

NEIGHBORHOOD

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EXTRA

Rotary District 5650 to honor Glenn with Humanitarian Service Award

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Information

Steve Glenn, a Lincoln businessman and member of Rotary 14, will be presented with the Rotary District 5650 Humanitarian Service Award during the annual conference of clubs from Eastern Nebraska and Western Iowa.

He is being recognized for his extraordinary service to Ukrainian refugees as they fled the invasion of their country. Barbara Bartle, current Rotary district governor, and Carol Horner, immediate past governor, will honor Glenn at the organization's event at Nebraska Innovation Campus Saturday, April 1.

Though Glenn has led a life of service, he has provided herculean efforts to support Ukrainian refugees. In March of 2022, shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine, he launched Operation Safe Harbor, an effort to provide temporary housing for refugees arriving in Poland as they fled the war in Ukraine. These refugees were predominantly women and children. He leveraged his contacts in the travel industry to partner with a hotel in Warsaw to provide rooms for displaced families. Providing the privacy and relative peacefulness of a hotel room was a critical benefit to traumatized families; much more favorable than sleeping in cots in an open gymnasium.

He utilized his points, airline mileage and personal funds to send em-



COURTESY PHOTO

Steve Glenn (right), founder of Operation Safe Harbor Ukraine and chairman of Executive Travel in Lincoln, has led efforts to temporarily house hundreds of Ukrainian refugees at a hotel in Warsaw, Poland. On April 1, Glenn will be honored with the Rotary District 5650 Humanitarian Service Award.

ployees from his company, as well as Rotarians from eastern Nebraska and Western Iowa, to be "boots on the ground" in Warsaw. He enlisted his church to serve as the fiscal agent for tax-deductible donations, keeping overhead to a minimum. He worked with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Warsaw to coordinate who would be staying at the hotel, provided transportation from the train station to the hotel, dispatched his contacts to procure medicine and guided the refugees toward the government benefits provided by Poland.

As other needs arose, Glenn and his team of volunteers did their best to support them with re-

spite babysitting, language translation, building relationships with other donation centers, providing diapers, toothbrushes, clothing and, most importantly, emotional support.

Among those who traveled to Poland as part of Operation Safe Harbor were Angie Muhleisen, president of Union Bank and Trust, a number of UBT employees, Bartle of Lincoln, Kathleen Nene Nolan of Omaha, Don Hutchens of Lincoln, as well as Brian Wallingford, Whitney Holcomb and Tamara Forbes who work at Glenn's Executive Travel agency.

In recognizing Glenn's efforts, Horner, a former Rotary district governor leading the initiative to

select the recipient, said, "Steve's effort is extraordinary. It personifies what a Rotarian and a person of action should do. Steve's effort (done on extremely short notice and with far reaching impact) is unsurpassed. I think I could say with pretty good confidence that there hasn't been a Rotarian in decades that accomplished as much humanitarian benefit in so short a time. This is a once in a lifetime moment."

The Humanitarian Service Award is not an annual recognition. Instead, it is given as someone such as Glenn illustrates an extraordinary effort. The award is coordinated and decided by current and past District 5650 governors.

Glenn helped raise over \$1 million, and more than 1,200 Ukrainians were impacted by Operation Safe Harbor. Late in 2022, the city of Warsaw received a grant from JP Morgan Chase for Ukrainian housing, and the hotel was sustained as part of this grant. Glenn's focus transitioned away from meeting these temporary needs toward more permanent solutions such as job training; preparing to pass the baton to local, sustainable programs. Glenn is guiding his efforts to support the refugees as they integrate more fully into Poland while they await cessation of the war in their country.

This effort represents the best of Rotary, of service above self with integrity, flexibility, business acumen and leveraging of networks. Glenn utilized the tools he had and the people he knew to make a significant impact in the lives of hundreds of Ukrainian refugees.

Glenn will be among many people recognized, including those listed from each club for the Golden Wheel Award, at the District conference banquet the evening of April 1. There are 39 Rotary clubs in the District that includes eastern Nebraska and western Iowa. Each year, they gather for a conference to recognize and celebrate the change they've made in their communities, across the United States and around the world. There are 1.4 million members in Rotary clubs in 200 countries.

https://journalstar.com/niche/neighborhood-extra/rotary-district-5650-to-honor-glenn-with-humanitarian-service-award/article_211181f0-c37b-11ed-a3ba-0352d0cb74f5.html