

**Heart of Giving Podcast – April 11, 2023**  
**Art Taylor Interviews Kateryna Zhuk (Katya)**  
**Transcript, Part 2 of 2**

**Art:** [00:00:00] Our featured BBB Wise Giving Alliance accredited Charity Seal holders for this episode are Prostate Cancer Foundation. Ronald McDonald House Charities Rainforest Action Network. To find out more about these and other BBB Wise Giving Alliance accredited charity seal holders. Go to Give.org.

**Announcer:** You're listening to The Heart of Giving Podcast with Art Taylor, powered by BBB Give.org. Here, we explore the motivations that form the basis of giving and service. We inspire, generosity, and celebrate the transformative effects that giving and service have on the human spirit and on community. The conversations featured on the podcast also uncover giving strategies [00:01:00] that educate and provide tools to help listeners make impactful gifts of both their time and money.

**Announcer:** We hope you enjoy this episode.

**Art:** Welcome to The Heart of Giving podcast, powered by BBB Give.org which is the nation's standards-based charity evaluator, and it's your one-stop source for information on giving and reports on the most asked about charities. I'm Art Taylor, your host. We continue to turn our attention to what's going on in Ukraine when the war started now over a year ago. We saw an outpouring of support from American philanthropic institutions, companies, and most importantly, American citizens to support the efforts underway to help people who were affected by the war in the region. [00:02:00] And, I know our website got an enormous amount of attention during that time because people wanted to know where they could go to support charities that were doing important work in the region at the time, and who could actually deliver aid and other needed support to people who were escaping from the war in Ukraine or being forced to move from their homes to other places. We decided that we would try to stay in tune with what was going on there, and over the last year or so, we've had other individuals speak to us about the situation, including some charity leaders — individuals who are parts of large international relief organizations who are assisting in the area, and we were also able to speak with an [00:03:00] advocate for Ukraine who gave us some insight as to what might need to happen if we're going to deliver the kind of support that people need. That was with former Ukrainian finance minister, Natalie Jaresko, and I recommend that podcast to you as well as the ones we've done with other international organization leaders. Today, however, we're going to introduce to you someone who is actually a Ukrainian citizen. She's lived and worked in the Ukraine, all of her life. She is currently the co-founder and director of the charity monitoring organization in Ukraine called Charity Turner. She also worked in the journalism field prior to that, and she's also a CSR specialist and media trainer. But [00:04:00] we wanted to reach out to her because of her status as a monitoring organization leader. Just like Give.org, which is tasked with identifying the most trustworthy charities in the United States for people to give to. We have separate partner organizations of course, but partner organizations like Charity Turner in Ukraine, and a host of others around the world that are doing monitoring work to help people in those countries understand what's going on with the charity scene.

**Art:** But today we have Kateryna Zhuk, we call her Katya, and Katya is going to speak to us about what she's seeing, what charities there are, and how we go about determining how we can support them. Because I know Americans are still very concerned about what's going on there and still want to provide some of their [00:05:00] philanthropic dollars to help that situation. So, Kateryna, we are thrilled to have you and I should add, we've commissioned Kateryna to begin doing blogs every other week, and you'll be able to read her blog on Give.org, which will provide insight to you from a bird's eye view. Now, Kateryna is not living currently in Ukraine, and we're going to hear that story. She's living in Poland, in Warsaw right now. But you're going to find out that she has a bird's eye view of the situation in Ukraine and what the needs and aspirations are for philanthropic groups that are trying to help people on the ground. And this is part two of our interview with Katya. You can hear part one — which we released last week — you can listen to that one. It's up on any podcast platform for you to hear. I hope you'll [00:06:00] check it out as well. So, Kateryna, welcome to the Heart of Giving podcast.

**Katya:** Thank you! Thank you so much.

**Art:** So, I wanted to, I wanted to ask anyway about your work, and you were the co-founder of an organization in Ukraine. That, like the Wise Giving Alliance here in the United States, monitors charities in Ukraine. Can you tell us a little bit about how that got started? And what the status of it is at this point.

