

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | 3RD MARCH 2022



PACKED WITH HOPE: PUBLISHERS, BOOKSELLERS & AUTHORS URGED TO DONATE BOOKS FOR CHILDREN DISPLACED BY THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Two independent UK publishers have come together to provide backpacks containing a selection of books, head torches, drinking bottles, notebooks, colouring pencils and other much-needed items. Gracie Cooper (Little Toller Books) and Kevin Duffy (Bluemoose Books) are behind [Packed with Hope](#), an initiative that aims to bring a little comfort and escape for the displaced children fleeing Ukraine.

Coordinated from Little Toller's offices and bookshop in Beaminster, west Dorset, a JustGiving campaign goes underway today to raise £75,000 to support the purchase of items and the distribution of 10,000 filled rucksacks from a warehouse in Dorset.

Gracie Cooper said: 'My children are constantly asking: "Could this happen to us?" We can't simply stand back and watch. The uprooting of families is heartbreaking, and we have to be able to help in some way.'

Little Toller Books and Bluemoose aim to provide at least 30,000 books and are inviting publishers, bookshops and authors to donate picture books and paperbacks for children of different ages. All books must be accessible to children for whom English is not their first language.

Gracie Cooper is mobilising a volunteer network in Dorset to help source, sort, pack and distribute the bags. 'Alongside the books,' she adds, 'we also need all sorts of other items, for both comfort and necessity, such as colouring books, notepads, head torches, toothbrushes, hairbrushes, puzzles, bags of marbles, insulated water bottles, warm hats, gloves and socks, pencil cases, stationary, hot-water bottles, and not forgetting the rucksacks themselves so volunteers can pack and send them overland to the countries bordering Ukraine, such as Poland or Romania.'

The JustGiving campaign aims to raise funds to cover basic costs of warehousing and transportation, alongside items that are not donated so every bag can be packed full of useful and lovely things.

'We know what we are doing is only the slightest of gestures. But what if something in that bag puts a smile on someone's face? What if a six-year-old could fall asleep listening to a bedtime story? What if a thirteen-year-old could escape into a story? We're sure that our friends in the publishing world will be supportive.'

We are extremely grateful to the Poundbury Cancer Institute in Dorset for lending us their warehouse to run our project from.

HOW TO HELP:

Donate to the [Packed with Hope](#) campaign: <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/packedwithhopecampaign>

We also have a Pay Pal account for those wishing to donate as a business or organisation.

For all publishers, booksellers and authors wishing to offer books.

For companies who can donate other items on our list.

We are also seeking volunteers, help and assistance.

IMPORTANT:

Please do not send anything to the Little Toller offices, this is a carefully coordinated campaign and dispatch information sheets will be issued once we know what we are expecting, we will need boxes to be marked clearly with our instruction.

Gracie Cooper: gracie@packedwithhope.org

Kevin Duffy: kevin@packedwithhope.org

Please contact Alex MacEwen for those wishing to donate items other than books

Alex MacEwen: alex@packedwithhope.org | 07803 049790

For press please contact:

Gracie on [07983 542086](tel:07983542086)

Kevin on [07920 359777](tel:07920359777)

Social media #PackedwithHope

Ends.

YELLOW BACKPACK 0-4 year olds | 7500 books, a bedtime story, a counting book, alphabet books, animal books, books without words, lift the flaps books, a colouring-in book.

BLUE BACKPACK 4-8 year olds | 7500 books, a bedtime story, simple fact books, colouring-in book, comfort story book, early reader books for a child learning English for the first time.

GREEN BACKPACK 8-12 year olds | 7500, bedtime story books, fact books, activity book, English language adventure story, comfort books, graphic novels, knowledge books

RED BACKPACK 12 -16 year olds | 7500 bedtime story books, fact books, adventure stories, European stories, graphic novels, non-fiction books. Small pocket sized dictionary