Newsletter October 2012

Dear Friends **Edition 8**

Welcome to the latest edition of the Smiles 200 Hope Club Newsletter. We are very thankful for your support to the work of the Smiles 200 Hope Club which covers 5 different projects all impacting the lives of families in Romania. We hope this report will be informative for you and if you have any questions or would like further copies, please do not hesitate to contact us.

FAMILY CARE PROGRAMME

The Cornerstone Project of the Smiles Foundation's work in Romania.
Helping a family through this project can be a life or death issue for them.



Why is it NECESSARY to have a Family Care Programme?

The social-economic problems, which are already bad in Romania, have increased in the last four years of recession, meaning many families from Romania cannot cover their minimum need to survive. They cannot buy daily bread, clothes and shoes, and cannot have access to medical treatment or support the costs of their children to attend school.

Social income, child benefit and other Government support received by these families cover just a very small part of what they need. Because of this, many of them face difficulties with the day to day living and live with fear for tomorrow. It is difficult for these families to have the resources from inside and strength to change their circumstances. All the problems they face lead some of them to make easy option choices and turn to alcoholism, domestic violence, school abandonment or even worse, to abandon their children into State care. In conditions like this, it is impossible for them to get through emotionally and physically and they need help from outside to survive and have **HOPE** for tomorrow.

The Family Care Programme was created to help such families in difficulties, to make a change possible and to improve their condition of living while showing them the LOVE of GOD and the HOPE available through Jesus Christ.



HISTORY of the Family Care Programme

The Family Care Programme was the first monthly support project that **The Smiles Foundation** established back in 2001 with several poor families from Oradea and surrounding neighbourhoods. Since Smiles was registered as a Romanian Christian Charity, this programme has grown and developed, with 5 social workers now working with more than 200 families.



We have beneficiaries from across Bihor County, especially in the villages where Smiles started to provide social houses. In all these years of providing assistance through the **Family Care Programme**, the Smiles Foundation created a good reputation in the community and started to have many contacts with the local authorities.

At present, the Cihei based Family Care Team (the Project Manager & 2 social workers), work with 120 families in more than 30 villages. This excludes the Tileagd Gypsy Community, Gepiu and Salard Projects where further families are supported under the care of additional Social Workers and Managers.

Plan for the FUTURE

There is a risk, that after nearly 12 years of work, the programme ends up in a routine: doing the same activities day by day, giving out monthly help and working with the same families each year.

A few months ago, during an initial research into the project, we found a surprising number of families being helped for many years, that are now 'addicted' to Smiles help and are actually fearful of life without Smiles, rather than the problems that brought them to Smiles.

Because of this, we are now preparing for a serious and significant process within the **Family Care Project**, which we are calling "**Back to Basics**". In the next 3 months, we are assessing all the families we currently support and are targeting at least 25% of them to be 'weaned off' Smiles Support by Christmas. At the same time we are receiving applications and reviewing new families living with desperate difficulties that we can begin to help on a specific programme of 6-24 months, dependant on the needs.



Our objective will then be to prepare the new families for introduction to the programme, with full sponsorship according to their need, during the first half of 2013. All current families kept on the project (the remaining 75% by Christmas) will also be assessed as to whether they are genuinely 'long-term' support needs and therefore no anticipated termination date, or whether a programme of intervention can be agreed within a period of time – allowing the Project to benefit more families at the Basic Level of support, rather than some becoming dependant long term.

NEEDS

There is a need to have a well defined monthly budget for social, material and spiritual support of the families we take responsibility for. We need commitment from our supporters so that we in turn can commit to our beneficiaries. Without that assurance, we do not believe we can continue the level of professional care and support we have become known for over the past 12 years.

CONCLUSION

Poor families have always existed and they will always be among us. But, by being willing to help them, find solutions and working together for their improved circumstances, can help them through their difficult period and see it pass, allowing for a better future. **For us to make this possible it's important we have your continued support and that of many new people to join us who have the heart to reach out to those in need and change their world.**



Prayer Points:

- Pray for our Social Workers who visit the families regularly and endeavour to guide and advise on the way forward.
- Pray for the many new families asking for our help. Many as a result of the Financial Crisis which has put them in difficult situations.
- Pray for more Sponsors to give regular monthly support that enables us to plan and budget the support for more families.
- Pray for the Medical support that we endeavour to provide for our families and especially the children, many of whom can't afford Dental treatment, Eye care or general Medicine.
- Pray for the financial support to make essential repairs to Housing, both Smiles Houses and the families own houses, as many suffer from serious problems, especially damp—which can cause more health problems for us to deal with.
- Pray for the families leaving our programme and the difficult choices that must sometimes be made.

Pray our help will have made a difference and provide Hope for the future.

Smiles 200 Hope Club

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