Giving Hope to Families living in poverty

Newsletter October 2010

Dear Friends **Edition 4**

Welcome to the fourth 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.

Offering HOPE to the Family in Need, the Sick and the Homeless

The Homeless Project has become a passionate part of the Smiles 200 Club these past couple of years. Homelessness is a problem in most cities around the world but we have been horrified at the conditions people live in when 'Homeless' in Romania.

The Smiles Foundation has been reaching out to the Homeless for many years. **Marius Pop**, our Family Care Social Worker for nearly 6 years has done a marvellous job establishing contact in the early days and after a short break personally from the project, has now picked up the reigns again and is making a great impact within the 'homeless community' by showing the 'Homeless' we really do care.



For the past 5 years, often as part of Mission Trips schedules, we have organised visits into the City to offer help and friendship to the Homeless and as a result, the project has become a popular, as well as heart-breaking, experience.

As the World Recession has taken its toll on everyone these past 2 years, we find those on the bottom run of society's ladder have suffered worse than most, especially in a society where social support is virtually zero for those who have lost everything and struggle to stay alive in make-shift huts or even underground sewers. **Scratched and bitten by the rats who share this extraordinary place called 'Home'.**

For example, **Veronica** Szocs is a lady who has lived on the street for more than 10 years. She lives with a man named **Zsolt** who is her companion for more than 8 years. Zsolt is 35 and Veronica is 32. They grew up in an orphanage and they are working in the open market for the moment and they get a small payment for a very hard job. They live in a small improvised shed with another couple. Two weeks ago, Veronica gave birth to a girl and is in the hospital, they discovered she has HIV. The Smiles staff and social workers cooperated with the hospital staff to try to find a solution for them so we could sort out some treatment and short term help, but their need is a home and this is really urgent.

Whilst Smiles has helped for years with Food, Clothes, Medicine and Blankets – even Tents and Sleeping Bags of late –we have wanted to do more for so long and believe we have struck the right chord with the **'Container Challenge'.**





The project has captured the hearts and minds of many in the UK and we hope to see the first in America within the next few months.

The Container Challenge Explained ...

The essence of the project is simple:

1. Secure by donation or purchase a **40ft Shipping Container** in good condition particularly the metal work which is most important to be water-proof.
2. Organise a community wide campaign to collect supplies detailed on the Smiles **WISHLIST** and steadily fill the Container to capacity with much needed and very valuable supplies for the work in Romania and for distribution through all our Projects.
3. **Fund-raise** sufficient to ship the Container to Smiles Romania.
4. Then, if you really want to complete the process – Fund-raise or source a grant for converting the **Shipping Container into a Home!!**

Now that sounds amazing, but we've done it a few times. It costs approximately £5,000 / $7,500 to complete the conversion and we already have three 40ft Containers that are ready to house 'Homeless' families.

The Smiles Foundation is also discussing with the Romanian State office in Oradea a ***Partnership Agreement*** for us to help the City with the Homeless Crisis. The State would provide Land for us to locate the Containers on which would have Water, Electricity and Sewage supply.

Our initial target is to locate 10 x 40ft Containers on the land which could house up to 80 people, thereby moving them from the Streets. We would also provide counselling and support to the beneficiaries in an attempt to rehabilitate and reintegrate where possible into regular society.

This is another 'God Sized' challenge for which we need lots of support. If you can help with a monthly or single gift for the 'Homeless Project' – please check the website or contact the office.

If you are interested in taking on a 'Container Challenge' in your area – please contact the office or e-mail: info@thesmilesfoundation.org

If you can help with transforming a Shipping Container into a Home for the Homeless – contact us and we can work together – sharing God's Love for the desperate currently living on Romania's streets.

Thank you for your concern and support.

The Smiles Foundation

Prayer Points:

1. Pray for the families leaving our programme. That the help we have given them will enable them to live better on their own in the future.
2. Pray for the many new families asking for our help. Many as a result of the Financial Crisis which has put them in very difficult situations.
3. Pray for more Sponsors for regular monthly support that enables us to plan and budget the support for more families.
4. Pray for the Construction Campaign of the 'Home for the Elderly'. Lots of support is needed and fund-raising events to build the Fund so that Construction can begin this year!
5. Pray for the sick who can't afford medical treatment and that Smiles will continue to have sufficient means to meet all the needs that confront us.
6. Pray for the Land needed to locate our Containers for housing the Homeless. We are building great relationships with the Homeless community, but need to offer real solutions to restore their Hope.







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