

A Ukrainian Summer: where to go, what to do...

Send your high school students to Kyiv Mohyla Academy

NEW YORK – Since 2005 the Ukrainian American Youth Association's New York branch, in conjunction with New York City's School of Ukrainian Studies (Ridna Shkola), has organized a summer studies program in Ukraine at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (NUKMA). The annual program, established for students interested in enhancing their Ukrainian language and cultural knowledge, has provided a top-notch educational experience as well as a unique opportunity for students to immerse themselves in the myriad historical, cultural and social offerings of the capital city and of Ukraine.

As the adult guides for the program, the authors of this article experienced first-hand the intensity and diversity of the program. The program was characterized by academic scholarship and achievement, hard work and the experience of student life in a leading Ukrainian university.

To supplement classroom learning, the program also included numerous field trips and excursions to the many historical and cultural sites in Kyiv and environs.

On a daily basis, the students had opportunities to observe and participate in contemporary life in Kyiv – the good, the interesting and the problematic. Ample free time was available to explore and socialize, and to form new and lasting friendships. The beauty of the city, with its wide boulevards, parks, gardens and architectural gems, proved to be a perfect backdrop for the summer immersion program.

The uniqueness of the program lies in its diversity. Students from different cities, countries and backgrounds, with varied talents and interests, gathered each morning for four hours of Ukrainian-language based instruction, covering topics including language, history, culture, mythology and contemporary political affairs.

The instructors also had diverse backgrounds – some were professors of NUKMA; others were distinguished guests and subject matter experts. Students were assigned to either intermediate or advanced classes, according to age and language abilities.

The professors, under the direction of Larissa Kadurina, the Kyiv-based NUKMA summer program director closely monitored the progress of their students. There was Western-style interaction and discussion in class. Homework consisted of writing assignments, and final exams were administered.

Each weekday afternoon was organized around a different "excursion" to one of

Kyiv's many interesting historical, cultural or natural sites. Students were given opportunities to explore art, enjoy music, relive some of Ukraine's history, and marvel at the splendor of this 1,000-year old city – the cradle of Ukrainian civilization. Each excursion was led by an experienced student guide who was knowledgeable and attentive to the interests and needs of the students.

In the words of Nataliya Surmachevska, a student participant: "The excursions all around Kyiv to all of the various landmarks were informative and fun. Finally, everything I had been learning about for years was right there, in front of my eyes!"

Evenings were mostly free and students could explore both the well-known and hidden corners of the city – its cafes and restaurants, shops, parks and public squares. It was a time to socialize with friends and to meet new ones.

On weekends, the students split into groups to pursue their various interests. One group enjoyed the beach and related activities at HydroPark along the banks of the Dnipro River. Another went shopping or to rummage through books and CDs at the Petrivka market. Still another went to explore and experience different parts of the city. Summer music concerts were abundant. It was possible to observe and enjoy the various political discussions and debates that are a staple of city life on Independence Square. Sidewalk cafes were filled and people-watching is a legitimate weekend activity.

The final week of the program was intended to be equally exhilarating yet completely different. It consisted of a whirlwind trip to a more remote area of Ukraine – far from the capital. Choices included western Ukraine, the Zakarpatia Region or Crimea. The students had an opportunity to experience a different Ukraine – more rural and less cosmopolitan.

It is difficult to imagine a more interesting and satisfying student program – one that is lived as a participant and temporary citizen of a great city in a young and dynamic country.

Simon Kazarenko summarized his recent experiences: "I believe this program is 'one of a kind,' unique in its liberal way of presenting the information, which was new to many of us. A combination of rigorous study, informative trips and freedom of choice for rest from the voluminous amounts of information gained each day is ideal for those seeking to know more about Ukrainian life and history."



Summer program participants during a visit to Yaremche in the Carpathians.

Much credit is due to the New York City organizers of this enriching program, including Bohdanna Wolansky, Peter Sabat, Mykola Hryckowian, Zhdan Lasowsky and especially the President of the Social Development Institute, Mykhaylo Kazarenko.

Mr. Kazarenko is the inspiration, implementor, and champion of this exceptional

project which deserves the highest level of community and parental support.

For further information about the 2009 summer program readers may log on to www.sdinstitute.org or call 718-372-0235.

– *Halia Hlushko, Stefania Kernytsky, Nataliya Lopatsky, Myron Melnyk and Ivanka Zajac*



Students in class at the National University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy.

KMA 2009 Summer Language Program for high school students in Kyiv

Halia Hlushko,
Stefania Kernytsky,
Nataliya Lopatsky,
Myron Melnyk,
Ivanka Zajac

Since 2005, CYM in New York, in conjunction with New York City's Saturday Ukrainian School "Ridna Shkola," has organized a summer studies program in Ukraine at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy NaUKMA. The annual program, established for students interested in enhancing their Ukrainian language and cultural knowledge, has provided a top-notch educational experience as well as a unique opportunity for students to immerse themselves in the myriad historical, cultural, and social offerings of the capital city and of Ukraine.

As the program's adult guides, the authors of this article experienced first-hand the program's intensity and diversity. It was characterized by academic scholarship and achievement, hard work, and the experience of student life in a leading Ukrainian university. To supplement classroom learning, the program also centered around numerous field trips and excursions to the many historical and cultural sites in Kyiv and environs. On a daily basis, the students had opportunities to observe and participate in contemporary life in Kyiv – the good, the interesting, and the problematic. Ample free time was available to explore and socialize and to form new and lasting friendships. The beauty of the city, with its wide boule-



Students of the KMA Summer Program at the open air Museum of Folk Architecture and Rural Life on the outskirts of Kyiv.

wards, its parks, its gardens, and its architectural gems, proved to be a perfect backdrop for the summer immersion program.

A unique and diverse program in Ukraine's cosmopolitan capital city

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porary political affairs. The instructors also had diverse backgrounds – some were professors of NaUKMA, others were distinguished guests and subject matter experts. Students were assigned to either intermediate or advanced classes, according to age and language abilities. The professors, under the direction of Ms. Larissa Kadurina, the Kyiv-based NaUKMA summer program director, closely monitored the progress of their students. There was Western-style interaction and discussion in class. Homework consisted of writing assignments, and final exams were administered.

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organized around a different "excursion" to one of Kyiv's many interesting historical, cultural, or natural sites. Students were given opportunities to explore art, enjoy music, relive some of Ukraine's history, and marvel at the splendor of this thousand-year-old city – the cradle of Ukrainian civilization. Each excursion was led by an experienced student guide who was knowledgeable and attentive to the interests and needs of the students. In the words of Nataliya Surmachevska, a student participant: "The excursions all around Kyiv to all of the various landmarks were informative and fun. Finally, everything I had been learning about for years was right there, in front of my eyes!"

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Sundays were more restful and started with a morning Divine Liturgy at one of Kyiv's numerous churches or cathedrals. After standing for two hours, it was time for a lunch at Puzata Khata or a similar American-style fast-food place.

In the afternoon the students enjoyed the warm summer weather by going to the beach or relaxed in their accommodations and watched American or Russian films dubbed into Ukrainian.

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