

# The Damen Helpt Foundation continues to create miracles!



»» The tour to Mount Sinai

With the support of **Damen Helpt Foundation**, the **Help Ukrainians Association** and **MDEM Intl.** teams created an unforgettable Winter Adventure, turning dreams into reality for Ukrainian children!

This winter the rocket strikes and blackouts didn't ruin the holidays of our children. Instead of the horrors of war the teenagers enjoyed Romania's breathtaking mountains, rich history, warm hospitality, and lasting friendships!

Campers from the Ukrainian and Romanian teams of MDEM Intl. gathered in Braşov, Romania, for a unique winter camp centered on hospitality management.

Divided into teams, participants lived in a mini hotel, taking on tasks like meal preparation, cleaning, and organizing activities, all while fostering teamwork

and independence. Guided by coordinators, they created menus, calculated shopping lists, participated in teambuilding games and impressed one another with delicious food and excellent service in a friendly, competitive environment.

The camp also featured masterclasses, quests, and trips to iconic landmarks like Bran Castle, Sinaia, and the stunning surroundings of Braşov, blending education, teamwork, and fun.

**Sofia Lagun**, a participant, shared: *"Cooking and working in teams brought us closer. It was amazing to see others enjoy the food we made. Evenings filled with games and conversations made the camp unforgettable. Thank you to the organizers and the Damen family!"*







» Ukrainian campers at American Hotel Academy



» An excursion to Swissôtel Poiana Braşov



Our campers also gained valuable insight into the professional world of hospitality. They visited the **American Hotel Academy**, where they explored career paths in the industry – from studying at the Academy to becoming a General Manager of a hotel or restaurant chain. It was an inspiring tour around the academy, and it was interesting to see how the study area is organized – with real kitchens and even a bar, where hospitality experts give masterclasses.

During their visit to the 5-star **Swissôtel Poiana Braşov**, campers met the General Manager, who shared her inspiring journey from starting at a reception desk to leading the only 5-star hotel in the Braşov area. As a teacher at the Hospitality Academy, she told an interesting story about her career and provided valuable insights into career opportunities.

Ivan Seleznov, one of the team leaders, noted: *“Visiting the American Hotel Academy was incredibly insightful. I was impressed by their training approach, where students gain hands-on industry experience from the very first year. At Swissôtel Poiana Braşov, it was fascinating to see behind-the-scenes operations in a newly opened 5-star hotel. Speaking with real employees gave us an authentic perspective on hotel management, making the visit truly valuable.”*

All the activities of the week had the one common goal of the Winter Camp: to explore in reality the “service mindset” with focus on creating value for others. The program included follow up from previous camps on Damen history and business activities.





»» An excursion to Bran Castle



»» An excursion to Peles Castle



»» Campers at Dino Park Râșnov



»» Valea Cetății cave

The camp's schedule was packed with tours and excursions. Campers visited Bran Castle, and Peles Castle, the former summer residence of King Carol I. They took a cable car ride up Mount Sinai, marveling at snowy landscapes, and explored the stunning Valea Cetății cave. They also enjoyed the charming old city centres of Brașov and Sinaia. A highlight was Dino Park Râșnov, home to 120 life-sized dinosaur replicas based on the latest paleontological discoveries. Despite their busy days, the campers still had energy for skating at the open-air rink!

**Olesia Mandra**, a member of the camp organizing team, highlighted, *"During this great week, we've heard from the teenagers that their biggest dream is to see each other as soon as possible or turn back the clock to the beginning of this amazing week. It seems like a short life path full of dreams that came true, challenges that made them stronger, and insights that helped them to understand themselves. They are definitely not only the friends but after spending this time together—they have become like a family."*

All these great things happened thanks to the contribution of the Damen Helpt Foundation, the support of all Damen colleagues and sponsors, the tremendous efforts of the team of Help Ukrainians Association and MDEM Intl. team.

**Mykolay Latushkin**, Consultant of Damen HR Expertise Centre, contact person for Foundation Damen Support and Director of Association summed up, *"Inspired by the success of our Summer School, we launched the first Winter Camp, introducing participants to the world of hospitality through meaningful connections and hands-on experiences. Thank you to Annelies Damen, Foundation Damen Support, UNHCR, MDEM Intl. Team, the American Hospitality Academy, Four Seasons Hotels and the Help Ukrainians team who made this possible. Your support is key to making a lasting and meaningful impact. Let's continue building a future filled with opportunity and resilience!"*

**Dear all, your kindness, support, and sponsorship not only made the camp possible but also brought a miracle to the families of MDEM Intl. employees!**

**On behalf of MDEM Intl., we express our sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to making this camp a memorable and meaningful experience. We are one family, we are Damen!**