HONORING TEELA MICKLES

HON. LEE TERRY

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2013

Mr. TERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because I want to honor Teela Mickles for being an advocate for the youth of Omaha. She is an inspiration for change by creating opportunities for young people to remain active and accountable members of the community.

Teela's interest in helping people return to a successful life after incarceration comes from her own experiences. Teela was involved in a marriage where domestic abuse was prevalent and was finally able to break away after fourteen years. She was able to start a new life for herself and her five children. Her faith in God and desire to do what was right convinced her that she could help others to restore their lives as well.

Teela founded an organization called Compassion in Action in 1994 to provide a holistic approach to family restoration and community re-establishment for incarcerated individuals and their families. The program is designed to address the specific needs of individuals coming out of incarceration by offering them pre-release and re-entry services, advocacy and mentoring services, and transitional and independent living preparation for youth.

Currently, Teela is leading Compassion in Action in a $300,000 fundraising campaign to renovate the former Wesley House building in North Omaha and begin operations there. She is especially enthusiastic about the R.A.W. D.A.W.G.S. Youth Corps Gang Prevention Program clubhouse that will be in the lower level of the building working to replace the desire for gang membership. Teela is working around the clock to recruit a community-wide network of concerned families and community leaders who believe in the importance of investing in our children, rather than building more prisons.

Teela believes that the main key to success is prevention. She is convinced that the best way to prepare someone for the outside world after their release is to prepare them prior to their release.

It's my privilege to recognize Teela's commitment to building up our community and her efforts to bring it together.

IN HONOR OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF CLEVELAND'S RIDNA SHKOLA

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2013

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, Ukrainians have been coming to the United States since the Industrial Revolution when immigrants came to cities like Cleveland for jobs. Here they established communities with their own churches, businesses and social clubs. Many also felt the need to perpetuate the language and culture of their ancestral home. And so, starting in the first decade of the 20th Century, the first Ukrainian Heritage Schools were born.

The current Heritage School, ''Ridna Shkola,'' whose 60th anniversary we celebrate this year, was founded in 1953 by immigrants who found refuge in America after they had been driven from their homeland by the devastation of the Second World War and the repressive policies of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Because they had been active in cultural institutions in their Homeland, the Soviets who conquered Western Ukraine in 1939 targeted them for execution or deportation to Siberian labor camps. Also targeted were the ''Ostarbeiters,'' Ukrainians forced to work as slaves in the Nazi economy. Stalin saw them as tainted by Western influences and after the war assigned them to a similar fate.

Those who could fled—first to the Displaced Persons Camps of post-war Austria and Germany and ultimately to a new life in Cleveland and other cities in the U.S. and Canada. The bitter circumstances of their immigration reinforced the refugees' determination to perpetuate their identity and culture.

There is no exact English correlative for the term ''Ridna Shkola.'' Roughly it means, ''Our own native school'' and already in 1950, informal classes began at Cleveland's Ukrainian National Home in Tremont.

In the fall of 1953, educators and leaders formally established the ''Ridna Shkola'' Association led by Ivan Fur, a grocer whose real vocation was the Ukrainian community. In January 1954, ''Ridna Shkola'' was incorporated as a non-profit organization in the state of Ohio and joined the Educational Council of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA) which to this day coordinates a nationwide network of Ukrainian Heritage Schools. The first director of Cleveland's ''Ridna Shkola'' was the distinguished scholar, Volodymyr Radzykevych, author of the three-volume ''History of Ukrainian Literature'' and several children's books. For many years, Professor Radzykevych was the librarian at the Ukrainian section of the Jefferson Branch of the Cleveland Public Library.

Once it was established, ''Ridna Shkola'' met every Saturday during the school year at Tremont Elementary School before moving to Merrick House a few blocks away. Enrollment grew from 95 students in 1954 to 307 in 1963. That's when the school moved to Parma, following the demographic trends of the Ukrainian-American community to the suburbs. Since then, several thousand Ukrainian-American students have attended ''Ridna Shkola'' with more than a thousand completing the rigorous ''Matura'' which tests students' knowledge of Ukrainian language, history, literature, geography and culture.

From the very beginning ''Ridna Shkola'' was distinguished by a highly-qualified faculty: Hryhoriy Golembiowsky, Mykhaylyna Stavnycha, Olena and Marian Dub, Mykhailo Zhdan, Yaroslava Pichurko, Myroslava Mychkovska, to name a few. There have been scores of others over the past 60 years—all deserve mention, but they are too many to list. Directors (principals) included Vasyl Ivanchuk, Stepan Wolanyk, Viroslav Kost, Petro Twardowsky and George Jaskiw. Today, the majority of teachers and students at Ridna Shkola are from the most recent Fourth Wave of immigrants to the U.S.

Critical to its operation are the administrators, people who make sure children have books, collect tuition, pay faculty and resolve a thousand details. For many years, Lida Parc in Cleveland fulfilled this role, insuring a smooth operation. The school also depends on a solid corps of volunteers and, of course, parents who wake their children every Saturday morning and drive them to school.

The school is supported by the Ridna Shkola Society, a group of parents and other supporters who raise money, take care of administrative tasks and organize events associated with the school year—weekly classes, graduation exercises, annual celebrations. Today, Chrystine Klek heads the Society, following such dedicated leaders as Kost Melnyk, Vasyl Ilchyshyn, Evhen Nebesh, Evhen Palka, Bohdan Milan, Luba Mudriy and George Jaskiw.

It is impossible to assess the importance of Ridna Shkola. Many a college application and professional resume lists Ridna Shkola and the ''Matura.'' Untold numbers of Ridna Shkola graduates have gone on to careers in journalism, politics, government, medicine, law, business, media, diplomacy, etc. where they applied their knowledge of Ukrainian, as well as the lessons and skills they acquired in ''Ridna Shkola'' something their parents forced on them and they unwillingly accepted, only to later acknowledge how beneficial it all was. And now a quarter century after Ukraine's independence, it's clear the huge difference Ridna Shkola made not only in the lives of its graduates, in the Ukrainian-American community but also the positive impact on the country their parents and grandparents left under such bitter circumstances.

Best wishes to Ridna Shkola on its 60th Anniversary and all the best in the years to come!

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2013

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 603, I was not present for the vote due to a family emergency. Had I been present, I would have voted ''nay.''

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TOM MARINO

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2013

Mr. MARINO. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 583, I was unable to make it to the floor in time for this vote due to the hearing in the subcommittee on Reform, Commercial & Antitrust Law running over. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea.''

IN HONOR OF THE 45TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FARMINGTON MINE DISASTER

HON. DAVID B. McKINLEY

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2013

Mr. MCKINLEY. Mr. Speaker, this week marks the 45th anniversary of the explosion at Consolidation Coal's No. 9 Mine in Farmington, WV. We remember the 78 miners who