

Classes were not held for months

UKRAINE continued
from front page

proper heat within the school.”
Falla’s Ukrainian friends asked if she could help them raise funds for a generator that they could purchase from a local vendor in order to continue heating the school when the intermittent power surges happen during the cold winter months. Falla estimates the project will cost approximately \$1,200.

She said that the Russian occupation of the town happened very fast and lasted until the fall.

“It was very bad,” she said. “They cut off electric, gas and blew out bridges so a lot of medicines couldn’t be brought in to restock stores. They interrogated and tortured people. It was really bad. All of the sudden, you had 200 tanks and vehicles and they set up shop in the First School. They even burnt down the forest. Most people I knew were able to get out. Those who stayed were just terrorized. There was a lot of torture that happened. ... My host papa was a fisherman and they threw a grenade in his boat just to mess with him.”

Russian troops also used the so-



Contributed photo

Tribal employee Anne Falla, sitting in center, served in the Peace Corps in Ukraine for three years at The Second School. She is currently raising funds to help purchase a generator for the children who attend the war-torn school in Kherson Oblast.

cial service centers and First School to store weapons and ammunition. Classes were not held for months. The Second School was spared much of this due to its remote location.

“There have been war crime investigations in the First School,”

Falla said. “There are a lot of missing people and families couldn’t bury their dead so they had to use their front yards and look at that for months. Most didn’t feel safe leaving their homes.”

Since the area was liberated in the fall, daily life is still far from normal but some routines have returned, such as the re-opening of the post office, some social service benefits and the return of in-person school. Many teachers from the Second School are still instructing remotely, as they left the country at the start of the war and haven’t yet returned due to ongoing safety concerns.

“We were a farming region so people were able to grow their own food before the war,” Falla said. “They usually farm all summer, but I’m not sure what they were able to do because before the Russians left they destroyed all of the infrastructure.”

For these reasons, Falla said the school having a generator is even more crucial.

“The school needs reliable electric service to make meals for the kids,” she said. “That to me is crucially important to get nutrients for them.”

Falla has spearheaded a few different fundraisers for Ukraine since the war began and said Tribal employees have been generous.

“I’ve been really impressed with the response here,” she said. “Lots of people here can relate because it’s a culture fighting for their sovereignty. They aren’t going to give it up. That is what they want, freedom. They’ve been displaced and are missing out on school, traditions with family and all of these milestones. This war has been very destructive to Ukrainian families and their culture.”

On Friday, Jan. 20, Falla visited different Tribal government offices to promote a 50/50 raffle. She raised nearly \$400.

“I’m always so thankful for this community and the hearts of those we work with,” she said in an e-mail. “Thank you to everyone for your support.”

For more information or to donate, visit <https://gofund.me/150a9eb2>. ■

Clothes Closet open Fridays

The Clothes Closet is open from 9 a.m. to noon Fridays on the Tribal campus near the Elders Activity Center at the end of Blacktail Drive. The Clothes Closet accepts clothing, small appliances, small pieces of furniture, electronics and household goods that are clean and in good condition. It does not accept books, large TVs or furniture, but there is a community board where people can post those items.

For more information or emergency clothes, contact Lori Walker-Hernandez at 559-847-7565. ■

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

Love Rocks

PRIZES

Pizza

Rock Painting

Punch

Saturday, Feb 11th, 2023
11-2 P.M.
At the Community Center

1 in 3 American teens are effected by Teen Dating Violence. Let's come together to discuss the facts, and paint Love Rocks to promote awareness and healthy relationships within our community!

All are welcome; however, we ask that guardians use discretion with children under 10 years of age. Children under 10 must be accompanied by an adult or guardian for the duration of the event. Discussion topics include: Forms of Teen Dating Violence, Sex, Healthy Relationship Traits, and available resources.

***While supplies last.*

ikanum

stories from the pacific northwest

ikanum is a culturally specific time of year when traditional stories are shared. This show showcases contemporary artists, their work, and their stories.

JANUARY 18 - APRIL 14, 2023