**Katya:** You know, 13 years ago, our head of board now, he told me interesting sentence. He told me, “hey, you, you're a good sales manager.” I'm a good sales manager. “You're a good sales manager. So, but, but maybe after some [00:07:00] years that's really, uh, easy to sell product placement or advertising maybe it's easy.” I said, “yeah.” For me it's uh, it's easy, [he said] “it's interesting and maybe you want to sell, maybe you want to sell, uh, human life.” I said “what?” And he proposed I be a fundraiser on the first charity platform for online charity.

**Art:** Wow!

**Katya:** Yeah. Okay, so you're a sales manager, so go.

**Art:** Go sell.

**Katya:** Yeah, go sell. And I said, “well, this was the question, not about money.” You know, it's a question about future of my kids, but a future for my kids.

**Art:** Mm-hmm.

**Katya:** It's, it's you. That's [00:08:00] another level of, of, in, in my life. Another level. Yeah. I started to work with with (inaudible in Ukrainian) and at the time, I learned a lot, really, a lot. And about monitoring, ok I learned a lot of desert eye, so.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Katya:** Yeah, yeah. How it works. So, because we had and we talk about ideas about our strategy about plans, yeah?

**Art:** Mm-hmm.

**Katya:** Cause it's, it's marketing. We can do the same all the time. Yeah?

**Art:** Right.

**Katya:** We have some, some plans and I wrote marketing strategy and we started to, to talk with him about monitoring. So, yeah. That's the charity's foundations and our platform. We would check and verify. Yeah. [00:09:00] And, at first, it was only 20 foundations from all of Ukraine. It was the year 2011. (inaudible in Ukrainian) [We met with] every manager, CEO, foundation, and leader of these foundations. After when we left this project, the owner of (inaudible), the owner of the platform, didn't want to monitor Charity Foundation. So yeah, so we have, we had other ideas. We chose another way. Yeah. But, after that, I can't work or even write articles, not about social, but about charity. [00:10:00] That's, yeah. So, I have my, my own interest in my life. I, I live in it, you know, because, because of Pasha.

**Art:** And by the way, Pasha by the way, is a co-founder of, of Charity Turner.

**Katya:** — of Charity Turner, yeah.

**Art:** And he is quite an individual. He's a force of nature.

**Katya:** Yeah.

**Art:** Outspoken. I've met him and he's so full of life and energy. And maybe we'll talk about him a little later, but he's still in Ukraine doing some media work there. We'll talk about him later. But go ahead, Katya.

**Katya:** So, after the revolution 8 years ago, charity foundations that we were in connection. After we leave this platform, working project, they started to ask me, hey, what are you doing? There's a lot of fraud, a lot [00:11:00] of scammers because of the revolution and the nation creased. So, Katya, you should do something. You, you can write about it. You work with CSR. This and that, and work in media, so you should do something with it. This is a problem for us. You should do something. I said okay, maybe, maybe I should do something. I live near a channel, I work there at this time as head of the Department of Development Proposition. I left the channel. I left my job in media and went to my colleagues, journalists at, at the time, at many, many TV channels and radio channels in Ukraine and proposed to them writing a story about [00:12:00] scam, about this fraud about some, some people on the streets with transparent boxes that accumulate money for charity, for help Ukrainians. So, we start an informational campaign. (inaudible in Ukrainian) It's a scam and it's really started to work. Yeah. So, because, you know, that's a horrible story that three or five of these people with boxes were all staying on the one, on the one road. Yeah. You know, at the same time. Yeah. And we talked about it with the foundation, and they told me that, you know, we can't ask volunteers to go with transparent boxes by the streets to transport, because by our

legislation, Ukrainian legislation, if [00:13:00] someone [does that] will beat them, yeah. We will pay, we will pay a lot of money for repair by insurance, anyway, but it's a lot of money. We are charities. We, we can, we haven't a lot of money for it, for sure. We use the online platforms. We use boxes at concerts, maybe at events, but not on the streets.

**Art:** But not on the street?

**Katya:** It's not a transparent story, no. So after half of the year, you know that sometimes we met these guys with boxes, but this was really sometimes, one or two times per month maybe, and then, in other regions, people had heard about this action or saw it on the tv, [00:14:00] or heard it by radio, they started to ask all these guys with a box, "where's the report, please? We want to see the report!"

