

Welcome to our Autumn-Winter 2022 Newsletter

Sincere Greetings from Romania to all our friends and supporters. We are delighted to have prepared and published another packed Newsletter with information, updates, and challenges from the work of God through the Smiles Foundation.

The past 6 months have been the most exciting within Smiles for a few years now. The Covid Pandemic caused great sadness and a sense of loss in so many ways and for sure our work in Romania was severely impacted. It is thrilling to now be on the other side of that experience and for sure, 2022 is proving to be an incredible year, with a full rebound from the pandemic in all the ways we were hoping and praying for.

This Newsletter is full of updates from the 4 Pillars of Smiles Ministry, and I know you will enjoy reading through each and every word that is shared. For more than 20 years now, Smiles has developed projects that have important impact on lives, generally lives that struggle with life and are significantly less fortunate than all we are blessed with.

The Smiles Foundation provides an opportunity for kind-hearted people to share with others, expressing the Love of God in very practical ways, which when you are Hungry, Sick, Homeless or Abused, that practical help speaks volumes and perhaps in no better way, demonstrates a truly loving Heavenly Father who cares for all the needs we each encounter in life, whoever we are, wherever we are from and whatever our circumstances be at the point of encounter.

I am so thankful for the wonderful family of Smiles who are so caring and generous towards the people we serve here in Romania. Whether that be through our work with Families and the Homeless, Nursery provision and After-School support, Residential Care of the elderly, disabled and vulnerable, or the spiritual development of individuals, families and communities through our Church Plants and teaching ministries in Tileagd and Rapa.

And much more with 100 Romanian Staff serving through our projects, we are always looking at what can be done better, more effectively, whilst ensuring at all times, our stewardship of your generous support is paramount in our minds as we structure the operational outworking of all the projects.

Over the many years we have been privileged to serve in Romania, Smiles hasn't rested for long, as the needs are always there for those with Faith and Courage to step out and see the God of Miracles leading the WAY to fulfil His Plan and Purpose for this Organisation.

Thank you for your faithfulness in supporting Smiles, trusting God's Work will always be done for His Glory and for the extension of His Kingdom. With love and appreciation to you all.



Kevin Hoy
Founder & Chief Executive
The Smiles Foundation



Inside this newsletter:

Read about the summer
activities in "Wonderland"
page 3

Progress on the new project
Sunset House Cihei
pages 4 and 5

Residential Care under Smiles,
see "Years like leaves"
page 7



MISSIONS PILLAR

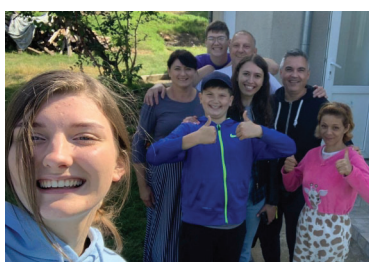
Missions is one substantial corner pillar that supports the entire work of God through Smiles. It covers strategic elements of long-standing projects that have been the backbone of Smiles for over 20-years. Now with new vision and motivation, the MISSIONS Pillar strives to be "salt & light" as we are commanded in **Matthew 5 v16**.

Maria Hava

Director of Missions Pillar
The Smiles Foundation



As we are preparing this newsletter, we hear through the news of the continued Russian actions in Ukraine, and it seems there is little chance for a peaceful resolution of this conflict that affects so many lives. In Smiles, we are happy to have had the opportunity to help so many refugees, some even for longer periods, until they were ready to move on, either to a western European country or make a return to Ukraine.



This is now the case with Pastor Anatol and his family. They have been staying with us for several months at our Emergency Housing Unit in Mierlau. This family had to escape the war, but they never lost their faith in God, and they did not give up on the idea of going back home, when things would become a little bit better. Their decision was to move back to Ukraine, as they felt they could be used in ministry by God there by helping others!



They moved on with new hopes and future prospects, as well as very grateful hearts, being forever thankful for the time when someone was ready to offer them much needed support. Smiles are pleased to have done that.

We do not know what the future holds concerning the Ukrainian crisis, but we are ready to help, when needed.

It is great to be able to update you on the Missions Pillar, but I can't believe how fast time flies! In my last update I was telling you about my trip to USA! Well, I could not miss a visit to the UK recently! It was really touching to be in London during the mourning week of the Queen. An experience that I will never forget!

