, originally from central Ukraine, immigrated to Switzerland in the early 20th century. Established in 1967 under the umbrella of the UNWLA, the Kovaliv Fund is dedicated to nurturing and promoting Ukrainian literature, both poetry/prose and non-fiction works. The fund awards a prize each year to works selected by a jury of well-known Ukrainian authors.

### Laureates of the Kovaliv Fund award since its inception:

Yuriy Andrukhovych  
Sofia Andrukhovych  
Natalka Belchenko  
Vasyl Gabor  
Tamara Gundorova  
Vasyl Herasymiuk  
Vasyl Holoborodko  
Oleksandr Irvanets  
Kateryna Kalytko  
Ali Kinsella

Mykhailyna Kotsyubynska  
Myroslav Layuk  
Oksana Lutsyshina  
Raisa Lysha  
Andriy Lyubka  
Sofiya Maidanska  
Vasyl Makhno  
Bohdana Matiyash  
Dzvinka Matiyash  
Larysa Onyshkevych

Leonid Plyusch  
Maria Rewakowicz  
Ostap Slyvinsky  
Marta Tarnavska  
Zenya Tompkins  
Vira Vovk  
Lyubov Yakymchuk  
Oksana Zabuzhko  
Bohdan Zadura



## Shakespeare Contest in Ukraine

Beginning in 2010, the UNWLA supported an initiative of the Ukrainian Shakespearian Center that united Ukrainian universities around a research contest dedicated to William Shakespeare. More than 400 students from 27 universities in 19 Ukrainian cities participated in the contest during its 10 years of existence. In 2019, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine took the National Shakespeare Contest under its umbrella, affirming its value on the national level. The contest's judges are globally recognized literary scholars, theater scholars, and literary translators, and the UNWLA continues to provide the funding for the award stipends.

## HOW WE CARE

### Pediatric Burn Victims

Children suffering from serious burns need repeated surgeries as they grow in order to survive. The UNWLA has partnered with Doctors Collaborating to Help Children and the Shriners Hospital to examine and operate on young burn survivors from all regions of Ukraine. The patients often come from households that would not otherwise have access to such follow-up medical care. The program began in 2012 with two doctors and ten patients and has grown steadily over the years. Ukrainian doctors also take part in this mission, expanding their professional toolkit and working with their American colleagues to improve the survival rate of young children who have suffered serious burns. The program provides leading-edge training to specialist physicians in Ukraine.



### Oxygen for Life

In December 2021, the UNWLA raised over \$30,000 for the purchase of oxygen concentrators and CPAP machines for patients in Ukrainian hospitals suffering from COVID-19.

### Otchyi Dim

The UNWLA supported an orphanage in Pokrovsk in the Donetsk region since 2015, home to approximately 40 children under the age of 18.



## Babusi Fund

Through its representatives in Ukraine, the UNWLA sent personal Christmas and Easter greetings with small monetary gifts to 515 elderly women across Ukraine. These *babusi* (“grandmas” in Ukrainian) all belong to the Ukrainian Society of Political Prisoners and Victims of Repressions. Some of them also belong to the Ukrainian Women’s League in Ukraine. Our Branches in the U.S. have explored extending the *Babusi* initiative to elderly women in their own communities.



## War Victims Fund

Timely assistance to injured active-duty soldiers and their families ensured that they live a rewarding and independent life. The War Victims Fund contributes to the immediate and long-term needs of wounded warriors and civilians injured in the war for dignity.



## HOW WE EDUCATE



### **Women's Studies Program at the Ukrainian Catholic University**

In September 2012, the UNWLA's decision to create a fund to support women's studies at the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) led to the establishment of the Women's Studies Lecture Program. The program has since grown into a UNWLA Center for Women's Studies that organizes graduate and undergraduate courses, invites guest lecturers, curates library resources on the subject of women's studies, and implements collaborative educational projects both in Ukraine and abroad.

