









ROMANIA ’09

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Having spent a week in Romania, I bring home many vivid and lasting memories of my experience.

The poverty and the living conditions hardly fit for human inhabitants stay in the forefront of my mind, reminding me just how lucky I really am to have my own bed to sleep in every night, not a bed to share with 8 other siblings, or no bed at all.

But most of all, my time in Romania is defined by the faces of the children I met, the faces that lit up upon the giving of a cuddly toy, the blowing up of a balloon, the wearing of my sunglasses or simply the receiving of a cuddle. These children, often with so little to smile about, were smiling from ear to ear because of the difference we were making just from being there. On my last day in Romania, I spent the day in the Tileagd School, a reminder of just how much the Smiles Foundation is achieving, whereby I got to help in art classes and play with children in the sports hall. But on that day I shall never forget the little girl who I spent only two minutes with, lifting her up and spinning her around before having to piggyback her to her next lesson. When we arrived at class and I tried to leave she was upset and spoke to her teacher. Upon asking what she had said the teacher replied: ‘She asks if you can stay with her. You are her friend.’

For me this emphasises the point of our Mission Trip to Romania. There were times, such as the night I returned from the visit to the homeless, a harrowing, heart-wrenching experience, where I faced a feeling of helplessness, where I felt I could never give enough to these poor, suffering people. But Kevin Hoy, founder of ‘The Smiles Foundation’ reminded me: ‘You can’t change the world for everyone, but you can change the world for one person’, and I believe I, and all of us that went to Romania have made a big impact upon many people’s lives there.

This was without a doubt the best experience of my life, the first school trip I have not felt ready to leave from and consequently, I miss it every day. I hope to be returning very soon.









