VASYL STUS SCHOOL OF UKRAINIAN STUDIES

FEBRURARY

What a productive start to 2026! Our January was filled with student accomplishments, cultural traditions, historical acknowledgments, and graduation preparations.

Ukrainian Language Competition

The first stage of the Petro Yatsyk Ukrainian Language Competition has concluded. It began in the fall of 2025 for schools of the Ukrainian diaspora in America. Upper-grade students of our school eagerly took part in this prestigious competition and completed interesting tasks appropriate to their age level. And here are our winners, of whom we are proud.

- Arsen Semkiv, 6th grade – 1st place
- Marharyta Kukharska, 7th grade – 2nd place
- Denys Lahoyda, 7th grade – 2nd place
- Daryna Levytska, 7th grade – 3rd place

Ninth graders:

- Yulia Halasa – 2nd place
- Khrystyna Kovalska – 2nd place
- Emma Archer – 3rd place
- Mariia Babinska – 3rd place
- Marta Ileiko – 3rd place

Now our winners will compete with students from other Ukrainian studies schools from different states across America in the second stage of the competition, which will begin in February 2026. Let us wish them victory! We also congratulate the Ukrainian language teachers, Pani Lilia Petrovych and Pani Halyna Prochna! Our language, our song will not die, will not perish!

FEBRUARY

Absences

As many families are new to our school, we'd like to remind everyone about our communication and registration database called School Cues. We ask families that if your child cannot be present for classes or will either be tardy or have to leave early to please complete an "Absentee" or "Tardy" form under the "Permission Form" tab of the website.

Koliada!

On January 10th, students of the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 8th grade classes treated patrons of various Ukrainian establishments in the neighborhood to traditional Christmas songs. We thank our Ukrainian Village community for their continued financial and moral support of our school!

PARKING RULES

We remind everyone to bide by the parking and driving rules when picking up and dropping off children, especially avoiding double parking and blocking the whole street. Please respect posted signs and the residents living nearby. We also want to avoid any potential hazards that may occur as a result of unsafe parking choices.

Join the Parent's Committee!

FEBRUARY

As you can imagine, the school does not run on luck and good wishes, but there are several people behind the scenes who dedicate their time and good will to its coordination and running. To support the work of our administration and teaching staff, a Parents Board is responsible for the school's coordination. Any parent of a student of the Vasyl Stus Ridna Shkola is welcome to represent their child's interests on the board. We encourage you to join our ranks by emailing ridnashkolachicago@gmail.com. We also want to announce our annual elections on May 16th at 11am where the Board will summarize their year's work and a new Board will be elected.

Amazon Wishlist

As a non-profit entity, our school team works hard to keep costs for families low and rely on the financial support of local organizations and generous patrons. As you can imagine, in order to modernize and afford students with the best resources for learning, we are in constant need of supplies and materials. We plan on creating an Amazon wish list of materials of which we are in need. Please consider purchasing items from our wish list to have donated to our school team. More information to come.

St. Nicholas School Open House

We are including flyers regarding an open house on March 20 for the St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Elementary School which affords our school program the opportunity to use its facilities each Saturday. The school provides a rigorous curriculum and many extracurricular opportunities, particularly for students in the diaspora. Please consider coming to learn more about the school programming.

Слідкуйте за нами!

Sviato Heroyiv

FEBRUARY

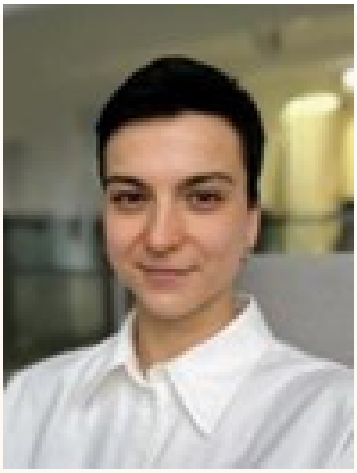
On January 31 st our school held our annual Svyato Heroyiv. At this time, students honored the heroic acts of Ukrainians of the 20 th and 21 st centuries. This year, the school administration along with the Chicago Stanytsia of the youth organization, PLAST, coordinated the commemoration. CYM also took part.
Slava Ukrayini! Heroyam Slava!

Spotlight on a Teacher

As noted in our January bulletin, we have welcomed a new teacher of history and the 7 th grade primary teacher, Ms. Iryna Tymar, to our school team. With her entry, we would like to initiate a new section to our newsletter called “Spotlight on a Teacher” by introducing her via a brief interview.

SPOTLIGHT ON A TEACHER

Iryna Tymar



1. What do you teach at the Vasyl Stus Ukrainian School?

I am a history teacher for grades 6–10.

2. What professional and personal experience has helped you in your role as a teacher at the Ukrainian School?

For many years I was engaged in academic work. I worked on my dissertation and research projects in the archives and libraries of Lviv, Warsaw, Bratislava, and Prague, and participated in academic conferences. This experience taught me to treat information carefully, not to repeat stereotypes and clichés (of which there are many in interpretations of Ukrainian history), and to distinguish what is essential from what is secondary.

