

Board

CONTINUED | FROM A1

cold of February is not exactly timely information.

But through the work of the library's foundation, a new digital message board was purchased using Memorial funds. It was installed this past August much to the delight of Panfil and her coworkers.

The sign was fully funded by the Traer Public Library Foundation using generous donations from three different families. Memorials used toward the sign include one made by the family of F.R. (Bob) and Doris McMillan Madera — both Traer natives.

"Bob, in particular, was very grateful for the library and the librarians during his childhood years for opening his eyes to the

world," Panfil said.

A memorial from the family of Harry Paul Madera — also a Traer native — was utilized as well.

"Harry was a 'bookie' all through his life," Panfil said. "In his declining years, his oldest child would take him to browse in used book stores as he had done for most of his life."

Thirdly, a Memorial made by the family of Lester and Sarah "Sally" Sevcik also helped fund the purchase.

"Sally was an avid reader," Panfil said.

Donations from the Madera families used toward the sign totaled \$23,200, while donations from the Sevcik family totaled \$5,000.

The idea for the digital sign came about due to a similar sign that was

installed at the Waterloo Public Library recently, Panfil said.

Traer's new sign — purchased through Nagle Signs, Inc. of Waterloo — was installed inside the existing brick pillars that once supported the old sign and is updated wirelessly using communication software accessed through a library computer.

In addition to text, the new sign can also display images and photos, as well as play animations and video files. The sign has been in use for several weeks now, communicating general library information as well as promoting ongoing and upcoming library programming.

"The library would never have been able to purchase this sign within the constraints of our regular annual budget," Panfil said.

"We are so thankful to the Madera and Sevcik families for their generous donations."

"We also thank all those who continue to donate funds to the Foundation, and for their continued support of our library. Without their ongoing support, we would not be able to offer many of the programs and 'extras' that are available for our community. For a small town, we have a magnificent library, with so much to offer."

And now there's a sign able to broadcast all that and more come rain or shine or the icy depths of an Iowa winter.

The Traer Public Library Foundation is a charitable tax-exempt organization and accepts any donations to help support the library.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Twentieth Century Club fall luncheon

Twentieth Century Club met on Sept. 26 at Binford House for the annual fall luncheon. Jeff Schneider, city council member, presented the program "Update on Marshalltown."

Family

CONTINUED | FROM A1

to the area. Laura McIntosh, another member of the local faith community, connected with Philip on a website called Welcome.US, and the search for a suitable home began.

"I think that was one of the first needs that we recognized in the community (was) that we have to have a place for these people to stay, and we didn't know how big of a place we would have," McIntosh said. "And that needed to guide how big of a family we would bring over."

As it turned out, Mary and Scott Swift had just the place tucked in rural southeastern Marshall County a few miles off of Highway 14, and Mary and their son Jordan attended one of the early United for Ukraine meetings.

"It felt like, just, the perfect storm because we've had this house, and it's been empty for two years. It had just been sitting empty, and when this came up, it just felt right," Jordan said. "It made it a lot easier of a decision when there were so many other people willing to help out and tons and tons of volunteers that really made it happen."

Although he did consult with his siblings before signing off (the house belonged to their late parents), Scott said it wasn't a hard decision at all, and he knew it was something his family could handle. Another community member, Sandy Bennett, had a vehicle she was willing to lend. Jasmin Banderas with Child Abuse Prevention Services jumped in to assist with paperwork and connecting the Myroshnikovs with services and programs to make the transition easier. Simply put, it took a community, but the community came through.

"I can't imagine a better place to bring people if you look at how everyone jumps in doing what they can do,

Ladehoff said.

The list of individuals who played a role in getting Philip, Maria, Katerina, Anhelina, Damir and Karim to Marshall County is too long to print in its entirety, but everyone involved — people like Bennett, McIntosh, Banderas, Ladehoff, the Swifts, Musselman and Elly Mack were all on hand for the interview Thursday — can take pride in a job well done.

Welcome to America

The Myroshnikovs, who spoke in Russian through translator and Ukrainian native Roman Gromov of Tama, spent five days stranded in the staircase of their apartment building after the initial invasion, and their children slept on a concrete floor that wasn't heated. Before long, they were without electricity, gas or cellular service, and they finally fled for the downtown area to seek shelter elsewhere.

Mariupol, which sits about 40 miles from the Russian border to the east, was hit almost immediately. Once the Russian shelling of the city intensified and bombs completely destroyed the local university, Philip and Maria knew it was time to make a change.

"We could not believe that something like this could happen because we were always in a buffer zone so close to Russia, and many people are Russian speaking people," Philip said.

Katerina's husband — Maria's stepfather — was one of the thousands of civilians killed in the siege, and it still chokes her up to discuss the matter. It still shocks her that death and destruction on the scale seen in Ukraine can occur in the 21st century, and those who left their shelters often had to walk carefully to avoid stepping on corpses.