**Art:** No report. Everybody wanted a report.

**Katya:** They couldn't find it. Everybody. Where's the report? And that's really, that's a problem. And this started to be a problem for all this (inaudible in Ukrainian). So, they go out because, once, some guys, they even beat this student who had a box. (inaudible in Ukrainian) And now we have the same problem online. Electronically. Yeah. (inaudible in Ukrainian) [00:15:00]

**Art:** So, what's the status of the organization now, now that you're dealing with this war? I mean, are you able to provide these similar services now or is the organization sort of on hold?

**Katya:** No, we started work as volunteers. We stopped asking for money, stopped asking for donations for Charity Turner, and it's normal because all money, all money, now should go for our victory. For people in need, for Ukrainian forces that, that's normal. I work as a volunteer. It's normal for me, because I worked as a volunteer for many, many years. Not for money, but for ideas. We, we still work. That's interesting that in this horrible situation when foundations have a lot of work [00:16:00] and a lot of problems, foundations still ask me to check their work and foundations still fulfill our online, our Google form, special Google form, and they answer to my questions. And talk about the situation. And it's really, I'm happy about it. I'm happy about it because they want, even in these times, even when they have increased donations, really, they have increased donations. But after all, they came to me, they told me, "hey, we're now having three, four times more money than we had a year ago, but after it we, we want to show you, Katya. We want to show you that we are transparent." [00:17:00] That's amazing. That's for me, that's amazing.

**Art:** It is. Transparency and trust is key. And they understand that even in the circumstances that they're in now. That is impressive. Well, let me ask you this. So, when I think about the work that you're doing, I also have to think about the charities and the work that they're doing right now. So, I want to know from you, what do you currently see as some of the needs that charities can fulfill right now? What is the biggest need for people in the region who fled Ukraine, or those who are in Ukraine now that charities can kind of help with?

**Katya:** The first — we have the first two points globally — [is] people. People that need [00:18:00] homes. People need their homes. There are a lot of people that moved from their

homes because of occupation. New one [occupation]. We have the old story of occupation in, uh, Crimea, in Lugansk and the next region, but we have a new one, the South. And they need their homes. Some of them, they're now homeless, completely homeless. And without any possibility to buy something or rent something people without work, with kids and in a horrible, really horrible situation without the story of their life, are fired. And they, they want to live as people, not as usual. Not as [00:19:00] before, but as people. Now these families live in a horrible dormitory. No, you can live in dormitory if you're adult and you are alone — maybe, maybe you can live in it. But if you have kids and maybe medical problems, problems with health, you can't live in this dormitory every day, months by months. So yeah, that's the first need for people in Ukraine: housing. Housing. You can name it. Housing. The same problem for refugees who go out then and are now in the Europe Union and in the USA, maybe have the same problem. And in Canada and then in another country, not in European Union. In Great Britain, Islands, [00:20:00] it's problem where to live, how to live. How to find a job, how to learn a language, but the same for refugees inside in, in Europe and in other countries. The same that, uh, emotions, psychological support. (inaudible in Ukrainian) Yes, I understand English, and I can learn Polish. You want to do something for them? (inaudible in Ukrainian). That's, that's the problem for, for all of us. We have the same problem for all of us: housing and psychology. [00:21:00]

**Art:** Emotional support.

**Katya:** Yeah, emotional support. Yeah.

**Art:** Trauma, there's a trauma associated with what you've gone through. And I can't imagine what it's like for even young children, for that matter, how difficult it must be for children who've been uprooted and, in some cases, separated from their parents. I would imagine some have been separated from their parents. Because of what may have happened to their parents, you know? The trauma that many of you have gone through has to be addressed if you're going to be whole and healthy. And I'm not sure how charities participate in that. I guess they're — you need people who have those skills to come and, and I guess, support you. Would, would that be, a way of addressing that, do you think? Having people with those skills to provide the counseling services that you might need?

