



# **Jersey High School Honors Student's Home Country, United With Ukraine Day April 8th**

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JERSEY - Friday, April 8, will be special as Jersey hosts "United With Ukraine Day" with several activities with a goal to support their foreign comrades.

Jersey High School is home to two exchange students this school year, Dominick Schrenk from Germany, and Kateryna Savienkova from Ukraine.

Gwen Brunaugh, a Jersey Community High School Math Teacher, challenged the community to join the school system in "Uniting With Ukraine" on April 8, 2022.

"We should unite with them as long as the Ukrainians are in conflict and even beyond when they rebuild. Let our student ambassadors inspire us to open our eyes to the issues that others face beyond our normal worldview. While we may not physically see those in need or those who are suffering, they are unfortunately still there."

Kateryna Savienkova is a foreign exchange student from Ukraine and of course, the Russian invasion and devastation throughout Ukraine have sparked great emotional grief for her. Her parents and family remain in Ukraine.

"On February 24, Kateryna's country was invaded by Russia. As terrified as she must have been being a world away from her family, Kateryna stepped up in a way that will forever inspire me. Kateryna's role in our school seamlessly changed to Student Ambassador, and I know her countrymen would be very proud of her. Kateryna went to work educating anyone who would listen.

"Dominick Schrenk from Germany has been in my Algebra 3 class since the start of the school year. "Dominick, who was also deeply affected by the invasion joined Kateryna's cause. They want to remind everyone that inaction is not always right, and oftentimes it is wrong.

"They want others to educate themselves about those in need and those who may be struggling. They have reminded us that we are all global citizens and we should all care about each other. Kateryna is from Ukraine and at first, was a little more reserved than Dominick which I equated to cultural differences. She was a great addition to our classroom and as we got to know her better her humor would make an appearance. Having two foreign exchange students in one in class has been so very fun!"

Brunaugh said before school, students and cheerleaders will have signs and flags as students enter the building. Candy and Ukraine stickers will be handed out.

**These are other activities that will be done throughout the day:**

- There will be a table in the lobby where students can buy bracelets, fill out a peace greeting, and buy raffle tickets for a Ukrainian Blanket the students have made.
- At 8 a.m., the High School Band will play the Ukrainian National Anthem in the lobby.
- During school, the Panther Prize Mobile will be visiting classrooms. The decorated cart encourages kids to answer trivia questions about Ukraine. Blue and Yellow themed prizes are awarded to students along with some traditional Ukrainian candies.

- During the third hour, the video that Dominick and Kateryna have put together telling Katerynas's story and informing the students about the war in Ukraine will be broadcasted to the entire school.
- At the end of the day, all students wearing Blue and Gold will be called to the gym for a group photo.



**The following is a full letter from Gwen Brunaugh, a JCHS Math Teacher, describing her relationship with the current exchange students who attend Jersey Community High School and what to expect on April 8th when the community comes together to celebrate “United with Ukraine”:**

*As an educator, I hope my students have an opportunity to learn from me. After teaching for 18 years I am very well aware that I learn from them, and they most definitely learn from each other. This year I am reminded that the community learns from our students as well.*

*Jersey Community High School has welcomed foreign exchange students for as long as I can remember. Mr. Cliff Kaminsky's discipline exchanges with a slightly rambunctious German foreign exchange student who was also in our band are fun memories of my own high school experience. I have had the privilege to teach and learn from quite a few foreign exchange students in my role as a teacher, but this year I know my foreign exchange students have opened my eyes forever and I am so thankful to have met these young people.*

*Dominick Schrenk has been in my Algebra 3 class since the start of the school year. Dominick is from Germany and has taught us some fun German words, showed us the German Happy Birthday Song, and explained to us that words like gesundheit that are occasionally said to people after they sneeze originated in his country. Our class enjoyed the small break from math and appreciated the difficult spellings of his language and enjoyed teaching Dominick some American slang as well.*

*Kateryna Savienkova joined my class second semester. Kateryna is from Ukraine and at first, was a little more reserved than Dominick which I equated to cultural differences. She was a great addition to our classroom and as we got to know her better her humor would make an appearance. Having two foreign exchange students in one class has been so very fun!*

*On February 24 Kateryna's country was invaded by Russia. As terrified as she must have been being a world away from her family, Kateryna stepped up in a way that will forever inspire me. Kateryna's role in our school seamlessly changed to Student Ambassador, and I know her countrymen would be very proud of her. Kateryna went to work educating anyone who would listen. Dominick, who was also deeply affected by the invasion joined her cause. They want to remind everyone that inaction is not always right, and oftentimes it is wrong. They want others to educate themselves about those in need and those who may be struggling. They have reminded us that we are all global citizens and we should all care about each other. Our student ambassadors are truly making a difference in Jersey County.*

*JCHS and the entire Jersey Community have rallied around Kateryna and are moved by her family's forced displacement. Bracelets (500) were purchased and quickly sold out. Students, Staff, and Community members have been donating to help Kateryna's family and others in Ukraine. Kateryna is so touched by the love she has been shown. She feels*

*a personal need to help others in Ukraine as well, and with Dominick and her JCHS family's support, she can do just that. On Friday, April 8, 2022, JCHS will celebrate United with Ukraine Day. More bracelets have been purchased for those who would like to support Ukrainians on that day. We will be wearing blue and yellow, the colors of the Ukrainian flag, and our band will perform the Ukrainian National Anthem. Dominick has worked hard on a video that teachers can show to their classes, and students are making signs and will be collecting donations in the form of change. Informational facts regarding the conflict and the country of Ukraine will be used in the form of trivia questions where students can win prizes such as Ukrainian candy.*

*I challenge the community to join us in Uniting with Ukraine on April 8. What's more, we should unite with them as long as the Ukrainians are in conflict and even beyond when they rebuild. Let our student ambassadors inspire us to open our eyes to the issues that others face beyond our normal worldview. While we may not physically see those in need or those who are suffering, they are unfortunately still there. While Kateryna was able to be a physical representation of someone affected by the conflict in Ukraine, there are conflicts all over the world and within our own country that affects the lives of so many. Let us all learn from Kateryna and Dominick and educate ourselves to others' needs and respond as appropriately and as generously as we have for Kateryna. I am proud of our students and proud of Jersey County for showing how responsive and kind we can be to those in need and struggling.*

**Always a lifelong learner,**

**Gwen Brunaugh**

**JCHS Math Teacher**