On September 5th, the schools started back in Romania. A Very special time, as it marked the start of the 18th year of the Smiles Nursery in Tileagd!! 18 years!!

Most of you know, that we started first with the School and then the Nursery. For the final 5 years of Smiles running the school, it was in partnership with the State and in 2019, we could confidently say our work with minority groups was fully integrated with the State School, so we transferred all the children and for the first time in our 20 year history, Romanians and Gypsies were learning together in the same classrooms. We continue to help kids with school supplies and whatever we can, but mainly through the Church and what we call our After-School Programmes.



But the work in the Nursery is still growing and now we receive State support for the work, which they value and see its great successes. We are thankful to God that this year we started with 46 children registered and a lot more on the waiting list! But we decided to do what we can best, taking into consideration the climate of the world we live in, and we continue to serve best the 46 kids registered in our Nursery, with the 6 full time staff, and to be a real support for the families and people around us!

This year we are back to having 3 groups: classified small, middle, big - as we call them. Each one of them has their own teacher and it was amazing to see the connections between them starting from the first day! The opening day was like a party, with good food, cookies and laughter, which is always good to hear in a place of education.

Please pray for the team there, for the staff, kids and parents. Pray for God's protection and provision during this coming year too.

Another highlight of the Missions Pillar are the **Mission Trips**, and this year we had a great number of people visiting us. All coming H.O.M.E. ready for a '**Hands-On Mission Experience**'. My favourite experience from the summer was the fact that I was a lot 'hands-on'! From driving to Budapest to collect Mission Guests, to driving the teams around the projects and spending time with them recharged my batteries, and helped disconnect me from the day-to-day office work! I love to hear their stories and be a part of the fellowship that they have here in the evenings! It really is a 'family affair'. Now, as we are in October, and we have a busy month which I'm looking forward to! **I hope one day, YOU WILL BE HERE, H.O.M.E - for a 'Hands-On Mission Experience'.**





OUTREACH PILLAR

*Outreach represents several well-established projects that Smiles has become known for in more recent years. Now the focus has moved from the primary "social" concern to our primary responsibility of "spiritual" concern. This new emphasis of purpose encourages all in the OUTREACH Pillar to honour the Great Commission of **Matthew 28 v19**.*

Adrian Matis

Director of Outreach Pillar
The Smiles Foundation



New, exciting, challenging, I love it!

My beginning with The Smiles Foundation was in February, and for me quite an opportunity since it was my first experience as a social worker, so just imagine how exciting this was for me!

I always enjoyed helping people, showing kindness and compassion to them, showing how much God loves them. That's why I chose social work in the first place. When I came to the Smiles Foundation, I was very impressed to see how many projects the foundation has started in the past years, and I was amazed to see how many people were helped and continue to be helped. But the thing that got me really excited was the fact that I am part of a Christian organization because my desire was not only to be a social worker, but to be able to share more of God's heart for people.

Being part of the Outreach team for 6 months now was quite the experience for me. My role is more focused on field visits with families, so I got to enjoy going out to see them, getting to connect with them. I got to enjoy seeing new cases and discovering ways to help.



Doing these visits, I saw people who live in really bad conditions, some of them barely have anything. Some experiences were even quite shocking because I never saw such poverty before...

Besides my work with families, I love the variety of activities. For example, I love that I can go once a week and serve the elderly people in our residential centres by having fellowship with them. I also enjoy going to the homeless Container Village, to bring them food and hear their stories.

Another great experience for me was to see people coming here, as Mission Trip visitors. I find it extraordinary how people come from another country, take of their time and come to Romania to help people. We had quite a few mission trips during the summer, and I enjoyed being part of each one! This way I got the opportunity to learn something new from our guests.

I still have so many things to learn and to experience, I do believe here at Smiles I will get many chances to do so! I am very glad I can be part of it!

Andreea Andrei
Social worker for Outreach Pillar

Dezna Wonderland

Maybe your reaction, seeing that title is "Wow, did they install a roller coaster, or a water slide, or a drop tower?" or whatever else might cross your mind, knowing what a "wonderland" is supposed to be! But nothing like that, this is just the same camp that you know very well! This title is something that came to my mind after seeing how this summer season passed for Dezna Outreach Centre, after two years with less activity, because of the pandemic.