During my university years, I worked as a counselor in summer camps and in an early childhood development preschool. This experience of interacting with children of different ages taught me to understand my students.

3. What is your teaching philosophy?

The goal of a teacher is to build a type of relationship with students in which they perceive the teacher as a more experienced friend, someone who comes not to punish or reward with grades, but with a kind and sincere desire to teach and to share knowledge.

As for my subject, we study history, not in order to memorize dates and names, but to learn how to think, analyze events, and understand cause-and-effect relationships between events and phenomena. History is a practical discipline, if one learns how to understand it.

...4. What is your favorite Ukrainian book and why?

It is difficult to choose just one. There are many interesting books, and at different stages of life some resonate more, others less. We "outgrow" some books, and to others we have not yet "grown up."

In my later school years, I read almost the entire Ukrainian literature curriculum not in shortened anthology form, but as complete works. Some of them I reread. "The Hunters and the Hunted" by Ivan Bahrianyi or "The Yellow Prince" by Vasyl Barka are perceived very differently now than they were in 10th grade. These works have a historical background (the Holodomor and the dictatorship of Soviet rule). Along with compelling plots, the reader experiences the tragedy not only of fictional characters, but of the entire Ukrainian people. I reread both books last year. It was very painful.

The most recent book I read is the modern mystical detective novel "I See You Are Interested in Darkness." Its author, Illarion Pavliuk, is often called the Ukrainian Stephen King. I usually do not like mysticism, but I read this 600-page book in four days. It was good that it was during the Christmas holidays and school break 🙂

5. What is your favorite Ukrainian city and why?

I greatly regret that I have not visited many Ukrainian cities. However, of those I have seen, without a doubt it is Lviv in the summer. Romantic, architectural, historical, musical, and cultural. For me, this city combines the modern pace of life with deep magnetism. The walls of its old architecture "breathe" history, so with my profession, the choice is quite natural.

6. What excites you most about teaching at the Ukrainian School?

At the Ukrainian School there are children who have never been to Ukraine. What excites me is that parents and teachers invest their energy so that children know and hold on to their own roots. This inspires me to give my very best in my work as well.

День Відкритих Дверей

субота - 28-го лютого

11:00 - 12:00

КАВА
СОЛОДКЕ
КНИЖКИ
РОЗМОВА

І не тільки...

ШКОЛА УКРАЇНОЗНАВСТВА ІМ. ВАСИЛЯ СТУСА

Join us Saturday, February 28 at 11 am for a book sale, coffee and sweets sale and a presentation about the USL Program.

The Ukrainian as a Second Language program helps students of all levels build confidence in speaking, reading, and understanding Ukrainian in a supportive and engaging environment, while connecting language learning with culture and community.

ПРОДАЖ КНИЖОК! BOOK SALE!

ЗРОБІТЬ СВІЙ ВНЕСОК У БОРТЬБУ ЗА ПЕРЕМОГУ УКРАЇНИ! ЧИТАЙТЕ УКРАЇНСЬКОЮ!

DO YOUR PART IN UKRAINE'S FIGHT FOR VICTORY! READ IN UKRAINIAN!

USL — Ukrainian as a Second Language

Vasyl Stys School of Ukrainian Studies | Chicago

Supporting children learning Ukrainian abroad

What is USL?

- A **supportive** language program for children developing Ukrainian skills
- Designed for students living outside Ukraine
- Highly positive feedback from students and **parents**

Our approach:

- focus on spoken Ukrainian
- communication-based learning
- materials adapted to each child's level
- safe, encouraging environment
- confidence to speak without fear

What we study:

- key topics from Ukrainian history
- history used as a foundation for language practice
- reading, short texts, discussion
- vocabulary development in context

Program format:

- during Saturday School
- two class periods
- age groups:
  - Grades 1–3
  - Grades 4–6

Preschool & Pre-K (new!)

Sign up by: January 22

Contact:

- Parents' Council:
- uprava@ridnachicago.org
- School Director — Ms. Natalia **Ponomareyova**
- director@ridnachicago.org

Sincerely,
School Administration

ST. NICHOLAS CATHEDRAL SCHOOL

LITTLE GUARDIANS PLAY DATE & OPEN HOUSE

LITTLE GUARDIANS PLAY DATE
UPCOMING DATES:

Suggested ages 2-5

Wednesday, February 25, 2026
4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

OPEN HOUSE
UPCOMING DATES:

All ages welcome!

Wednesday, January 28, 2026
5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Friday, March 20, 2026
5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

COME JOIN US!

- Toddlers/Preschoolers will participate in interactive activities with current SNCS Teachers and Staff
- Fun activities, make and take an art & crafts project home!
- Meet Principal Anna Cirilli
- Listen to our current 8th grade students share their experiences at SNCS
- Tour PreK - 8th classrooms

R.S.V.P. NOW!

2200 W Rice St, Chicago IL 60622 admin@stnickschicago.org 773.384.7243