

## **Unique Children's Health Centre Inaugurated In Lviv**

The Anna Mazurenko Children's Health Centre was inaugurated in Lviv on July 11, 2014. It will be located near the Western Ukrainian Specialized Children's Medical Centre, better known as the Chernobyl Hospital.

The expertise for the Anna Mazurenko Centre will be provided by specialists who worked in long-term cooperation with similar children's health centres in Toronto (Canada) and Los Angeles (USA). The uniqueness of the Mazurenko Centre is that unlike existing centres, it will focus primarily on mental health problems of children, which is a very important but often neglected area of health care. The services of the Mazurenko Centre will be delivered in accordance with modern European standards, protocols of diagnostics and therapy in children's health.

Dr. Antin Kushnir, head of the Anna Mazurenko Children's Health Centre, who is also Head of the Medical Committee of the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program (CUPP) Alumni Association, spoke about the work and plans of the Centre as follows: "Thanks to the support of the Anna Mazurenko Fund over the past four years we have researched the needs of children's hospitals in Lviv, and western Ukraine and received financial support to purchase medical equipment, such as sophisticated incubators for neonatal patients of premature birth and birth defects.

Anna Mazurenko, a Canadian citizen of Ukrainian ancestry actively supported and helped many projects in Ukraine, among them the Dzerelo Centre in Lviv. She was dedicated to improving the health and living conditions of children in Ukraine. Today the Mazurenko Fund continues to assist in the purchase of equipment for children's hospitals in Lviv and other western oblasts. The Mazurenko Children's Health Centre in Lviv is the 3-rd phase of the program of assistance which to date has expended over 3 million Ukrainian hryvni. The largest scale project will be the Mazurenko Children's Health Centre in Lviv."

The organizers of the project in Lviv anticipate that this new Centre will provide professional advice, timely diagnosis, and thus offer effective help to families with children, diagnosed with developmental disorders and psychological problems. Families will benefit from the program which will be based on modern European and world evidence-based approaches of psychological assistance.

"The problems in the field of mental health of children and teenagers are common and very important. Their early detection and proper care can significantly help the family and the child to overcome the existing difficulties and improve the quality of

their lives. Despite the efforts of many dedicated specialists, Ukraine is far behind European standards of care. It is vital that the Mazurenko Centre be created in Lviv and operate on European standards. I hope that with the assistance of our governments we will seize this opportunity and create this much needed Centre. This initiative will provide information to our families, train specialists and conduct scientific research," said the Director of the Institute of Mental Health of the Ukrainian Catholic University - Dr. Oleh Romanchuk.

As the Mazurenko Centre will deal with the health of children not only in Lviv oblast, but also in the western regions of Ukraine, it is important to appreciate the establishment of this much needed Centre. Dr. Iryna Mykychak, the Deputy Director of the Health Department of Lviv oblast, stated the following: "Ukraine has attained associate membership in the EU which will require important changes in every sphere, including health care and medicine. Psychiatric care for children in Ukraine must be brought closer to western standards. With the establishment of cooperation with the Anna Mazurenko Fund, the Department of Health of Lviv oblast will enthusiastically support this joint project."

Representatives of the Anna Mazurenko Fund declared their support for the acquisition of an adjoining building to the Chernobyl Hospital. After major renovations this building will become the Anna Mazurenko Children's Health Centre of Ukraine.

CUPP Director Ihor Bardyn said: "Over the past 24 years the Alumni of the Canada Ukraine Parliamentary Program have been involved in civil society and democracy building projects. Today our alumni begin a new initiative, namely, in the field of children's health. The health of children today will determine the health and prosperity of Ukraine in the future. The support from the Anna Mazurenko Fund will depend on the transparent cooperation of the Ukrainian side and specifically Ukrainian government agencies. The Anna Mazurenko Fund, CUPP alumni who are active in the establishment of the "Professional Government" project in Kyiv will expect the same level of transparency and cooperation from government agencies in Lviv and Kyiv. I am optimistic that together we will succeed".