

ANASTASIYA VOVCHEENKO

My name is Anastasiya Vovchenko. I was born in Ukraine and moved to the United States with my family after the Russian invasion began in 2022. Relocating to a new country was a major step for us because everything was unfamiliar, but we have been fortunate to meet many people who have helped us learn about American culture while also showing interest in Ukrainian traditions and heritage.

I recently graduated from Delaware Technical Community College with a degree in Marketing and currently work in the hospitality industry.



I became involved in the *Photovoice* project through JFS and Professor Jonathan Cox, who originally led a cyanotype workshop. After attending a screening of his documentary about the lives of Ukrainian refugees in Ireland called “A Return Home”, I learned about the *Photovoice* exhibition he and Andrew Bale were developing. I was drawn to its focus on culture and identity and wanted to share what culture means to me while encouraging others to learn more about Ukraine.

Art has been an important part of my life since childhood. I have taken painting classes, attended theater and ballet performances with my family, and enjoyed dancing and playing guitar. I believe art helps people express themselves, process emotions, and connect with others. Since moving to the United States, I have found that access to the arts can sometimes be challenging, even though there is so much incredible art here that often goes unnoticed.

I believe it is important to introduce younger generations to art because it brings people together and helps create a sense of belonging. I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this panel discussion and to share my perspective on the art and culture of Ukraine and the United States