The Smiles FOUNDATION

Latest updates from Smiles in Romania

newsletter

series 4, edition 8 - AUTUMN/WINTER 2024

Welcome to our Autumn-Winter 2024 Newsletter

I just can't believe the speed at which time passes. Here we are publishing the Autumn/Winter newsletter, and the print seems barely dry on the Spring issue! It's been a frantically busy summer and in reality, every day of the past 6 months or more, has been lived at a rather challenging pace. That's in no small part due to the Summer Mission Trips and of course, finishing the Construction of Sunset House, Cihei – ready for the Grand Celebration & Thanksgiving which we have just enjoyed.

I was overwhelmed that 100 International Guests were here for the weekend, and quite a number came for a full Mission Trip both the week before the Opening and then another the week after. A very busy time is an understatement, but it proved a wonderful opportunity to fellowship with so many of our friends and supporters, all Praising God and Giving Him the Glory for such Great Things He Has Done.

A more extensive report on the Weekend and range of photos is featured in our centrespread of this newsletter. Even more is on the website, so catch up all you can with the exciting occasion of seeing Sunset House Construction finished and ready to start operating very soon.



Now, as is always the case, there is lots of paperwork to process and Authorisation Certificates to secure, but time passes quickly, so by the next newsletter, we'll have a lot more news on the specifics of Sunset House ready to function and news of Staff appointments and new Residents welcomed in!

A lot of Mission Teams over the summer was great for helping us with COP's, Family Support, Residential visits and so much more. Our beneficiaries so enjoy the teams visiting and as I always say, nothing can replace the personal visits which means the world to those we support and moments they will never forget for sure.

As we start planning our various schedules for the year ahead, why not plan on a Mission Trip to Romania with Smiles. Come as a Church Group, Youth Team, Family or on your own. You will soon meet up with many on a similar mission, often becoming friends for life. E-mail us or contact the office for full information on timing, cost and booking arrangements.

I am always thrilled we have so much news to share with you, so be sure to read every article featured through these pages. There is even more covered on the website, enjoy more at www.thesmilesfoundation.org

We have been blessed for so many years as the ministry here just keeps growing. I first came to Romania 34 years ago – half my life spent serving here – and I'm still excited every day at what God has planned for us to do next.

Stay connected and see for yourself, whether by newsletter, website, photos or video and even better, on a personal visit through a Smiles Mission Trip. My thanks for your continued support of the Smiles Foundation prayerfully, practically and financially.

With love and thanks to you all.



Kevin Hoy
Founder & Chief Executive
The Smiles Foundation

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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





20th ANNIVERSARY

The Mission Centre begins its 21st year of functioning!!! It was amazing to have people visiting us this summer, people that came to see us 20 years ago!!!! That's called faithfulness!

And it is amazing to have people so committed to the work we do!



We had special cake over the summer, and looooots of memories shared over dinner!

If you want to experience a trip to Romania, combined with a time to serve and time to relax COME TO SEE US!!!! There is always a place for you, as my teddy bear from the front of the warehouse says!!!!

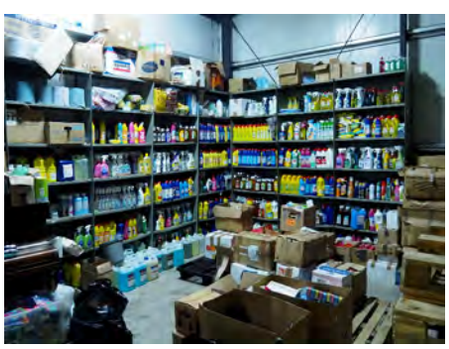
"Mad House"….

Well, I'm sure that each one of us at some point in life felt that we are living in a "mad house". To be honest I often feel that the world we live in today is the best example of a mad house. There is so much bad going on, no respect, no love, and generally a no care attitude…….



But this is not the case in Smiles, people might think…..well sometimes it can be due to the pressure of doing our best! These past few months were more like the mad house feeling than ever….

With Sunset House project in the final stages before the opening event in October, with TAL fire department Authorisations going on, with the Nursery starting a new academic year…….and all the other day to day functional projects continuing, it felt like it.



