

November 2010

Report on the work with abandoned children in Romania

The charity „Samariteanul Milos“ (Good Samaritan) in Ghimbav/Weidenbach near Brasov/ Kronstadt in Romania is home to three groups, currently totalling 15 children. Some of these children were previously living on the streets, others were abandoned by their parents.

Dear friends and supporters of our work!

Cassandra has been in our group for two years and has made real progress. The under-developed, aggressive child that joined us is now a happy, confident girl. Extra tuition has helped her achieve the targets set for her year at school and she is popular amongst her classmates. They like her approachability and openness, and she has a real gift for making and maintaining friendships. She recently told us: “When I lived with my social mother (a kind of foster mother), I often spent the night crying and praying 'God, take me away from this!' I didn't know if he could hear me or not. But now I'm here – I never thought that I'd end up in such a great place.”



Developments in the work of “Good Samaritan“ in Romania – an overview:

The number of children living in our “family“ groups has remained roughly the same.

Three of the oldest children have left the group in the course of the year and are being supported individually. In their place, we were able to take in four new children last summer.

The work with the Roma in Dumbravița continues successfully.

There have also been developments in our staff situation over the past year.

Alexander Höbelt, who was here working for the Civil Peace Service, was a great help, especially in practical tasks. His successors are *Christian Weller* and *Konstantin Reichert*, who have both begun their service here with bundles of energy.

The arrival of Ricki and Chuck Worley and their two children from the USA was a big change for us. They have moved over to Romania to take on the leadership of one of the groups. We are delighted that one of the groups now has “fixed parents“, living with them twenty-four hours a day, five days a week.

Caty Guguianu has now been working as our director for two years. She works very competently, efficiently and with great integrity, putting her heart and soul into her responsibilities. She introduces herself below:



Caty with her adopted daughter Teresa.

„I feel privileged to be part of the team working for “Good Samaritan“, giving abandoned children a new chance in life. I started working for the Scheytts in 2004, initially as their language teacher. I first taught Mr and Mrs Scheytt, then later other German volunteers. Almost three years ago, I began working in the office, and I've now been director for two years. For me, that means serving the children more than organising and administering everything. I can't do anything about the things that the children have experienced in the past, and I can't promise them a glowing future. But I know that God can do both those things. And it is my task to teach the children this, and remind them that it is true, time and time again.

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The general situation in Romania

Präsident Basescu, elected last year, is still in power, but here you never know how long the status quo will last. No party has ever managed to rule through an entire parliamentary term, making extensive changes impossible. Peter Harrold from the World Bank points out that the politicization of the structures and the extensive bureaucracy makes the administration of Romania very inefficient. One example that shows this is the fact that 95% of the European funding made available to Romania has not been used – that amounts to billions of Euros.

Meanwhile, poverty in the poorest areas of Romania is increasing. Romania is one of the poorest countries in Europe. More than three million of the 22 million inhabitants have an income of less than €150 per month, although food and energy prices are almost on the same level as in Western Europe: a litre of milk costs €1 in the shops.

Approximately 350,000 children live in absolute poverty, 250,000 live in orphanages. More and more children are abandoned by their parents because they don't know how they can go on feeding them. The suicide rate is increasing, primarily because of economic hardship and a lack of future perspectives.

As in past years, we can say that our work continues to be absolutely necessary and serves the abandoned and needy in the society here. *(Statistics from the ADZ – Allgemeine Deutsche Zeitung)*

Our children

Noemi's Group

Noemi's group continues to be stable. It consists of the five siblings of the J. family, who have been with us for almost ten years, as well as Alexandru, who we reported on last year.

The five siblings are still making good progress through good and more difficult times. Reli, Ildiko and Cristina are doing very well at school, Andrei und Stefan have difficulties there. Alexandru has now integrated well into the group. Since he changed schools, he has been getting excellent marks and has become a lot happier. His anger, that often led to him breaking things, has calmed down considerably – we can see that he has experienced some healing in this area.



We would like to introduce you to Andrei, 13, from this group. Andrei is introverted and has learning difficulties. At the end of last year, he told me that he had begun to pray to God of his own accord, and that he had promised to follow God's way in his life. He wrote me a letter once: "Dear Grandma, I am happy and sad, when I do something bad, lie, or steal. But I want to change these things. I know that Grandpa sees us from heaven and forgives me.(n.b. not entirely theologically correct!) God is with us. Your grandson, Andrei." Since he made this decision, Andrei is more open and approachable. The children say that he has changed for the better at school and in his group, and that he is behaving differently to the way he used to behave.