## Spiritual Rebirth of Ukraine

✕ Since 2017, the UNWLA has supported two theological seminaries: the Kyiv Three Saints Theological Seminary of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Volyn Orthodox Theological Academy. Both institutions focus on the training of future priests whose vocation will take them to the eastern regions of Ukraine. The Spiritual Rebirth of Ukraine Fund helps offset the costs associated with student tuition and classroom equipment.



## Summer and Winter Camps for Children in Ukraine



The UNWLA sponsored summer and winter camps for children from central and eastern Ukraine who have been affected by the war in eastern Ukraine, and for orphans from Lviv's orphanages. These efforts, combined with the guidance of Reverend Stefan Sus, Head Army Chaplain of the Lviv Archdiocese of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, offered children mental health support and socialization in a nurturing and educational environment.



## UNWLA Scholarship Program

The UNWLA Scholarship Program has operated without interruption since 1967. It was founded to support underinvested students of Ukrainian descent: from elementary school children to doctoral candidates. Since 1989, the program has focused on Ukraine. In 2021, 257 Ukrainian students received stipends totaling \$58,000. In addition, generous sponsorships allowed 46 students in Brazil and one in Poland to continue their education.

Recipients are recommended by educators and trusted partners associated with the UNWLA in the students' country of residence. The success of the Scholarship Program is attributed to the generosity of the sponsors: UNWLA members, benefactors, and partners who have supported the program.

### Testimonials

"I'm tremendously grateful to the Ukrainian National Women's League of America, which keeps in touch with the homeland, and to all the UNWLA members who help young Ukrainians get a degree. Without your support, studying at the Ukrainian Catholic University would have remained an unattainable dream for me. May God send you all good fortune for the generosity in your hearts!"

– **Anna Andrejeva, graduate of the UNWLA MA Program at the Ukrainian Catholic University**

"Thank you so much for your financial support! I wish you good health and happiness! This year was hard for my family. I was sick with pneumonia, my mother had COVID, with minor symptoms, and my grandma was sick with COVID-19 twice. It was very hard, but it's over now. I finished 9th grade. Many schools don't have 10th and 11th grades anymore. So, I will enroll in a lyceum and have a good profession. I don't know which one yet, but there's still time. Thank you for the scholarship."

– **Herman, Mykolaiv**

"I'd like to thank the UNWLA Scholarship Program, its director Nadia Jaworiw, and sponsor Mr. Alex I. Khowaylo for their support in making my dream come true. Besides working on my research topic – the impact of geography on urban planning – I enjoy sharing my experiences at conferences and assemblies."

