



# Supporting a Road to Recovery for Injured War Survivors

As a high school student in Ukraine, Vitaly was deeply moved by live broadcasts of the country's Revolution of Dignity, a series of violent clashes between protestors and state forces that led to the ouster of President Viktor Yanukovich. From that time on, Vitaly vowed to defend Ukraine, so a few months after turning 18 years old in 2018, Vitaly joined the military and was deployed to fight against pro-Russian forces in the Donetsk region. Despite being sent home after a sniper's bullet damaged a nerve in his hand, Vitaly resolved to fight for his country again, exercising on his own to regain strength and mobility. When Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, he was working in Poland, but within a week, he had traveled home and joined up with a combat unit. Several months into his service, his left wrist was severely injured by artillery fire during a tank assault and again when cluster bombs exploded in front of him after a doctor treated the wound. Although he was evacuated and received additional medical care a short time later, Vitaly's hand needed to be amputated.

## State-of-the-Art Care for Devastating Injuries

During his recovery process, Vitaly learned of the Superhumans Center, a state-of-the-art medical facility that provides prosthetics and rehabilitation to the injured. Founded by Ukrainian entrepreneur Andrey Stavnitser, who co-owns a private port, Superhumans treats soldiers and civilians who have lost limbs, hands, and feet by explosives, gunfire, and other weapons. Among the tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilians and soldiers killed or wounded since the 2022 invasion, thousands have suffered such disfiguring injuries. When he received one of the first two bionic hands provided by Superhumans in early 2023, Vitaly described himself as ecstatic and like a child receiving a toy he really wanted. He has since been training in the gym so he can return to normal activities — and possibly fight for his country again.

"The only way you can decrease the amount of pain you feel is really by working as much as you can," Andrey said in an [April episode of \*Ukraine: The Latest podcast\*](#) produced by *The Telegraph*.

## Creating a Pipeline for Giving

Through his work with the health care sector, now-retired Mintz attorney Stephen Weiner learned of Ukrainian nationals who were in touch with American donors interested in helping the Superhumans team. To maximize donations, the Ukrainians knew they needed to create a US-based 501(c)(3) organization, which would enable US citizens to make tax-deductible contributions. So, Steve reached out to colleagues for help, including Health Law attorneys Kate Stewart and Cody Keetch and Private Client attorney Peter Miller.

Working with Ukrainians taking refuge in a variety of countries because of the conflict, the Mintz team launched and incorporated a US nonprofit, Superhumans Ukraine Inc., in August 2022. To address the IRS's trepidation about approving a nonprofit established solely to make grants to overseas groups, the team drafted a compelling story focusing on the life-changing services the Superhumans Center could provide to people who had sustained catastrophic injuries. During the application process, Mintz Private Client attorney Susan Kealy provided guidance on technical issues. By November, the attorneys had obtained a 501(c)(3) designation for the US nonprofit, allowing eligible US taxpayers to take deductions for their 2022 donations to the charity.

## Tax-Exempt Donations Advance Rehabilitation and Healing

By the spring of 2023, the US-based Superhumans nonprofit had raised several million dollars. Although it is currently focused solely on supporting the Superhumans Center, the organization's mission allows it to direct funds to other charities supporting people harmed in the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

"It was very rewarding to use my skills and knowledge to help secure tax-exempt status for an organization that will have a profound impact on people's lives," Cody said.

## Pro Bono Team

**Susan M. Kealy**, *Special Counsel*

**Cody Keetch**, *Associate*

**Peter M. Miller**, *Member / Chair*, Private Client Practice

**Kate F. Stewart**, *Of Counsel*

“Mintz provides an incredible level of support to attorneys and professionals at the firm who want to make a difference in the world. I was honored to work on a project that will help individuals severely injured by the war in Ukraine to get prosthetics and other critical medical services.”

Peter Miller

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// PUBLISHED

October 17, 2023

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Pro Bono

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