

Ukrainian natives unite to help orphans of war

By Hollen Wheeler; photos courtesy of Yulia Boozer and Olga Funk



Yulia Boozer (left) and Olga Funk met and knew they wanted to help orphaned children in their native country.

On a chance meeting, Yulia Boozer and Olga Funk felt a connection and knew instantly they wanted to do more together. After the war in Ukraine began, the two native Ukrainians met in Denver at an event organizing medical supplies to send to war-torn areas.

“We met and knew we wanted to pursue the same thing,” said Boozer. “The pain of watching children losing their parents and orphans being left behind has inspired us to combine our efforts in this humanitarian mission.”

After researching to see if there were other like organizations and finding none, Funk and Boozer started their nonprofit, Nova Spark, last April. They chose the name as a hope to “amplify the inner spark in every child.” The proceeds and money raised are being pooled to send care packages to the most affected and underserved in Ukraine.

In addition, the partners began an online clothing and home decor store, Funk and Boozer Events & Design to create a second revenue stream for Nova Spark,

as well as to give a hand to vendors in their native land.

“We are working with Ukrainian small businesses and artists to create the products for the store,” said Boozer. “This allows us to support small businesses and individuals who lost their primary sources of income during the war.”

Both ladies have full-time jobs and families: Boozer is a data warehouse architect, and Funk is a human resources recruiter. But that has not stopped their passion for fundraising for the cause. They regularly set up booths at farmers markets, attended the Parker Wine Walk, and have displayed Ukrainian cookbooks and T-shirts for sale in the Castle Pines Postal Center at Village Square Drive. American Academy held a fundraiser for them at the end of the school year.

In June, Funk visited Ukraine to assess the most purposeful destination for aid. In July, Nova Spark sent their first round of care packages to Lviv, in the western part of the country. The boxes contained medicine, infant supplies, LEGOS, mechanical toys and handmade cards crafted by kids attending the base camps at Buffalo Ridge and Timber Trail elementary schools. The community donated many of the toys and baby items. The postal center donated the overseas shipping costs. Looking ahead to the school year, Funk and Boozer intend to send educational supplies to those children able to attend school in the fall.

“We want to thank the community for their generous donations and continuous support of our mission to help orphaned children,” said Boozer. She continued that she talks to people regularly who want to help and aren’t sure how, so she encourages anyone who has questions, wants to know more or to get involved, to contact them. “What we do is real,” she concluded.

To learn more, email the duo at funkandboozer@gmail.com or visit the Nova Spark website at <https://kindest.com/053522-nova-spark-foundation> or the online store at funkandboozer.com.



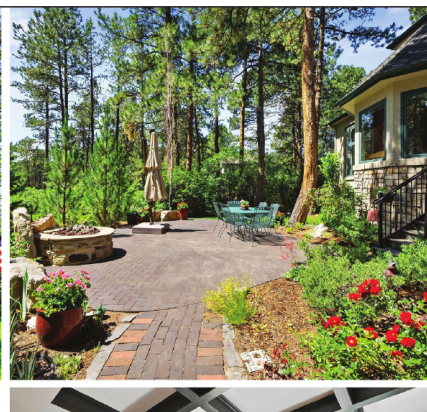
Yulia Boozer (left) receives help from Castle Pines Postal Center owner John Tartz, along with Denise Champagne (right), who is pictured weighing the box filled with donated items to ship to Ukraine.



One of the children in Ukraine who will receive the care packages sent by Nova Spark.



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