

Ridna Shkola Vasyl Stus

Newsletter

APRIL



The spring season has brought with it new growth, excitement, and renewed energy at our school. The USL program has welcomed students in both its full day and part-time program. Our students honored Ukraine's literary heroes with *zvha de vive* through a combination of open class lectures and an all-school assembly. 10th grade students are entering their final preparations for completing their culminative exams. Below is a review of our events from March and a look ahead.

Easter is quickly upon us and we will break our Lenten fast with the blessed foods of our Easter baskets. Our school calendar changed so please keep in mind that we will not have classes on April 4th and April 11th. May God's light and forgiveness from Jesus' sacrifice shine brightly on you and your families as you celebrate together. Wishing you a delicious Easter brunch!

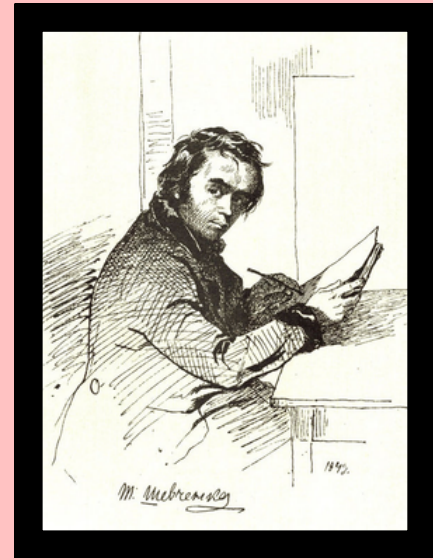
Don't forget to benefit from the reduced early registration fee for the 2026-27 school year. You should have received a reminder in your School Cues account to pay the early registration fee. If not, please email ridnashkolachicago@gmail.com for assistance with completing the process.



March Events

Honoring Taras Shevchenko

Second grade teacher Olenka Herasymchuk once again proved that Shevchenko is not just a date on the calendar, not only March 9. He lives alongside us every day — in words, in thought, in the heart of every student who discovers the Ukrainian world, no matter where they are. A variety of exercises, creative activities, movement exercises, and dances were seamlessly woven into the lesson theme “Shevchenko — the poet of the Ukrainian heart,” creating an atmosphere of learning that was lively, modern, and at the same time deeply rooted in national identity.



It was especially wonderful to see our school alumna Uliana Rybak, who came to support her younger sister Anya. Together they prepared a beautiful movement routine set to a modern interpretation of Taras Shevchenko’s words. This once again confirms that traditions live when they are passed from heart to heart — from older generations to younger ones. The most touching moment of the extended lesson was a video greeting from students of Gymnasium No. 7 in Zviahel, Ukraine, created especially for our second graders. In response, our students also recorded a warm message to their peers in Ukraine. Moments like these remind us once again: when Taras Shevchenko “stood guard” over his word, it became a bridge that unites Ukrainians around the world.



Under the guidance of our teachers, P. Lilia Petrovych, P. Halyna Prokhna, and P. Natalia Bonkovska, as well as the support of our music teacher, P. Katya Kyshka, our students recited Taras Shevchenko’s powerful poems and sang songs dedicated to his influence on Ukrainian literature and patriotism. With the backdrop of his beautiful artwork, the svyato also welcomed the bandurist chorus and the musical Pilyukh family who offered beautiful renditions of famous poems.



On March 14, our school had the honor of welcoming a well-known Sixtier, dissident, political prisoner, and member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group — Mr. Mykola Horbal. For our school community, this was an extremely meaningful and moving meeting with such a distinguished figure. During the totalitarian regime, Mr. Horbal served his sentence alongside Vasyl Stus, whose honored name our school proudly bears.

It was especially valuable that our guest was genuinely impressed by our students — their love for Ukraine, respect for traditions, deep knowledge of history, and reverent attitude toward the words of Taras Shevchenko. Students and teachers had a unique opportunity to speak with Mr. Horbal, to hear his personal testimony and stories about difficult times — “when people were killed for their words.”

We are sincerely grateful for the gift of books written by the author, which will hold a place of honor in our school. Dear Mr. Mykola, we wish you strong health, continued creative inspiration, and many blessed years!



School Visitors

Throughout March, our school was visited by representatives of the “Samopomich” Credit Union, who conducted a series of highly valuable and informative financial literacy sessions for high school students. Ms.

Tetiana Darmohrai introduced students to key aspects of financial life, including how to save money properly, manage it responsibly, and develop a mindful approach to personal finances.



During the lectures, students learned about credit, financing, and investments, and also received practical advice they can begin applying in their everyday lives right away.



In addition to the educational component, students were pleasantly surprised with gifts from the credit union, as well as the opportunity to enjoy donuts and pizza, which created a warm and friendly atmosphere. At the conclusion of the program, all participants received certificates valued at 20 dollars. We sincerely thank the organizers of this important initiative, and especially Ms.

Tetiana Darmohrai, for providing such necessary and meaningful sessions for our students.



The Parents Board wants YOU....

Parent support is paramount to the successful running of our school. We invite you to help stock our classrooms with needed teaching and learning materials for the school via our Amazon wish list that can be found [here](#).

We also encourage parents to join our Parents Board which makes decisions for the improved running of our school.

The Board also helps coordinate events and programming, such as Ukrainian as a Second Language (USL). We will be holding our Parents Board annual elections on May 16th at 11am. We invite and highly encourage all parents to attend to hear about the state of our school, the year's events, and to identify the new board. Mark your calendars!



Spotlight on a Teacher

Halyna Prokhna

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

I have been working at Ridna Shkola for quite a long time and teach Ukrainian language and literature.

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

I came to Ridna Shkola with solid teaching experience. I had the good fortune to work at a small, old school in the village of Yasenytsia-Silna, where Ivan Franko studied. Interestingly, all the students there studied very well. Later, I had the opportunity to teach French language and literature at the Drohobych Pedagogical University named after Ivan Franko. I also have the experience of being a parent of a Ridna Shkola student.

3. What is your teaching philosophy?

To teach children how to learn, to stand up for their opinions, to value themselves, to be proud of Ukraine and its heroes, to want to speak the Ukrainian language, and to care about its harmony and beauty.

4. What is your favorite Ukrainian book and why?

I have many. I enjoy rereading the works of Ivan Franko, Lesya Ukrainka, Taras Shevchenko, "Mazepa" by Bohdan Lepky, "Nationalism" and "The Spirit of Our Traditions" by Dmytro Dontsov, "Internationalism or Russification" by Ivan Dziuba, "The Century of Yakiv" by Volodymyr Lys, "Vichnyk" by Myroslav Dochynets, and "The Black Raven. The Outcast" by Vasyl Shkliar. I am inspired by the poetry of Lina Kostenko, Vasyl Symonenko, Oleksandr Oles, and Liliya Petrovych, a teacher at Ridna Shkola. I am deeply impressed by the video lectures "The Gene of Ukrainians" and the program recordings "The Greatness of Personality" by Iryna Farion, which every conscious Ukrainian should watch.

5. What is your favorite Ukrainian city and why?

Not one, but three. Truskavets is the city of my childhood, Lviv is the city of my youth, and Drohobych is the city of my early adulthood.

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

When your former students bring their own children to the school. That is inspiring.