



*The Free Store for Ukrainian Newcomers collects donations and provides clothing and household items while Firefighter Aid Ukraine collects supplies and equipment to distribute to first responders in Ukraine. Both are using free leased space in a building owned by MacEwan University near its campus. (Photos courtesy of Free Store for Ukrainian Newcomers and Firefighter Aid Ukraine)*

March 16, 2023

## **MacEwan University partners with Free Store for Newcomers and Firefighter Aid Ukraine**

*Initiatives provide humanitarian aid for Ukrainians in Edmonton and Ukraine*

**Edmonton** – MacEwan University is proud to officially announce a partnership with two important community organizations, [Free Store for Ukrainian Newcomers](#) and [Firefighter Aid Ukraine \(FFAU\)](#). The Free Store for Ukrainian Newcomers (FSUN) provides clothing and essentials at no charge to Ukrainian newcomers to Canada displaced by the war in Ukraine. FFAU collects firefighter gear, personal protective equipment (PPE), life rescue equipment and medical supplies from fire departments and vendors in Canada and sends it to first responders in Ukraine.

Thanks to the donation of space by the university, both organizations have found a home in the MacEwan-owned “Macrotronics” Building near 108 Street and 106 Avenue, just north of the MacEwan campus.

“Community partnerships like this are so very important and are integral to MacEwan. We understand and welcome the role we have to play in our neighbourhood, in Edmonton’s downtown and in this city as

a whole,” said Dr. Annette Trimbee, president and vice-chancellor. “It’s amazing what can be accomplished when we share our resources, our time and our talents.”

FSUN, which has been operating in a smaller space since April 2022, has seen over 5,000 visits from Ukrainian newcomers who have fled the war in their homeland. All the items in the store have been donated by Albertans and local businesses while most volunteers are newcomers to Canada themselves.

“We are very excited about our new larger space and our partnerships with both MacEwan University and Firefighter Aid Ukraine,” says Janice Krissa-Moore, co-founder of the Free Store for Newcomers. “The people who come to our store have been through trauma and need help trying to establish themselves here. It is heart-warming to know that MacEwan and the general public have been willing to help get them through a very difficult time.”

Established in 2014, FFAU has spent nearly a decade working with the State Emergency Services and volunteer brigades in Ukraine. Prior to the invasion, FFAU had collected and sent 89 tons of relief to Ukraine including firefighter PPE, rescue tools, medical supplies, and hospital/surgical equipment. When the conflict started, FFAU used their trusted network to focus on the immediate delivery of critical aid to Ukraine.

““Firefighter Aid Ukraine has a history of building relationships and we are proud to now be in partnership with MacEwan and Free Store for Newcomers,” says Kevin Royle, FFAU project director. “While we provide aid to Ukraine, and the Free Store provides aid to newcomers, we both provide assistance to Ukraine and an avenue for anyone to show their support. With the donated space and student assistance, we can’t thank MacEwan enough.”

The relationship extends beyond the physical space: MacEwan students are now engaging in work integrated learning projects to support FFAU by conducting market research and developing content for social media for the organization.

“Student involvement is key for us with initiatives like these,” said Trimbee. “Many of our students come to MacEwan because they share our passion for contributing to the communities we serve,” said Trimbee. “They are aware of the issues that affect us and are keen to roll up their sleeves and get involved. MacEwan students want to make a difference.”

**For more information, please contact [archerj24@macewan.ca](mailto:archerj24@macewan.ca)**

*Founded in 1971, MacEwan University inspires its students with a powerful combination of academic excellence and personal learning experiences. Offering more than 90 programs including undergraduate degrees, applied degrees, diplomas, certificates, continuing education and corporate training, the university provides a transformative education in a creative, collaborative and supportive learning environment where creativity and innovation thrive. Located in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, MacEwan University offers a unique student experience that opens up diverse pathways for achievement and growth.*