"It was very hard living 55 years and leaving everything behind, but there was nothing left to go back to," Katerina said. "(But) I was

always close with the children. We were one group, so there was no other option... I always wanted to get to the U.S. It's a beautiful country, but the people are even more beautiful here."

They were frantically scrambling for necessities as basic as water and food, and they ended up finding refuge in the basement of a nightclub whose owner became somewhat famous for driving across the country to find supplies and helping individuals and families evacuate.

Eventually, the family made their escape attempt, driving west through Crimea and north to eventually get to Germany. Through their indirect route, they traveled about 10,000 kilometers (just over 6,200 miles), but their long-term goal was still to get to the U.S. if they could.

Coming from Mariupol, a port city about twice the size of Des Moines, a house several miles from the nearest town was a bit of a culture shock, and Philip and Maria admitted they had never heard of Marshalltown or Marshall County before they came here. They joked that they wanted "something warm" when they were searching for a new home, but the warmth of the welcome they received in central Iowa was more than enough to make up for it. Of their three children, only nine-year-old Angelina is old enough to have any grasp of what has happened in Ukraine, but they have all adjusted well.

Compared to Ukraine, where a large gap exists between wealthy and poor citizens, Philip said he appreciates being in a place with more economic balance, or as he put it, where "everyone is kind of in the middle." He hopes to plant roots in the U.S. and start

some sort of a food business because at this point, he feels there is nothing to return to in Mariupol.

"My ultimate goal is to be on the front page of some magazine of rich people," he said.

Keeping tabs from a distance

Although they've settled in the U.S. and hope to stay here, Maria, Philip and Katerina still watch news reports, read updates and do their best to keep tabs on friends and family in Kyiv and Odesa — Philip's mom is the lone relative left in Mariupol — who are caught in the middle of a bloody conflict halfway across the world. Although they count themselves as firm supporters and admirers of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who they feel is there for the people, their primary concern remains a simple one. People are dying, and they could care less about "who's laundering money or who gets what."

Witnessing the war and the atrocities committed in Mariupol firsthand may have exposed the Myroshnikovs to the worst of humanity, but over 5,500 miles away in the middle of Iowa, they've gotten a glimpse of the best.

"Sometimes, it was to the point of tears to see how welcoming people are and how caring they are that they put so much effort and time into a family that they don't know," Philip said.

United for Ukraine is planning to host several more families in the Marshalltown area in the future, and donations can be sent through St. Francis Parish or Hope UMC. Everyday items and gift cards are also accepted.

Contact Robert Maharry at 641-753-6611 ext. 255 or maharry@timesrepublican.com.

United Way agency profile

Editor's Note: This is the latest in a series of informational profiles about the partner agencies affiliated with the United Way of Marshall County. Profiles will be published now through December.



Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging

Years of service: 50 years

Years Affiliated with the United Way: 5 years

Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging serves 18 counties and is one of six Area Agencies on Aging in Iowa. With a mission of empowering older individuals to age with dignity and independence, NEI3A strives to improve the lives of older Iowans, their caregivers and their communities by providing information, services and supports to enable aging at home.

Services provided include short and long term case management (service coordination, application assistance, benefit enrollment) nutrition services including home delivered meals, caregiver support, respite services, evidence-based health programs, advocacy and education programs.

"NEI3A helped me receive additional benefits that I did not know were available. My case manager made sure I was educated on all available benefits, options and resources. It is difficult for me to keep up with housework and I was not eating properly. NEI3A helped me get a homemaker in place and set me up with home delivered meals. I am able to stay in my home because of NEI3A."

For more information about NEI3A and the services provided, call 866-468-7887 or visit www.nei3a.org.



6th Street Auto Sales 607 S. 6th St. Marshalltown 641-752-1755

Locally Owned
Dick Wooldridge
Brad Wooldridge

www.6thstreetautosales.com FINANCING AVAILABLE

The Most Advanced Car Washes Around

919 N. 3rd Ave.
102 Iowa Ave. East
Marshalltown, IA.

Super Skine
Touchless Automatic Car Wash

Tight Wad Tuesdays!
(\$2 Off a Deluxe Wash)

LiveWell with UnityPoint Health

ask the **EXPERT**

Dr. Lance VanGundy
ER Medical Director and Physician

What would you tell those who are still unvaccinated?

1. I can't stress this enough, please get vaccinated. It's for your own longterm health, and the health of your family, friends and community.
2. It's been a year and the evidence is as strong as ever, the vaccines are safe and effective.
3. Everyone in the VanGundy household got the shot. Please do the same.

Learn more at unitypoint.org/marshalltown

UnityPoint Health
Marshalltown