Through this Summer, Jesus' name was glorified and honoured again at Dezna Centre, a number of about 250 kids and youth, accompanied by 50-60 leaders, discovered and learned more about God's love, mercy, grace, care, faithfulness and long patience; some of the kids and youth have even accepted Him as their Lord and Saviour. Children and leaders alike experienced some wonderful things in Dezna and because of that, they will never forget it!

Their programme was full, both with fun and serious teaching: many different games - outside and inside, crafts of various types, Bible lessons - each group having their own way to teach: with puppet, skits, using the projector for some picture, and so many others; songs - some worship songs, but also some creative songs about the camp; hiking - walks up to the Dezna Fortress ruins, where you get a wonderful view over the valley; bonfire; walks - to Moneasa, a nice resort close by... Our guests really enjoyed the location and what we had to offer them, they felt disconnected with the world and connected with God, they loved the food - some of the kids even wrote some "thank you" notes for the cook on the napkins!

But this was not all that happened in this wonderland. Almost 130 grown-ups had their time worshipping God, sharing experience through some different fellowship groups, like families' groups from Church, Sunday School Leaders weekend meetings, a weekend group with volunteers from the Prison Fellowship organisation and the Christian Police Officers Conference.

For me, it was all so wonderful, especially to hear laughter again at the camp, kids voices, songs to worship God and prayers, seeing the entire yard full of kids, playing, running, having fun, having a bonfire, having the activity room full!

So, yes, Dezna Outreach Centre really is a true wonderland - but not because of technology and machinery, but because with God's help and guidance and being creative, we can do big things for God, as He can transform lives in this amazing place using us. Churches leaders, Sunday school leaders, police officers, Smiles staff, me and... you!

Do continue to pray and support this amazing programme!

Ioana Soporan (née Tamaş)
Dezna Outreach Centre Coordinator



The progress of



If you are a regular recipient of our Newsletters, I hope you have to hand the Spring Edition, published earlier this year. If you don't have it, all our current newsletter series are available online: www.thesmilesfoundation.org/newsletters

I mention this so as to not repeat too much of what I have already said in previous editions, but it is important for you to follow the whole developing story, so please do follow through either with the newsletters or on the website, at www.thesmilesfoundation.org/category/newsletter/sunset-house-cihei-news

Sunset House, Cihei is a huge project, but we knew that from the early concept and discussions, but when the Architect and Engineers had finished their work, and the Construction company started the actual build, we could see just how big the project really was!

Naturally, with any project of this size, a substantial contingency fund is established at the outset to compensate for ups and downs (small or larger surprises) that come along during the process of the project. What we could not have anticipated with this project, which started with Architectural instruction in October 2020, was all that would follow involving events beyond any control with a war in Ukraine, subsequent Energy Crisis, Supply Chain shortages and on top of all that, a Cost-of-Living crisis!



This is significantly affecting our plan of construction with the most significant, changing an initial 3 - year construction timetable, to 13 months - at least for the main building. This also crunched our fund-raising timetable from 36+ months to 13-months!!

Initial responses and support have been generous with a combination of Gifts and Loans. At the time of writing, a little over half of the required funds have been raised for the initial Budget of £2million / \$2.3million which is largely required for Contractual commitments by May 2023. Then we will be able to breathe a little easier as there will be less pressure on the final stages of the Project requiring a further £500,000 / \$575,000.

Sunset House Cihei



Apart from being the biggest project Smiles has ever undertaken, the conditions that have already impacted us greatly, especially reducing the time scale to beat out-of-control rising prices, put a high importance on the Smiles Family helping with the funds needed.

Whether that be a Special Gift, a Loan repayable over the coming years, sponsorship of an Adopted Room by your family, church or local organisation, or planning a fundraiser to contribute to the Budget. Whatever you choose to do, it will be critically important if Smiles is to meet the contractual obligations within the next few months. The anticipated total budget of £2.5million / \$3million is a huge sum of money to us all, but Sunset House, Cihei will be a huge facility, having a huge impact on the community, in providing residential care for the elderly, disabled and vulnerable allowing us to show God's Love in a mightily practical way, that will help draw people to Him and into His Eternal Kingdom.

Full details of our plans, timetable, support options - including sponsorship of rooms or facilities to honour loved-ones, are all on the Smiles Website. I also update news and a picture gallery every month with an occasional Video to help you keep pace with progress on site. Anything not covered, please contact me directly, so I can assist with your questions or support for this truly amazing project.

