

## **COURTNEY ROBSON**

*Program Manager, DTCare Ukraine and Panama Operations*

Courtney Robson graduated magna cum laude from the Indiana University of Pennsylvania with dual bachelor's degrees in Art Education and Art History. Courtney further earned credits toward her recertification in Educational Leadership from Point Park University. She is vastly experienced in fulfilling dynamic leadership roles, program management, as well as teaching art and design.

Courtney's expertise lies in program management, project planning, working under pressure, and fine arts. She worked as a high school fine arts teacher, designing lessons and writing and implementing a multi-disciplinary art history course curriculum for county-wide use. She was an art director and director of programming, responsible for planning resident-camp experiences and mentoring and working alongside camp counselors to deliver a quality camping experience. As a skater resources chairperson and mentor, Courtney leads a diverse group of individuals and provides peer mediation support for conflict resolution. She also works as an art educator and special events coordinator, designing, developing, and implementing art lessons for children of various age groups and organizing and hosting major all-school events.

As program manager for DTCare's Ukraine and Panama operations, Courtney manages the regional teams, delegates tasks to employees best positioned to complete them, adjusts project targets as needed, makes timely and effective decisions when presented with multiple options for how to progress with a project, and develops long- and short-term plans by setting targets for milestones and adhering to deadlines, and writing and submitting grants to fund projects.

In Panama, Courtney oversees the educational program and Blue Garden elementary and preschool as well as manages DTCare's free medical clinic for Monte Lirio and surrounding communities.

In Ukraine, Courtney helped launch DTCare's art therapy recovery initiative that has grown to include 13 art therapists and 1 music therapist and covers three major cities in under 7 months.

Courtney's rich background in art uniquely qualifies her to manage DTCare's art therapy initiative in Ukraine to help at-risk populations, especially children, abuse survivors, IDPs, refugees, and veterans, receive the mental health care and support system they need to recuperate psychologically and begin the journey towards healing.

When DTCare explored the best method for accessible mental healthcare that would be beneficial for vulnerable groups and the estimated 1 in 5 individuals that are likely to develop depression, anxiety, PTSD, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia within ten years due to prolonged trauma as a result of the war, art therapy stood above the rest because art therapy, especially in communal settings, creates a safe environment to stimulate multiple senses at once, helping to reconnect mentally and physically a sense of self within the patient that is not always accessible with traditional one-on-one talk



therapy. This allows individuals to understand and acknowledge a deeper sense of previously avoidant feelings, memories, and unconscious thoughts, allowing the patient to be open to advancing their exposure to increased mental health care and additionally grow acceptance of the healing process.

Using art therapy to combat PTSD and facilitate healing from trauma, DTCare provides free art therapy programs, specifically open studio, small group, and one-on-one sessions in Odesa, Lviv, and Kyiv that Courtney helped implement and oversees. Courtney takes the lead on designing and implementing programs that are accessible and provide the best support to promote and facilitate processing trauma, managing the program budget, facilitating and connecting US experts with art therapists in Ukraine, and actively researching and exploring the best ways to expand DTCare's art therapy initiative to other parts of Ukraine.

Courtney, with the help of DTCare's local team of experts and international partners, is working to open additional art therapy programs in cities reporting high levels of mental health fatigue and PTSD symptoms among the populace, especially in the eastern regions of Ukraine, including Kharkiv, Kherson, Dnipro, and Mykolayiv, advancing the art therapy curriculum with an intentional focus on war trauma, PTSD, sexual abuse, and specialized art therapy practices for children for the improvement of the Ukrainian educational system to be more accessible and match with global Art Therapy standards, as well as increasing highly sensitive training for art therapists working with victims of sexual abuse, torture, and individuals recovering from limb loss, vision loss, and other physical injuries while also providing mental health support for therapists to prevent vicarious trauma.

Courtney's empathetic yet decisive managerial approach, strong background with non-profit and charity work, diligence, and artistic insight, are aspects that make her an essential addition to DTCare management.

