



*Sharing the Faith and Making Disciples*

# Newsletter June 2011

Dear Friends

Edition 5

Welcome to the fifth edition of the **Smiles 400 Faith Club Newsletter**. We are very grateful for your continued support of the projects within the Smiles 400 Faith Club which covers all aspects of the work with the Tileagd Roma community and the surrounding area. We hope you enjoy this update and should you have questions or require further copies, please do not hesitate to contact us. Our featured report is from a member of the **Educational Challenge Team** of her experiences on the Challenge and working with our friends in Tileagd.

Please also read, enclosed with this report, the important letter from our Chief Executive, Kevin Hoy.

## The Smiles 400 Faith Club is about supporting the projects in Tileagd

*'Eye-opening, challenging, awe-inspiring, admirable and over-whelming'* are just some of the words and phrases this year's Educational Challenge team used to describe their experiences.

The team was made up of 13 excited teachers from the UK, plus the Educational Advisor, Stephen Woodward, and Cristina Popescu, Smiles Mission Organiser. Together we embarked on a 3-day trip to take part in the fifth Educational Challenge.

The programme included visits to the **Tileagd Gypsy Community** and the children's homes, lesson observations and the opportunity to engage in teaching and learning activities with the children. The children enjoyed a wide range of practical, creative activities in subjects such as Art, Design Technology, Puppetry, PE and Mathematics. The children had lots of fun and so did we. We also spent a fabulous afternoon celebrating **'Children's Day'** - beginning with some of the groups making sandwiches with the team and ending in fun and games galore in the basking sunshine.

It is also fair to say that both the Romanian and UK teachers treasured the opportunity to have professional dialogue and share good practice. It seems kids really are similar the world over!

Visits to the Barrage Community and the Homeless of Oradea brought a very real, heart-wrenching dimension to the experience. This served to provide an insight into reality of the situations where Smiles strives to improve the quality of life for the marginalised in society - and in some cases the homes of some of the children who attend the school. All of us were moved and inspired by this aspect of the Foundation's work.



Tileagd Community Complex

A regular Educational Challenger said, *'It is always good to visit friends - and in the Tileagd community there are so many. The promotion and evidence of love, respect and trust make Tileagd an inspiring place to be. The vision for the future is walked and talked daily. My admiration for the team has risen again. Each time I return I hope to give a little of myself, but know I receive so much in ideas and ideals. The challenges are evident and also it is clear that every visitor faces challenges. I feel honoured to be a small part of making a difference to the children here. The experience continues to make a difference to me.'*



One of the team summed up her trip beautifully, *'It really hit me by day three, thinking that these beautiful, intelligent and loving children would be missing out on so many opportunities if it wasn't for the work of Smiles - and even writing about it brings a lump to my throat. The warmth and love within that school has touched my heart, the teachers are an absolute inspiration. Their love and commitment, along with a structure that works, allows the children to feel safe and to develop.'*



Another team member commented, *'It is amazing how much has been done and is being done to improve the quality of life for such a small community, starting with the basics in education as well as health and well being. Having the chance to go on the Educational Challenge was extremely welcomed and I am so happy I did it.'*



Are you up for a life-changing, perspective-altering challenge? We look forward to welcoming you to Romania, to Smiles and to Tileagd - , if you work in Education, join us on the next Educational Challenge!

**Sophie Clements: A Challenger's Report on the Challenge.**

## Prayer Points:

1. Pray for the Nursery, Kindergarten and School. For the impact education is having on the lives of the children in Tileagd.
2. Pray for the Medical Services of the Tileagd Community Complex, including Dental and Optometry.
3. Pray for the Gypsy Community for their continued adjustment to a different life from the past and the support they need to succeed.
4. Pray for the provision of funds to meet the ongoing needs of the Tileagd Community, particularly to cover the current deficit for the School and Nursery.
5. Pray for the ministry at Tileagd Community Church especially the children's work, youth work and family ministry. Pray for decisions for Christ and transformed lives.
6. Pray for the unity and co-ordination of the ministry team members at Tileagd.

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