With my very sincere Thanks,



UK



US



Kevin Hoy
Founder & Chief Executive
The Smiles Foundation

You can support the development of Sunset House, donate using these codes:



RESIDENTIAL PILLAR

Residential is a key-pillar of Smiles - demonstrating God's love and compassion for the elderly and disabled in our communities. Substantial facilities with trained and dedicated staff, enables Smiles to be a leader in the development of Residential Care in Romania. We rejoice at God's provision as stated in Isaiah 46 v4.



Years like leaves

My story begins earlier this year when, through God's will, the Smiles Foundation from Cihei received me into their family. Little did I know this journey was about to take me in different places, to see and learn hard life stories. My beginnings in the Outreach Team made me believe and get confident that I could literally conquer the world, and all that, thanks to the strong team that stood by me and encouraged my steps.



That said, May 1st was my beginning in Tileagd at the Assisted Living Centre, a beautiful place where I felt at home from the start.

With baby steps, me and the beneficiaries started to get close to each other and that's how my day by day tasks developed. Bringing joy, and relief with a good and optimistic heart to people, often just listening to them.

All our 34 residents in TAL are taken care of by an amazing team. We have a total of 19 staff looking after each and every person. We are blessed that we are not alone. Behind the scenes, there is you: teams that visited and helped us through the Summer, people who are donating for our centres, people that are praying constantly for us. We owe you a big THANK YOU, may God bless you forever!

Now, the Summer is over, we all started to think about how nature prepares itself for resting, pausing, exactly like a human being in the last years of life. Nostalgia starts to take place when we take a step back and start to reflect about our own life as well.

Many stories touch my heart, but one in particular. Miss Alexandra, a former teacher, mother of one and now a widow, with dementia, who doesn't remember much about her own past. This illness took away from her the joy of memories. She is living day by day, hour by hour expecting to go home to

see her mum and dad, and every time she asks me how her parents are doing, my answer is now, "they are fine just the way they are". A smile rises up her face but quickly disappears. But I am glad that her only son didn't forget her, and he is visiting every single week. I witnessed their last reunion when son greeted mum and called her "teddy bear"... I thought that's what true love is.



Delia Mezea
Social Worker at TAL

This is our duty at the centres. Treat each one as our own parents or grandparents. We are now their closest friends and may be the last person who sees them before they depart ...

I leave you with a few verses from a poem which touched my heart:

*"Who cares, who cares for elderly these days?
All children seem busy in their own ways;
Mere solitude is what the world repays;
Oh, what a blot on modern human race!,*

*Our parents kept us warm when we were cold;
All children have a duty to ones old;
The elderly need young shoulders to hold;
Their virtuous deeds are worth more than all gold!"*

- J.Celes



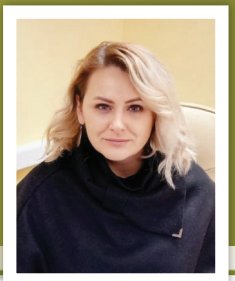


ENTERPRISE PILLAR

*The Enterprise Pillar carries the responsibility of supporting the Work of God through Smiles as an honourable Business, doing God's Work in God's Way. 100% owned by the Smiles Foundation, ensures all profits are channelled into front-line ministry - wherever most needed with the other three supporting Pillars of Smiles. Inspired by **Matthew 25 v15-16**.*

Simona Tosity

Director of Enterprise Pillar
The Smiles Foundation



I remember my last newsletter that I wrote, I believe in March – I ended it saying that after an exhausting spring: “I am looking forward to the summer!” Why did I say that? By that time, all the predictions about the months ahead were not optimistic at all. With a war that just started all the negative consequences that everyone was talking about – was about to happen. And I was still looking forward to the summer! ... Why? Because **always hope is stronger than any logic, knowledge or reality.**

Well, the summer is over – the winter is coming and reflecting a bit, I can honestly say that this summer of 2022 was one of the most challenging I have ever had. Yes, the summer was marked by increases of every kind: food, fuel, electricity, gas, bank mortgages, after 8 years the inflation reached double figures!

Of course, every product we bought for the Glasshouse was getting more expensive by the week. Compost, pots, boxes, trays, seeds, young plants – some even with 50% more than 2 months ago and the worst part was that we couldn't add 1 cent, 1 penny more to our selling prices, as they were negotiated already 6-8 months ago, with the end customers.

