Smiles 200 Hope Club

Giving Hope to Families living in poverty

Newsletter October 2009

Dear Friends **Edition 2**

Welcome to the second 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 6 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.

Special Feature:

I remember once passing a little boy on my street who was talking to his mum. She was trying to teach him the respect he should have for the elderly and the lessons we can learn from our seniors. She explained to the boy that we need the wisdom and the experience of these people. They are important for us.



"*I don't want to be old! Never! They are so weak, they are so sick, they are always lonely…*" Said the boy.

I was so shocked. Not too many of us would take enough time to think so deep about this cruel reality. It is unfair, it is sad and scary but for many of these old people in Romania – it is life. **Weak, sick and lonely** - three words to describe some of the elderly the Smiles Foundation cares for through the 200 Club each month.

Another day, I stopped to ask an old lady, begging at the tram station, why she as crying?
I couldn't just pass by and pretend that I didn't see this emotionally moving image. I couldn't prevent myself from the natural human reaction. She turned to me, surprised that somebody cared, and looking in my eyes, with her last piece of dignity, she said: "*I am ashamed…* After working for a lifetime, raising their children, even their grandchildren sometimes, our seniors are forgotten and falling into public disgrace. A well known Romanian poem says: "they are a burden for us and they know it is so"…

"Can you please help me get out of this? I can't handle it anymore.."

Since 2007, the Family Care Social Worker started to visit **Mr Alexiu**. He was living with his sister, in terrible conditions, extremely weakened by sickness and poverty. The closest relative was their nephew, who was aggressive and sadly an alcoholic. Several times we received word that Mr Alexiu was beaten for his pension money, by the very person who should take care of him, as the nephew will receive ownership of the house in due course.



Some of our Mission Trip visitors could not cope with the terrible smell and the darkness they found in this home. With every day that passes it became harder and harder for Mr Alexiu to take care of himself, his sister and the house - to cook and clean for two people. Even moving around was an adventure and the shaking hands refused to cooperate with his efforts. The worst fact of all was the loneliness and the feeling that human kindness and love had completely disappeared from this earth. Our visits were always received with enthusiasm. He always begged us: "***Can you please help me get out of this? I can't handle it anymore...***" We always promised that next year we may be able to do more, possibly being able to offer him a place in our new Nursing Home facility. But one year can be a lifetime at this age… And our friend got sadder and discouraged with every day.

Of course, our Nursing Home hasn't started construction yet and we wait for more donations to begin this exciting and much needed project.

It is well known that Smiles has a dream to help this category of people. We want to give them the opportunity to live a decent life, in a loving - caring environment, where they receive proper food and the medicine they need so bad. This is why we started the campaign to build the Nursing Home facility and we hope that people like Mr Alexiu won't have to wait too long. Like so many others, he was constantly in danger and virtually impossible to survive, so we have now placed Mr Alexiu in a private nursery home. Each month, Smiles pays the fees to ensure he can be cared for and receive a good treatment. We continue to visit him and encourage him, as some of his best friends.

One was saved. For him, suffering is now less painful and life is more decent. Many others are waiting, sad and lonely in their homes. We cannot find a similar place for all of them, so we must build our own. We have the dream. We are anxious to see the day when Smiles will open wide the door of the Nursing Home for these people. Please help us with a special Fund-raiser towards the Home or with encouraging others to make a regular monthly gift to the 200 Club to enable us to care for the elderly in their homes until we've built the one they are all waiting for!

Last time we went to see Mr Alexiu we left him smiling, clean and well fed.
We changed the world for someone. Can you help us Change the World for others like him?

Club Project Updates:

- **Family Care Project**
  Marian Zaharia was appointed in December with a main r
- **Medical Care**
  Dana Zaharia, Senior Nurse Practitioner, joins with
- **Sack of Smiles**
  Through December 2008 and into January 2009 we were a
- **Elderly Care**
  Whilst we have launched a Capital Project for the Nursing H
- **Homeless**
  Marian's experience with the Homeless has opened up
- **Crisis Care**
  A new project area aimed to provide support in crisis

Prayer Points:

1. Pray for the families that Smiles visits monthly that they would understand the reason for our visits.
2. Pray for our social workers, doctor, nurse and all the staff involved on a daily basis with the families.
3. Give thanks for the support given for the Sack of Smiles project and the opportunities to share the Gospel through the giving of these gifts.
4. Pray for the funding to enable Smiles to extend the work amongst the elderly to include a day centre in Tileagd and the residential care home in Cihei.
5. Pray for wisdom in the contacts with the Homeless in and around Oradea to help these families and individuals.
6. Pray for guidance and support for the newer aspects of the Hope Club through the Crisis Care for pregnant teenagers and families with severely disabled children.






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