Ricki und Chucks Group

The big group has seen a lot of change. In February, Ricki und Chuck Worley arrived from the USA with their two daughters. They have emigrated to Romania to become the parents of the big group. It does the children good to have a married couple there for them as parents for five days a week. At the moment they are still in the process of learning the language and the culture, and the children – who can already speak decent English – love them. Roxana has moved into a supervised flat, and Monica has moved back to her natural parents.

(Picture: Ricki and Chuck with their group and the new children)

Our new children



After the two older girls left, we took in new children.

Ioni (2nd from right) was abandoned by a foreign foster family who had lived in Romania when they left to go back to their home country. They promised they would adopt him, but then never contacted him again. He is now part of Ricki and Chuck's group.

The three siblings Marcela, Crina and Claudiu (l. to r.) arrived with us in October. At the moment, Crina is still "the child who never laughs". All three often cry themselves to sleep. Many of our children were in a similar state when they arrived with us, but they almost always improve after a while and start to play and run around just like the others.

Because we have found and employed Rebecca, a good new employee, we opened a new, third group in November, beginning with these three siblings. We already had the rooms and furniture for a third group on the same premises as the other two groups, so we didn't have to make any constructional changes. We are really pleased to be able to use our capacities and look after the children even more effectively.

Our older children

Now that our work has been running for many years, we also have teenagers and young adults, who can no longer be cared for in our "family" set-up. However, not all of them are mature enough to go their own way without help. We have accommodated these youngsters in different ways, depending on their own personal situation.

Radu, Banu and Marian are stable in their respective situations (see our last letter).

Ionuț is no longer with us in the main premises, but lives in his own, separate room with his former foster parents, Emma and Dan. They were the parents of our first group for many years, until the group was closed when the youngsters outgrew it. Ionuț has a tough job. This is a new step for him, in which he has some supervision but also his first taste of independence.

Monica and Mioara have both returned to their parents and are still going to school.

Roxana had more and more difficulties integrating into Ricki and Chuck's family group, and wanted more freedom. She began breaking rules, which has a negative effect on the younger children in the group, so she is now living in a residential group in Codlea, the next town. She is in Year 12, the final year of high school, and wants to work with children later. To prepare for this, she has already started visiting a children's hospital with Caty, our director, to deliver aid and play with the children there.



The project in Dumbravița

Our project in Dumbravița, a nearby Roma village, has continued as it began last year (see our last letter). Together with another organisation, we support 58 families, with a total of 155 children and 98 adults. We provide loaves of bread for their daily needs, as well as twice-monthly packages of essential articles such as washing powder, school equipment, medicine, clothes and shoes. By the end of 2010 we will have distributed roughly 16,000 loaves of bread. The requirement for this help is that the children attend kindergarten and school. If they fail to attend, the daily bread rations are withheld for one week.

It is now an exception when a child doesn't attend school, which is a real success for us. The children now attend reliably and over a long period of time, and we hope this will give them the possibility of gaining a qualification at the end of school.



Mrs Serbanescu with Maja Scheytt

The central worker in this project is Mrs Serbanescu. She was a teacher in Dumbravița for 42 years and knows almost every family in the village personally. When asked what motivates her to do this work, she smiled and said: "I want to help people in need. It has always angered me to see a person or an animal suffering. I have long given free extra tuition to school pupils, and some still come today." Mrs Serbanescu has exactly the right mixture of compassion, strictness and organisational ability, along with strong sense of justice, all of which is essential for coordinating the work with the Roma families. Her bookkeeping of the expenses is meticulous – she can always tell you to the cent what has been spent. She isn't deceived by the occasional devious tricks attempted by some of the families. She is one of the main reasons for the success of our work.

To close...

Andrei has a favourite song, that he can listen to again and again. It goes like this:

*Let me hear your grace in the morning,
For you, Lord, are my hope.
Show me the way of life,
Show me the good way,
For I long for you.*

The children entrusted to us are all broken, abandoned and often abused people. In the knowledge that God leads us in all things, we try to give them love, protection and advice. You all make an important contribution to his by supporting us with prayer, practical help and finances.

On behalf of the Scheytt Foundation and all those working for the ASM in Romania, I would like to thank you for this support and wish you all God's blessing for the coming year.

Best wishes,

Maja M. Scheytt

Invisible Pictures

Egbert Warzecha, from the board of the Scheytt Foundation, has recorded a new CD. The tracks are quiet, meditative piano improvisations on choruses and church songs. The CD costs €10 plus postage and packing. 50% of the income goes to the Scheytt Foundation. You can place orders by phone or email with Ingrid Donjes in our office, or via our website, where you can also listen to clips from the CD. Maybe a good idea for a stocking filler?



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