

STANWOOD CAMANO NEWS

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GROWING FORWARD

Part 3 of a 4-part series

Adapting to change

Area's past, present and future growth impacting people in different ways

By EVAN CALDWELL and PEGGY WENDEL
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Robin and Michael Carmichael used to live in the rural countryside outside of town. Now they live among increasingly dense housing developments in north Stanwood.

But they never moved.

They've been in their home on 9 acres for the past 45 years and watched the city grow up around them.

"We knew it would happen eventually. We never would have dreamed that three developments would go in all at once, hemming us in," Robin Carmichael said. "We don't feel like we want to move. I don't want to start over. Our three kids grew up here."

They are among the few hold-outs north and east of Stanwood as the city steadily expanded its boundaries in that direction over the years.

During that time, various groups popped up to decry the annexations. But, piece by piece, Stanwood grew — as cities tend to do.

The Carmichael property is bordered on the east and south by the Kottsick property, whose owner wants to build 127 homes. The neighbor wants to develop and has asked Stanwood to annex it, a request now before the Snohomish County Boundary Review Board.

South of that, Cedar Hill Estates is built out with 90 homes. Across 72nd Avenue, Chandlers Reserve is underway with 91 houses.

Now the Carmichaels are adapting by reorienting their property to the north, away from construction and toward the wooded part of their property.

■ SEE CHANGE, A9



Hundreds of children walk, skate and bike home after dismissal at Cedarhome Elementary School in Stanwood — something few students did when the school first opened in 1997 in the middle of what was farms and fields.



In Part 3 of our "Growing Forward" series, we chat with a variety of people to get their reactions and thoughts about the past, present and future of the Stanwood-Camano area.

Part 1 examines the area's population, demographics and housing trends.

Part 2 looks at the area's traffic and efforts underway to alleviate congestion and make streets safer.

Read the series at [SCnews.com](https://www.scnews.com)

ONLINE POLL

Each week of the series, readers can vote in a poll about growth with this article at [SCnews.com](https://www.scnews.com)

This week's question: How has your connection to the community changed?

Last week's results: What would best alleviate congestion on Highway 532 in Stanwood:

- 50% — Roundabouts
- 30% — Better-timed traffic lights?
- 20% — More lanes

EVAN CALDWELL / STANWOOD CAMANO NEWS

Stanwood group delivers humanitarian aid to Ukraine

By MARY JENNINGS
For the Stanwood Camano News

Stanwood teacher Nick Clack and three of his former students returned Sunday from a humanitarian trip taking supplies to Ukraine.

It was, at times, a challenging journey.

"We had about one and a half tons of supplies to deliver, and it definitely took much longer than we'd planned getting through customs and crossing borders," Clack said. "Fortunately, when officials learned that we were taking aid to Ukraine, they were all incredibly helpful."

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has been personal for Nick and Yulia Clack. The couple met in 2012 in Yulia's Ukrainian hometown of Zhovti Vody when Nick, who grew up in Stanwood, was working there as a teacher.



SUBMITTED

Nick Clack, third from left, helps unload goods after entering Ukraine across Slovakian border on March 10.

■ SEE UKRAINE, A5

Stanwood chief finalist to lead Bellingham Police

By IZZIE LUND
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The Stanwood Police Department's new police chief, Rebecca Lewis, is a semifinalist to be the next chief for the Bellingham Police Department.

Lewis is Stanwood's first female police chief and started on Feb. 1. The Snohomish County Sheriff's Office selected her for the position after the previous police chief, Rob Martin,

transferred to a Special Operations role with the agency.

The city contracts for law enforcement services through the Sheriff's Office to operate the Stanwood Police Department.

Despite her promotion to Stanwood chief, Lewis remains an active candidate for the



Rebecca Lewis
Stanwood Police Chief

Bellingham post. She is one of three finalists, the city announced Tuesday, March 8.

"I began the process for the City of Bellingham prior to being selected in the City of Stanwood," Lewis said.

She uses her maiden name — Lewis — in Stanwood due to not wanting to

change her uniform, email address and business cards with the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office. However, she is applying for the Bellingham job using her married name — Mertzig.

Lewis lives in Bellingham with her family and commutes to Stanwood for work.

Bellingham Chief David Doll retired in January 2021 and Chief Flo Simon has been serving while Bellingham Mayor Seth

Fleetwood and the Bellingham City Council have searched for new candidates. Simon has said that she plans to retire in May when a new police chief is appointed.

Fleetwood rejected all four finalists after an initial round of interviews in June 2021. This search is part of Fleetwood and the City Council's goal to reimagine policing in the wake of the June 2020 Black Lives Matter protests, according

to the city.

The other two finalists are John DeRousee, deputy chief for the Everett Police Department, and Dennis Flynn, commander for the Commerce City Police Department in Colorado.

