

November 2011

Report on the Work with Abandoned Children in Romania

The organization „Samariteanul Milos“ (Compassionate Samaritan) in Ghimbav/ Weidenbach near Brasov/ Kronstadt in Romania is home to three groups and currently 18 children, who either no longer have parents, or, for various reasons are not able to live with them.

Dear Friends and Supporters of our work!

Another eventful year with its highs and lows is coming to an end.

A highlight for two of our groups was, like two years earlier, a summer vacation in Germany. Sponsors from England and southern Germany covered part of the cost. The group of older children again stayed in Reken at the Scheytt's home. Mira Berger, a former volunteer from the area, organized a varied program for the children with visits to a nearby zoo and fairytale theme park, to the swimming pool, bicycle rides and bowling at a facility supporting our work.

Several sponsors from the area especially enjoyed meeting the children over coffee, whom some have sponsored, prayed for, or otherwise helped for years. For the children, the trip to Germany was a significant and exciting event they had looked forward to for a long time.



At the zoo and fairytale theme park



Bowling at the home of Maria Veen



Making pizza together

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The General Situation in Romania

Overall, the political and economical situation in Romania has not changed significantly. Groceries, gas and electricity prices are almost at a western European level. A sales clerk earns about € 250 per month, a craftsman about € 400.

According to a poll taken by a reputable Romanian institute, many Romanians are worried about their situation. 73% would advise younger people to leave the country, if they are able to find work elsewhere. 80% are concerned about corruption, wages, medical care, and the gap between the rich and the poor. We share their concern, because we witness exactly these problems and obstacles there. It is always the poorest and uneducated who suffer from the situation and who remain unaffected by positive developments. For this reason our work with these people is still very much needed.

Developments in our Organization – An Overview

This year we have taken in four new children and currently care for a total of 18 children in three groups. One child has found foster parents and no longer lives in our children's home.

Our work among the Roma in Dumbravita has increased slightly and continues to go well.

There have been several changes regarding our personnel:

Our Peace Core workers Christian Weller and Konstantin Reichert have returned in August after one year to Germany. They conducted their work energetically and with enjoyment. Their successor is Markus Strack, who settled in quickly and is an asset to our organization.

Ricki and Chuck Worley left unexpectedly end of 2010, a great disappointment for the children. Also Noemi, who led the group of Jocz children for seven years, has moved on professionally. We would like to thank her here for her dedication over the years.

Despite losing staff for various reasons, we also have found good, new co-workers. Jim and Sherry Black have been working with us since August. They are from the U.S., and have been involved in various church projects in Romania for the past 14 years. Our director, Caty, has been a friend for theirs for many years. The Blacks speak fluent Romanian and also have a very good knowledge of Romanian culture. Besides work in the church organization and church-sponsored building projects, they have always worked with children and youths, both in pastoring roles and recreationally.

In the beginning of November, Uwe Tesch began working for us; we know him since early this year. He has taken over Noemi's responsibilities and already has a good approach with the children. Especially for the three boys in the group we are happy that it is a man working as their role model and father figure.

Our Children

The Group of Jocz children

All five of the Jocz children in the group are still with us. At the moment we are unfortunately worried about Andrei. As recently as in our last newsletter we reported about his positive development, that he was opening up, turning to God and that he had become a constructive influence within the group. During this year he began to smoke, steal, and he no longer opens himself in conversations. We hope that we are able to reach him, so that he does not completely turn away from us and from God and make more poor choices.



For Alexandru (we reported on him in our last newsletter) the year has brought much change with it. After a short television piece about children in homes, in which he stated that he wished for parents, a married couple that wanted to adopt him contacted us. They had lost their own child years before in a car accident. Their first meeting went well, and since summer he has been living with this couple as a foster child. It was a tearful farewell, but Alex was incredibly proud and happy. It seems that he has done well for himself, because the parents love him and spend a lot of time with him, but also are raising him with clear rules and strong discipline. He had recently become difficult and violent towards animals and people, and we were no longer sure



whether we could continue to care for him in the group. He might do better as an only child in a family with a lot of parental guidance. For several of the other children Alexandru's departure was difficult, because they themselves long to have parents. Other children have clearly declared they would like to stay with us.



There is an addition to the group resulting from the initiative of the Jocz children. They talked about Vasile (15), a schoolmate who was not doing well, had learning difficulties, and always sad. They asked if we could take him in. We were very touched, that our children showed so much compassion for another and were even willing to make room for him.

Vasile was living after the death of both his parents with a guardian who mistreated him and made him work hard. He had to tend to animals, often until late at night, so that he would fall asleep in school.

