

November 2009

20th Report on the work for abandoned children in Romania

The organisation "Samariteanul Milos" (Good Samaritan) in Ghimbav/Weidenbach near Brasov/ Kronstadt in Romania is a home for two groups in two houses. Currently it houses 16 children, some of whom came off the streets, some of whom were abandoned by their parents.

Dear friends and supporters of our work!



"I'm happy to be in Samariteanul!", was a spontaneous remark from Andrej, aged 12, when he spoke to an American couple. Andrej has now been with us for eight years, and he is not a child who can speak clearly about his feelings. His remark is really encouraging for us. It spurs us on to do our utmost for these abandoned and troubled children.

The most exciting event of the year for the children was the long awaited holiday in Germany. An English organisation covered most of the cost of the trip and made the holiday possible for us.

The children came in two groups to our house in Reken, where each group stayed for a fortnight. They were very impressed, above all by how clean the area was and how friendly the people were.

Whilst we were there, we visited a nearby zoo and theme park and a skittles alley of a local charity, as well as spending an afternoon with local supporters of our work. We spent two beautiful afternoons with dear friends, who were finally able to get to know the children for whom they have prayed, donated money and helped in other ways over the past years. This was a really powerful meeting for many of them.



Picture above:
in the theme park



Picture above:
The fairy story teller B. Piwodda
spellbinds the children.
Picture right:
Monica, Enikö und Ionuts.



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The situation in brief

Despite elections, the political and economic situation in Romania has hardly changed. No party has yet managed to rule for a whole term of parliament, and corruption is still a huge problem. Because of the financial crisis, foreign companies are pulling out of the country, causing the unemployment rate to rise significantly. It is mostly less well qualified workers who are hit, widening the gap between rich and poor. Our work is therefore, as before, desperately needed, as we serve the poor and abandoned in society.

As every year, there have been some changes in ASM Romania:



In terms of numbers, our work has slightly decreased. Some of the older teenagers are now more or less independent and no longer live on our premises, but they continue to visit regularly and receive our support.

At the moment, *16 children* live in our accommodation in two groups.

Our attempt to create an *external residential group* for the older children was ultimately unsuccessful. We have found alternative accommodation for the youngsters.

Lukas van Husen was with us as a volunteer. He was a great support to us with his happy and friendly demeanour and his reliable practical help. His successor, *Alexander Höbelt*, has been with us since August and is playing an active part in our work. *Mira Berger* was also an indispensable supporter for us. She came to us in a roundabout way and was only here for a short time, but because she comes from near to Reken, she was a great help to us during the holiday in Reken. The older girls were especially fond of her, and were sorry to see her go. We would like to express our great thanks to all three of these helpers.

Caty, our director, is also an extremely competent help in many administrative areas.

The work with Roma families in Dumbravitsa continues and is showing signs of success. We now regularly support some 43 families, and 95% of the children go regularly to kindergarten or school.

We also continue to help needy families and individuals in and around *Ghimbav*.

Our Children

Noemis Group

The constellation of Noemis Group has remained the same.

It consists of the five siblings, Cristina, Andrej, Ildiko, Stefan und Reli, as well as Alexandru, who joined the group at the end of last year. The children are continuing to show positive development, with varying degrees of success at school. It is good for them to have a settled relational structure as siblings, although they have had some difficulty accepting

Alexandru as part of the group.



Noemi (top left) mit Monika, Reli, Ildiko and Cristina (clockwise)



Alexandru is a bright child. He has already been in three different homes and two foster families, and has a lot of anxieties, which is understandable. When I recently told him that we would never send him away, he saw this as a covenant between the two of us. Since then, he has often looked at me conspiratorially and spoken about "our secret".

The first group – Sanda's former group

The biggest change for the group this year was Sandra leaving, but the children seem to have come to terms with it. The mood in the group is positive and the children are still very involved in the group's activities.

At the end of last year (as we wrote), five new children joined the group. Cristian only stayed for a short period of time. The other four "new kids" have settled in well and found their place in the group. Oana, 12, is doing very well at school, and is a friendly child. The siblings Casandra, 13, and Ionuts (the little one), 10, are temperamental and are therefore currently causing problems at school. They are all happy children though, who are flourishing at Samariteanul.