I have many, many examples of why this summer was difficult, but none of them determined me to call it one of the most difficult. What did though, was something else.

One of the worst consequences that times like these bring are the insecurities, an uncertainty about a better tomorrow that people feel. In times of uncertainty, people change, they become more self-centred, more selfish, more stressed, and I guess I am no exception.

Tough times show our true nature.

The biggest challenge for me was how to motivate people that are facing these feelings and try to stay connected to people that are still rightly motivated. How difficult it is to convince myself and others that are looking up to you that no matter how difficult it is, how impossible it might look – hard work and good hearts are always rewarded.

Yes, this article is supposed to be about ENTERPRISE - about figures and progress, but right now I don't want to make it about that, I want to use it as a reminder for me and for others, that difficult times have always been coming and going – but how we go through it really defines us.

From time to time, we need to go back to basics and **remember the only truth that matters**, so let's work harder, the hardest, be an exampleand the reward is coming!!!

*“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you - you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” **Matthew 6: 28-31 & 34 (NIV)***





It was very exciting and of course, extremely useful to have once again Dr Jim Watts team visiting us and doing the **Eye Clinics in Bihor County**. This season was a tour-de-force, as more than 500 people were examined, advised

and supported with either one or two pairs of glasses! It was a wonderful team effort and despite various difficulties, the outcome was amazing! We are very grateful for the commitment and hard work and the immense generosity of everyone!

Thank you, Dr. Jim and team, on behalf of hundreds!



Please pray with us!

Many times, our thoughts are almost completely about what tomorrow may bring to us and we spend a lot of time worrying and being concerned with things of "the worst case scenario" - which we all know very well there are slim chances to become reality.

However, in the midst of this day-to-day fact of life, there is a significant truth underlying it, which is worth remembering and contemplating every time: "Without me, you can do nothing!"

This is what Jesus said, in relation to us being fruitful, but actually it also reveals our need for His intervention, as we pray for:

1
2
3
4

Overall, the international situation is complicated and it seems there's always something to trigger new problems, let's pray for wisdom and God's guidance and amidst all difficulties, we would all keep our focus on Him.

Not only Sunset House development, but all Smiles programmes need support for maintaining their impact and we all pray that God will provide, through His people, as He did in the past - let's pray for needed resources.

There are various challenges in relation to Smiles work, from health problems with some of our team members to maintaining and developing a long term vision for the future, so please pray for us all to stay strong in our cause!

Although we could be tempted to always ask for more and more from God, as His generosity and provision is what keeps us, we should never forget to be thankful for each and every blessing He already granted to us!

Thank You!

As always, we want to express our gratitude and appreciation for your encouragement and loving support, for your generosity and prayers, which all enable us to carry on with the mission we embarked on!

Everything you do in support of The Smiles Foundation has a direct impact on the people we work with, beneficiaries of our services! And it is true that together we can make a difference!

May God bless your work, your families and everything you do for His kingdom and may His presence be always with you!

What is a gift to you? Do you get one on your special occasion, like a birthday, anniversary, Christmas and so on? Can you believe that a lot of the kids here do not receive any such gifts at Christmas? Our prayer is that during this very special season of Christmas, we will be able to give something small to each one of the kids from the Smiles' projects!

So, if you can donate towards our Christmas project "SOS - Sack of Smiles", we will be very happy, and many children will be overly excited. **It is a wonderful opportunity for us to share the Good News of Jesus coming at Christmas as Lord and Saviour.**

However much you can support, please do. As little as £5/\$5 makes a difference in helping us to be able to do something special for the children. Donations can be made online or by phoning the Smiles Office.

We appreciate everything you do! Every little helps! Our SOS Project this year can be very special because of you! Thanks a million!



Latest updates from Smiles in Romania

newsletter

series 4, edition 4 - AUTUMN/WINTER 2022

The Smiles Foundation UK
PO Box HK70, Leeds, LS11 6YR
Telephone: 0113-276-5060
Registered UK Charity No. 1087961

The Smiles Foundation USA
10645 N. Tatum Blvd # 200-471, Phoenix, AZ 85028
Telephone: 423-239-9525
Registered USA Charity # 86-0957704

www.thesmilesfoundation.org