**Katya:** No, there's a lot of [00:22:00] foundation charities that provide psychological-emotional support. But for us, it's not in the first place. You know, in the first place we think about home, about money, about food, about schools, kindergartens. So that's first for us. And, we all have trauma. If you're a refugee or you're still at home, as many neighbors. Some of my neighbors are still at home, they didn't go away; anywhere. But we all have trauma, that that's really, that's true. And people now that, now [00:23:00] in Ukraine, they think that they have no trauma. So our society, Ukrainian society separates. Because part of us, maybe before war, wanted to go to the European Union to live there, for example. They saw it better to live in Europe or in the USA. I know people that wanted to go to the USA before. Now they this opportunity, for example, to go to Canada. So yeah, that's part, but mostly we separate in two parts. One part now [00:24:00] in cross border refugee in Europe. Second part now in Ukraine. So, I sometimes I think, “hey, we'll turn back after a while to Kyiv with kids.” For example, my [daughter] rolled out from Kyiv when she was 12. She was 12 and now she's 13 years. Yeah, for my youngest daughter, the first language is Polish. She will be, after one week, she will be only three year old, so, she speaks really funny. Sometimes it's Russian, sometimes it Polish! My oldest daughter speaks Polish. She speaks [00:25:00]

English very well. She really, she started to speak English here. Because in Polish school (inaudible in Ukrainian). That's really good education. Lessons in English. (inaudible in Ukrainian)

**Art:** Yeah. It's a whole different story with teenagers, right?

**Katya:** Yeah. It's not about kids, it's about teenagers (inaudible in Ukrainian) [00:26:00]

**Art:** Ukrainian diaspora now.

**Katya:** Yeah. Yeah. So, it wouldn't be easy.

**Art:** Well, listen, we're into this pretty deep. We're going to probably have to end it here, but I wanted to give our listeners just a sense of what you've gone through and some ideas about what you're doing professionally, uh, with your organization to help people identify charities that aren't scamming them, charities that are doing good work, and also to appreciate the needs that are going on now, what you lay out as being housing number one, and secondly, emotional support, that being, uh, to help deal with the trauma that you've all experienced. And in that we've also found out that you see the situation as they're being Ukrainians are separated. You have [00:27:00] those who are living inside of Ukraine, who may not see the trauma that they're experiencing, but they are nonetheless, and those outside of Ukraine having different needs. So, this has been very helpful, very enlightening, and we'll do these two, these two episodes. We'll do these as separate episodes. We'll divide these up so that people can absorb how you've answered these questions in two bites rather than one straight episode to give them the time to go through it a couple of times if they need to, to appreciate what you said. And again, I want to just highlight for everyone, that, uh, Katya will be doing a blog for us that you can see on Give.org. It'll be starting soon, and she'll be posting every two weeks to give us some insights into what's happening there and the charity scene in [00:28:00] particular, and the needs of the people that we can help with here, in the United States and other places where you're listening to this podcast. So, Katia, thank you for joining us today and obviously there'll be much more to come through your blogs. And for all of those who are listening for the first time, I want to thank you for tuning in to the Heart of Giving podcast and I hope that you will be a subscriber. Subscriptions are really important, because the way the podcast algorithms work is that the more subscribers you have, the more people who are likely to discover that the podcast exists. And we've had such amazing guests on this show over the last year and a half, two years and a half now. Two and a half years we've been doing this and I just hope that more and more people get to know about it. And the way that happens is by you to go on your favorite podcast platform, [00:29:00] whether that's Apple, Spotify, Google Play, or Podbean for that matter. And just like the podcast, like the show. You'll be a subscriber and you'll get all of the new additions as they come out each week. This is a weekly show every Tuesday. Well, and if you want to support the podcast financially, you can do so by going to Give.org and making a donation there. And I hope you'll follow Katya's blog. It's really important for all of us here in the United States and other places who want to support Ukraine to understand what's going on in the charity space because those organizations are filling the gaps. They are attempting to reach the needs of people in ways that we could never even imagine existed. So, let's stay on top of that and that's why I'm so excited to have Katya now join us to provide that insight. So, thank you for listening, and, uh, we'll see you back here for a new episode next week. [00:30:00]

**Announcer:** You've just listened to the Heart of Giving podcast with Art Taylor. Be sure to tune in next time for a brand new episode. To listen to our other interviews, visit [heartgiving.podbean.com](http://heartgiving.podbean.com). That's [heartgiving.podbean.com](http://heartgiving.podbean.com). Subscribe to our show on major podcast platforms. The thoughts and opinions expressed on this podcast are the views and opinions of the guests, not those of the BBB Wise Giving Alliance or Program affiliates.

**Announcer:** This podcast is for information and educational purposes only and is copyrighted with all rights reserved. This podcast is protected by Pod Bean's terms of service.

###