Oana, Lenutsa and Casandra



Lenutsa has also been through a big change. We wrote in some detail about her in our last update letter. The shy, timid girl with the short hair (left) is now a lively, happy child (right, with Oana). She is almost unrecognisable. She has a sparkling sense of humour and loves to joke around in a friendly, cheeky way. Our co-workers and her teachers just love her. One person called her "a thoroughly wonderful person".



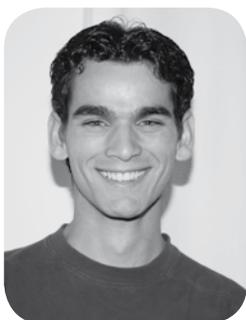
David, 17, and Radu, 18, have left the group. They found it difficult to keep to the rules at Samariteanul, so they couldn't stay with us.

David unfortunately turned to crime and is now in prison for robbery. It is painful to see how he failed to take the opportunities he had and has made trouble for himself. Radu is now with another Christian organisation, which offers young adults work and a place to live. The youngsters there are taught how to deal with money and hold down a job. He has made real steps forward and seems to be happy there.

The external residential group

Our external residential group project unfortunately didn't work. The ground floor of Casa Noua, our second house in Ghimbav, is occupied by our caretaker Mr Bogdan and his family. Three young adults, Marian, 19, Banu, 20, and Ionuts, 20, moved into the first floor. The goal was for them to gain their independence whilst still receiving help in their daily routine, similar to living in a supervised group. It turned out that they were not ready for this step. On the other hand, however, they could no longer be integrated in the fixed groups on our premises, because they want to go their own way and are not prepared to keep to the clear framework of rules that is essential for our younger children.

Marian has finished school and lives with Traian, who used to be with us, in Brasov. He has a job.



Banu (left) has had a job in a restaurant about 80km away from us. It was important for him to be a long way from us for his development process.

Ionuts (right) has now moved back into our premises. He didn't deal well with the break up of Emma's group or life in the external residential group. In spring he was so depressed that he attempted suicide. Since then, he has lived back with us, but has his own room and is not a fixed member of any one group. This has done him good; he has become more independent and stable, and now has a job.



All our former children come to visit us every now and then. They enjoy chatting with us, drinking a cup of coffee and visiting their old home.

The Project in Dumbravitsa



Family K. – the mother is a widow and has four children. They are helped by our project.

Our project in Dumbravitsa, that we run together with another private children's home, has further expanded. We now support 43 of the poorest families with 143 children, who either go to school or to the kindergarten that we have founded. The condition is that the children go to school or kindergarten. The teachers tell our workers immediately if a child is absent for three days without good reason, and the family then has to go for a week without bread. This system has stood the test of time because it fits the short-term thinking of the Roma people. A school qualification and the adaptation to a structured daily routine is a springboard into a better life. The system also prevents the parents from giving up their children out of necessity. As of October this year, we have given out a total of 10,660 loaves of bread.

We also help with basic groceries, washing powder, clothing, shoes, bed linen, medicine and school equipment. If necessary we help the families deal with the authorities and also with repair work and family planning. We have helped three families by building small houses for them. For many, our work together with the other organisation is essential for their survival.

A verse from the New Year song by Paul Gerhard expresses our desire for the needy in Romania.:

*Be a father to the abandoned,
Counsellor to the errant,
Gift to the needy,
Worldy goods to the poor,
And finally, above all,
Fill us with your spirit,
May he grace us here,
And lead us to heaven.*

The people who we help are abandoned, errant, needy and poor – materially and spiritually. We do what we can to meet their needs, but our share in this work is limited. We trust, however, that God's grace acts powerfully where we meet our limits. Our desire is that, through our help, the people around us in Romania and around you wherever you are experience God as their father and provider.

Please accept our heartfelt thanks for your support. It comes in so many different forms and is a great encouragement to us. God bless you for this!

With very best wishes from of all who work for the Scheytt-Stiftung and the ASM, the children and the needy people here,

Thuse M. Scheytt

Should your address change or you no longer wish to receive our update letter, please inform us. Thank you.