Vasile was afraid at first to make mistakes. For example, he would not get out of the car, because he did not know from which side he was expected to get out. He is a gentle, serious boy and an incredibly hard worker. He motivates himself to work hard in school, and absolutely wants to make up for what he missed. Although at the end of the year he did not meet the required standard, his teacher did not make him repeat the grade because his work attitude and his development were so positive, that she assumes he will catch up on what he missed in time. Not one of our children has ever been so goal-oriented and diligent, and our psychologist gives him a very good prognosis. For us, Vasile is an asset, a great encouragement for our work and a good example for the children.

The Group of Older Children

The group of our older children remains unchanged in its members. It suffered somewhat when Ricki and Chuck left, but the staff was able to compensate well. The group, the same as the other groups, is now cared for in 24-hour-shifts by three female staff members.

They experience the highs and lows of pubescent change in various intensities and it is not always easy.



The New Group – The Young Children

In the last newsletter we reported on three siblings with whom we started a new group. After Marcela, Crina and Claudiu came Gabriel, who was taken away from his family by the child protection authorities. As a four-year-old he has, through mistreatment, had his arm broken several times, a dislocated shoulder and a large burn wound on his behind, from being sat down on a stovetop. At the beginning Gabriel did not speak at all; the child protection agency thought he was mute. In the home he has started speaking and is now a happy boy and popular with everyone.

To the group also came two siblings, Joana (9) and George (7),

whose father stabbed their mother to death. Both so far smile very little, do not talk about their past and are hard to reach. Our new Peace Core worker Markus has won George's heart (see photo at right); he is attached to him and has started talking more. Joana likes to draw and the psychologist has suggested encouraging her to draw specifically, so that she perhaps learns to articulate herself.



Our Oldest Children

We have mixed feelings about the development of our oldest children, because they have a difficult time standing on their own feet. Our psychologist has said according to statistics, about 80% of children from homes fail after leaving the home. This shocked us, but we hope and pray that our children go their way and make good choices. Our wish is that there are more facilities like "New Life" (see below), that see older

youths through on their way to independence. Until now our children have stayed with us until maximum 20 years old, and we currently have no possibility to accompany them as young adults toward independence, because the domestic framework of the groups does not allow it.

We see with our children that they often after initial difficulties do find their way. We still have contact with many; they often come for a short visit and tell us how things are going and what they are doing. Here are a couple examples:

Ionuts (22) still lives in Codlea and has developed his part-time job to a full-time position. He feels he is ready for it and enjoys working.

Radu (22) has also become more independent. After several years of assisted living in the organization "New Life" (we reported in our last newsletters), he now has a one-room apartment and has a job.

The Marica brothers, Sorin, Adi and Alexandru are also standing on their own feet. Adi even has his own company in Germany and seems to earn well.

Alex Tudose works as a car-body painter.

Roxana (20) unfortunately did not earn her qualification for university entrance because she did not attend her classes. She now lives in Brasov in a shared apartment with two female students and has a job. We hope that she makes it.

Traian (22) lives with his sister and her husband.

The Project in Dumbravița



A Romanian-German newspaper reported in November that 80% of the Roma in Romania live in severe poverty. This is also true in Dumbravița. Our project among the Roma there has been underway since 2007 and continues to be successful. This year we provided support to a total of 267 people in 65 families. They receive food, clothing, and supplies for daily needs as well as financial help for medical attention. The provision of bread is strictly coupled with kindergarten or school attendance. By the end of the year, we will have distributed about 17,000 loaves of bread. Thank the consistent and dauntless checking by our employee, Ms. Serbanescu, who resides there, the project is going very

well. When asked what her wishes are for the future: "I wish we would no longer need bread to convince the parents to send their children to school. But it gives me satisfaction to see how families find a daily routine through this system of support, which mostly benefits the children".

Let's hope that the education and improved care result in better work and living conditions in the future!

„We are all beggars!”

Ms. Serbanescu has said this about her work among the Roma, and there is much truth to this statement. The Roma beg from Ms. Serbanescu, she begs from us, we beg from our sponsors – but we all are really beggars before God. None of us has influence over the living situation into which we are born. No one lives in absolute security. Every one of us is dependent on God's favor and provision. How good that we are children of a great and loving God, who enjoys giving and who has mercy on us.

All this he does in various ways and you, our supporters and friends of our work, are part of it. Thank you so much for your help, whether through prayer, encouragement, word or deed, donations or your participation. It means a lot to us and helps us time and again, to help those children in Romania entrusted to us and provide for them.

I wish you God's blessings for the coming year, I

Thuse M. SchyBA

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