– **Julia Oblogina, PhD candidate, Ivan Franko Lviv National University**



## HOW WE ADVOCATE

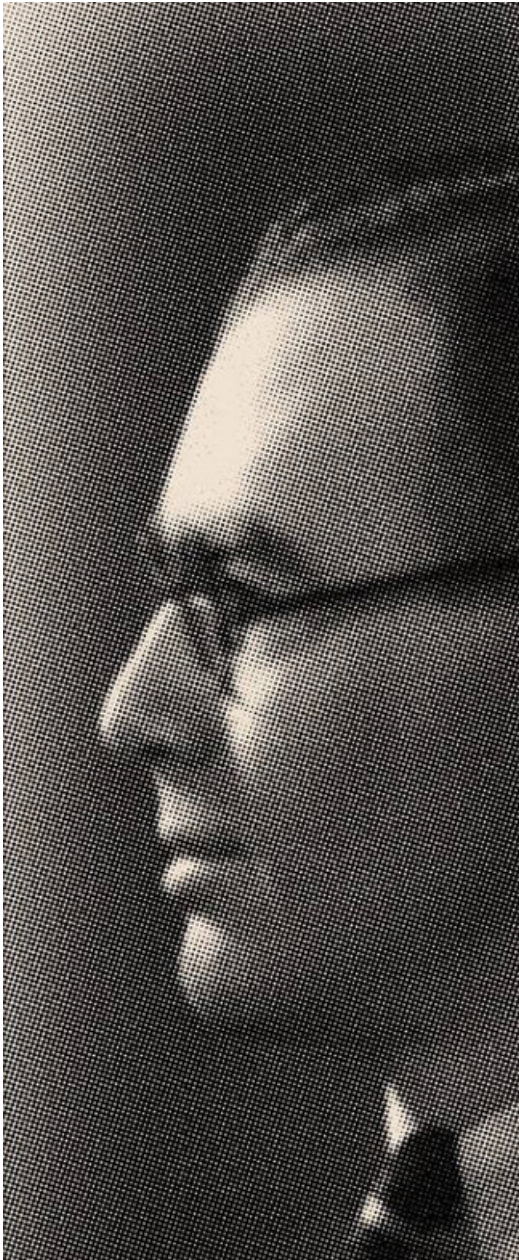
### Holodomor Awareness

Carrying out our historical mission of raising awareness about the man-made famine in Ukraine in 1932–1933, the UNWLA educates the public through lectures, classes, and exhibits. UNWLA advocacy efforts include outreach to state officials and calls for the inclusion of the Holodomor in genocide studies, proclamations on the anniversary of the Holodomor, and efforts to have state legislatures formally recognize the Holodomor as a genocide. Today the UNWLA is an affiliate member of the U.S. Committee for Ukrainian Holodomor Genocide Awareness and is actively engaged in efforts to recall the Pulitzer Prize awarded to Walter Duranty.





## ***Project Spotlight:*** **Digitization of Gareth Jones Diaries**



The UNWLA remains steadfast in its commitment to promote awareness about the genocide of Ukrainians in 1932–1933, known as the Holodomor. Joseph Stalin's attempt to force Ukrainian farmers onto collective farms grew into a massive man-made famine when Soviet soldiers were ordered to raid homes and take away every crumb of food. Villages and cities died of hunger, while the West remained unaware of the tragedy. Reporters like Walter Duranty simply spun the Soviet narrative and denied that massive death even happened.

Welsh reporter Gareth Jones was one of the few who shared the truth in British newspapers and periodicals of the time. Gareth Jones's diaries are a truly independent verification of what was arguably Stalin's greatest atrocity. The idea to digitize the diaries was first proposed to a small group of UNWLA members by Professor Lubomyr Luciuk of the Royal Military College of Canada in 2018. The diaries provide insight into Jones's travels and the people he met, and graphic accounts of the conditions of the Holodomor. Digitization of the Gareth Jones papers ensures that the public has access to the truth and horrors of the Holodomor, so that the atrocity will never be forgotten. [The digital collection is available online](#) through the National Library of Wales website, the Library of Congress, the Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine, Stanford University, the University of Toronto, and Cambridge University.

Completion of the project was initially planned for May 2020. Unfortunately, the global pandemic delayed the project to late 2021, and further COVID-19 breakouts postponed the actual commemoration to May 2022.

## HOW WE COMMUNICATE

### Our Life Magazine

The UNWLA continues its commitment to publishing *Our Life* magazine, available to all members of the organization in hard copy, as well as to the public in an online version. What began as an eight-page newsletter in 1944 has grown into a glossy magazine featuring articles on Ukrainian cultural heritage, lifestyle, and important historical events, as well as the activities of the UNWLA membership. In 2021, eight issues of *Our Life* magazine were published. Digitized versions of past issues can be accessed on the UNWLA website under the Publications tab.



Additionally, we communicate through weekly newsletters and postings on Facebook and Instagram. Our website shares news and UNWLA events, and contains information about our organizational structure, mission, and projects.



## THANK YOU

It is the generous support of our individual and corporate donors, as well as our membership, that fuels our efforts in cultivating, educating, and advocating for Ukrainians worldwide – with care. We appreciate your trust and support. Thank you! You truly make a difference.

With gratitude,  
Ukrainian National Women's  
League of America



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