OUTREACH PILLAR *Report*

AUGUST 2024

The Outreach Pillar of The Smiles Foundation is all about sharing with people God's Kingdom and the ways He can change their lives.

Welcome to Smiles Outreach Report, the second issue of these quarterly updates on what is going on with the various activities we run daily, here in Romania. The articles you'll read will present some of our very busy Summer activities, particularly with visits out there on the field, accompanied by our visitors from abroad, coming over through the Smiles Mission Trip Programme.



The most important priority that occupies our mind is to achieve what we need to achieve day by day, but equally to provide a good and interesting experience for our guests. So, a lot of driving around, a lot of people to see and interact with, a lot of energy to be invested! And all that under a tremendous temperature of almost 40ºC/104ºF, in the shade. This is a seriously demanding endeavour, but we've all been ready to do it and we were definitely impressed with the commitment and hard work of the teams, they really did excellent in all tasks, including those outdoor practical ones!

So, enjoy our report and as always, feel free to write to us, for even more specific information, as you feel inclined.

Adi Matiș, *Director of Smiles Outreach Pillar*

COMMUNITIES *update*

Homeless Community is one of our long-standing interests, as we have always wanted to do something for those who lost it all! Even before the Container Village (established in 2010) we have visited and supported a good number of homeless people. But once it was up and running, soon we gathered about 50-60 people who became regular.

Today, the Container Village is made into a day-centre open for those who use the Night Shelter services - run by the Mayor, but during the day-time, they need to be elsewhere.

So, a few weeks ago, we thought why not do something very special, like a barbecue for our friends...? Sure enough, the interest for a proposal was huge, and so we did it. We had the support of the American team from Madison Christian Church Ohio, and together we covered that part of the city in a sublime smell, for about three hours. It was excellent and once again, the Romanian "mici" were the stars of the show.

We definitely have to do this again, before too long!







FIELD VISIT *updates*

Not all is nice and rosy in our work. Often times, a way to help is doing cleaning for people who cannot take care of that anymore, like Ciprian. He has a very severe scoliosis and due to an epileptic seizure, he fell and broke some vertebrae. He then went through a surgery, but he was left with great pain, very little mobility and can hardly do anything.







We had a wonderful team of mission visitors who accepted the challenge, and what a challenge that was, to put some order in the little room where he lives. Thank you so much for your effort, the difference after finishing was huge! And Ciprian was very grateful for having his place so much more presentable, and for avoiding eviction that would have soon come!

PILLAR *updates*

Overall, the Outreach Pillar has done well in the last three months. Obviously, a major element in our work for the Summer months is the Mission Trip season, which opens up a lot of possibilities for various work that is only possible when extra forces are added.

That's why we are very happy to go out with our guests and usually they are very interested and excited to get involved - sometimes they do not realize how difficult a task or another might be, but they are very generous with their support and energy, and so a lot gets to be done quickly. We like that!

There are of course also some various administrative tasks, as well as some less impressive activities, like taking people to doctor appointments or submitting some papers to the authorities, or something along these lines. All of these we need to make sure are done, even if Mission Trip visitors couldn't help us much with those.

But no doubt, this period is more about going out and presenting to the teams the reality that we learned ourselves about the people we work with, as well as trying to find the support for their needs and ways to progress them further. Thank you all of those who are on our side on this!



This is just a mention of something we have already done about three months ago, but still worth placing a little picture here. Cristina and her family received a washing machine, something they had asked about for a while, and by the generosity of our supporters, they can now keep their children clean and tidy. Thank you for making this possible!

LIFE STORIES SERIES



Today we want to present Samantha to you. She lives in Rapa, being part of our support programme for a few years. She is one of the sisters in the larger family which today has formed the Rapa Community.

Samantha was married to Petrisor Covaci, who unfortunately died earlier this year, having a tumor in his stomach. They had three children together, but they lost the first one very soon after being born, due to terrible living conditions, and that was actually what prompted us to launch the Rapa Housing project, back in 2016.

As life is very tough for the people in Rapa, after Petrisor died, it only got more and more difficult for Samantha. She is not very well equipped to handle the challenges of raising two young children, and having lost her husband's support - who used to bring in some cash as day-work payment - Samantha ended up with building a lot of debt at the local store. Of course, she needs to provide food for her children, but not having any income at all does not help her situation. The rest of the family is supportive to some extent, but one thing we noticed in Rapa for many years, is that most of the time, it is about "each one on their own"!



We decided we'll try to get her some support from the State that she might be entitled to get, and for that we will do the necessary procedure, but in the meantime we will need to see what we can do to help the family out of their debts and see what is the best perspective for moving forward.

Please pray for Samantha and her two daughters, they are still very much in grief and they need to have their hearts touched by God, to be healed and recover.

Volunteer's Corner



Diana Dume is a very committed Christian lady who decided to make her skills available for the people in need. She feels that God blessed her a lot and so she wants to be a blessing for others too!

She comes regularly with us on the field and does hair work, trimming, cutting, arranging, for all beneficiaries that want or need it.

We are grateful for her commitment and now, that she does this for almost a year, we say thank you and pray that God will reward her generosity!

Prayer Points

"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:16

When we go through some good times, we tend to disregard anything that might be unpleasent or harmful. Equally, when tough times come, we might feel they will never leave us.

So, please pray for:

1. Focus and determination in doing God's work, no matter how we feel about it, or how easy or difficult it may seem.
2. Our trust and confidence to always be upon God and His provision, rather than our own qualities, no matter how good they are.

Thank You!

Please accept our thanks and appreciation for your support towards The Outreach Pillar's Programmes! Your kind generosity makes possible the work we do here in Romania.
Thank you for being our partner in doing God's work among people in need!

COP's updates

We all enjoy good company and people who feel optimistic, positive, always ready to be part of something, don't we? Well, this is COPs! And it's always fun, for children and for adults, equally!

Although we started the first programmes early in April, it is only now, in the Summer that we can really take off with our presentations. So far in the year we had a good, solid ten meetings, with about 200 children, from various towns of Bihor County. And it was sweet!





As soon as the visitors from US and UK started to come, we got them involved into this! And they all had great fun - as I mentioned before, these are great opportunities to discover what kind of artistic inclination one has and there could be nice surprises around for those brave enough to try.





The kids are always fantastic! They are also very competetive and it is just too bad the pictures here could not tell you the whole story, but you can enjoy.

The regular Bible story, the verse, the games and competitions, the crafts and the songs and the most thrilling feature of them all - the Mystery Box, we had them all! And hopefully there will be more to come, even this year.