

Lafayette nurse practitioner volunteers his services in Ukraine

By Vera Kochan



Photo courtesy Ryan Anson

Nurse practitioner Ryan Anson records a patient's medical history with the help of an interpreter/medical resident at a community health center in Kropivna, Ukraine

When Global Care Force was seeking medical volunteers for service in war-torn Ukraine, Lafayette resident Ryan Anson answered the call.

Having been a nurse practitioner for nearly 10 years, he was eager to make a difference in the lives of many whose medical care had been

abruptly altered. Based in Olathe, Kansas, Covid Care Force was founded in March 2020, as a response to the growing Covid-19 pandemic. Its purpose was to mobilize health care professionals and send them to areas with critical healthcare staffing shortages. In 2022, the name evolved to Global Care Force, with the same premise of sending volunteers to underserved locations. Anson volunteered between May 6 to 19 in various areas of Ukraine. "This was my first trip," he explained. "I first heard about them [Global Care Force] in March. I volunteered for a variety of reasons. I studied photo journalism in school and watched Putin's rise to power in Chechnya. After becoming a healthcare worker, I gained a new skill set that if partnered with the right organization, I could help.

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Local music teacher

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McLeod grew up sewing, making many of her own clothes. She discovered quilt making while traveling through small Amish towns in Pennsylvania and started making her own. "Some of the first quilts I made were for my own kids," she states.

As she became more interested in quilt making, McLeod discovered there were several quilt guilds in the area and there was a circuit of speakers and teachers. "I thought I could do that, too," she says. To do so, she realized, she would need to build an inventory of quilts. "So I kept on making them, learning new things with each one I made.

"It's funny how things come full circle," McLeod continues. "Before having kids, I was all about fabric and textiles and I loved it. All these years later, I'm back into fabric and textiles and I still love it."

Trying to live as green as possible, McLeod specializes in making quilts from recycled fabrics, focusing on silk. "Textile waste is a huge issue," she re-

ports. "And I think it's really neat to cut up old clothes, curtains or tablecloths, old neckties. I just find old fabrics super interesting."

With the large influence of Asian and Indian communities, it's easy for McLeod to find beautiful silks, kimonos, and saris in local thrift shops. She says, "There's nothing I like more than incorporating old and neglected materials into new quilts." She teaches classes on how to make quilts from recycled fabrics "rather than cotton you buy by the yard at a fabric store."

McLeod notes that she has about 20 quilts in closets at home. She also has some on beds and hanging on her walls. "There is a limit," she admits laughingly. "My husband doesn't want to see them in every room."

A well-respected lecturer and teacher, McLeod is invited to various quilt guilds around the country, sharing her knowledge with humor and showcasing her beautiful, colorful, intricate quilts. "When I go to a guild to lecture, the audience wants to see what I'm talking about. I travel with about 12

quilts and huge suitcases," she notes with a twinkle in her eye. "I am trying to learn to make smaller quilts."

She also makes quilts on commission, describing one she made from old neckties that belonged to three generations of men. "It's a wonderful way to celebrate someone's life," she states.

Needless to say, it takes a considerable amount of time to make a quilt - "often 30 to 40 hours," she reports. McLeod creates her own designs, but uses traditional blocks, often using centuries old combinations of shapes.

McLeod recently completed her first book, "Patchwork Luxe. Quilts from Neckties, Kimonos and Saris," scheduled to be released in September.

Noting that the average quilter is typically a retired, older female, McLeod smiles and says that's another reason she loves this industry. "I won't age out and won't experience sexism. Women are so underestimated," she concludes. "They are a wealth of wisdom and experience and really know how to get things done!"

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