"While I am going through the selection process, I am fully committed to the City of Stanwood and if I am not selected by the City of Bellingham, I plan to stay long-term," Lewis said.

Ukraine

FROM A1

"We have so many friends and family in Ukraine, and I'm in daily contact by either text or phone calls," Yulia said. "My brothers, who I FaceTime with, has shown me military jets flying over the town — things just keep getting worse."

Yulia, 29, moved to Stanwood 2 1/2 years ago and married Nick, 40.

With their strong ties to Ukraine, the Clacks felt they had to take action.

"We wired money during that first week of the war, but it soon became clear that many basic goods, like medical supplies, were running out," Nick said. "We heard that store shelves were starting to become pretty bare."

The couple decided to set up an Amazon.com wish list and get the word out through social media that they were collecting supplies, such as freeze-dried food, thermal clothing, headlamps and first aid supplies, to send to the war-torn country.

"After talking with family and friends in Ukraine, we knew that sending basic goods to Yulia's family to distribute would be a way to get things directly to the people in the most need," Nick said.

They also reached out to fellow church members at Stanwood Foursquare Church.

"At the beginning of March, we spoke at each service about the needs of all the displaced Ukrainians," Nick said. "I could tell everyone was moved and wanted to help."

The response was big. "At first I thought we could store donations in our apartment," Yulia said. "Everyone was just so incredibly generous. I knew we had to find a bigger place to put everything."

Kevin McCalmon, owner of Fofcee Coffee at Eagle's Landing Business Park on Camano Island, offered warehouse space.

McCalmon knew Yulia because she had reached out to him to learn more about coffee roasting. Her family has a small coffee business in Ukraine.

When the hostilities started, McCalmon immediately thought of the Clacks.

"I knew Yulia had family there, and I wanted to do anything I could to help," he said. "I offered the use of my space so that they could have a staging area to get everything together."

Last week, as more supplies were donated and nearly 1,000 boxes were delivered from the wish list, the Clacks came up with a new plan.

"We decided that the most efficient way to get these supplies to Ukraine was to take them there ourselves," Nick said.

He researched ways to get the aid into the country.

"I figured out that I



MARY JENNINGS / FOR THE STANWOOD CAMANO NEWS

Nick and Yulia Clack at Fofcee Coffee on Camano Island, where they stored and packed donations.

could bring 41 suitcases filled with supplies to Germany, load them in a van and then drive to where friends would meet me at the border so I could transfer the supplies to them to take into Ukraine," Nick said.

Nick's parents, Ron and Jenny Clack, and other volunteers worked nonstop getting things ready.

"So much has been donated, it's just incredible. We put out the word that we needed suitcases to pack the supplies in," Jenny Clack said. "By the end of the day, we had over 50."

They all decided that the plan would work best with Yulia staying to coordinate logistics with her family in Ukraine.

Nick got help with his mission when Gabe Johnson, Marko Jukanovich and Roman Savchuck decided to join him.

"Three of my former students who had heard us speak at church volunteered to go with me overseas," he said. "I'm just so grateful and proud of these guys for their selflessness. It would have been nearly impossible without their help."

The young men were eager to assist their teacher.

"We saw that there was a need to help people whose situation was getting pretty desperate," Johnson said.

"We welcomed this amazing trip as a way to make a difference for the better," Jukanovich added.

The four men left Seattle on Tuesday, March 8, and flew to Germany.

"After we got through customs in Berlin, we rented two vans to load with the supplies and traveled nonstop to Krakow in Poland to meet up with some friends who were going to help me get to the border in Slovakia," Nick said. "Gabe, Marko and Roman stayed behind in Krakow, and I traveled with my friends to cross the border into Ukraine on Thursday night to deliver the supplies."

Yulia has been in constant contact with her family.

"After Nick got the supplies into Ukraine, some of our friends loaded them into a van and took them to my hometown of Zhovti Vody," Julia said. "My family is a part of a local church that is a community hub for helping those in need."

Yulia said her family quickly started distributing

the aid that Nick helped deliver.

"My family and other church members are putting together backpacks filled with supplies so that those who are displaced by the war will be able to survive," she said. "They believe that they will be able to help hundreds of people with the supplies."

The men arrived back in Seattle on Sunday.

The Clacks support donating to international

relief agencies like the Red Cross, but said they wanted to make sure immediate aid made it to Yulia's hometown.

"Our goal was to get supplies as soon as possible to people further inside the country than some relief agencies have been able to," Nick said. "For us, the situation is so close to our heart that we felt compelled to help on a very personal level."

Yulia said she is grateful

to her husband and the Stanwood-Camano community.

"I'm proud of Nick and everyone who has helped," she said. "I am so worried for those in Ukraine — we have to do everything possible to help during this horrible time."

The Clacks are directing those who would like to donate or help to visit Facebook.com/yulia.chernomor for information.

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