The summer mission trips were a great experience. Lots of people visited us and their help on the day to day projects means a lot to us. I often do not have time to sort things that I would love to, so having extra hands is amazing. My warehouse is cleaner than ever!

The Sunset House project took a lot of my time these past few months but I'm soooooooooo happy that while I write these few words, I can say that the construction is done! I started to get the paper approvals and move onto that side of the work. THANK YOU ALL for making dreams real. If 3 years ago I was wondering how we will do it?! It's too big….it's hard…..it can't be achieved, WITH GOD and people from ALL OVER THE WORLD, ONCE AGAIN I REALISE THAT NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE!!!!! Just dream….. and better to dream BIG!!!





My little nursery started a new academic year!!! Now into the 21st year of functioning! What a great testimony to laying the foundation for the children at an early age! We have new dreams, new plans for the next 20 years so pray for us! Now we are getting ready for the THANKSGIVING festival and I'm sure that from the youngest one to the oldest one, we have thousands of reasons to be thankful!!

THANK YOU !!!

OUTREACH PILLAR

Adrian Matis
Director of Outreach Pillar
The Smiles Foundation



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.***





For many years now, the Outreach Pillar of Smiles has provided care and assistance to the people in need within Bihor County, the NW of Romania. Our work has been developing in many areas, but at the core of all we do is the mission to tell everyone about God's love for them and the hope we can find in Him. We are merely servants, hopefully skilled and diligent ones, whom He can use to bring people together, to help each other and to make a difference around us.

The Church and Pastoral activity is part of our work and Pastor Vasile puts in a lot of effort to make that difference. Every Sunday morning we meet in Tileagd Church and the participants are now of a very varied nature. We have people from the local community, as we always had, but now we also have a good number of residents from TAL joining in worship, as well as several people who travel from other places. Pastor Vasile is serving three out of four Sundays every month and then he also has meetings in Rapa church, with the local families, as well as in Mierlau, where he maintains a prayer group every week! Besides these church-oriented meetings, he visits families and provides various support, as needed, where needed.

Please continue to pray for this aspect of our work, as the spiritual affairs are very important and we want everyone to be aware of them. Pastor Vasile needs your support in prayer and the programme needs for sure also the financial resources - keep helping us to provide assistance for those who want to understand more and apply God's will in their lives!

Children's Outreach programmes were, of course, one of the main attractions for this Summer, both for our Mission Trip guests and the children in various communities around here. The meetings we had were, as always, very animated, got a lot of excitement and confirmed once again that children are wonderfully interested in these ocassions. We had about 250 of them, across 8 locations, for 15 sessions.

For this year, we introduced a new theme, another story from the Bible, the one that talks about the blind beggar who decided to approach Jesus, despite everyone telling him otherwise! Such a wonderful story, found in Mark 10. We learn that nothing should prevent us going to Him, with our problems, this will be the only way we can have the victory! Children loved it, we all can learn so much from it!

As usual, we had some amazing contributions from our guests, they played their roles with passion and commitment, making the story, as well as the songs, games, competitions, all very interesting and exciting! Thank you all, you did great!





My name is Andreea Mureșan and I am a graduate of the Theology College of Emanuel University from Oradea, Social Assistance faculty. During my studies, I had the chance to work with The Smiles Foundation within the school requirements of 'practical experience', and that ocassion was a defining moment for my personal and professional development.

From the first day, I felt this is the place I wanted to be in and to contribute every day! The large variety of projects, the many options to help the vulnerable ones and especially the warm and open environment makes me want to be part of this for long term! Being part of a Christian organisation is, for me, the best opportunity to share about Love, Peace and Joy that only God can offer!

I am therefore grateful to now being able to use my theoretical knowledge accumulated so far and although I am just starting, I trust God for guiding our steps and so together we will achieve great things for those we serve.

Sunset House celebration

As with many big occasions, I often worried, 'would we ever be ready'!

It doesn't seem to matter how long you have, the final weeks, and final days, are extremely pressured. The workday gets longer, while the sleep at night gets shorter. It just seems impossible, yet somehow, by the Grace of God, it all comes together and then we stand in amazement at what our Great God has done, yet again.

It was so wonderful to have 100 International Guests come to Romania to celebrate the Completion of Construction for Sunset House, Cihei. Joined by many Romanian Guests, we gathered at noon on October 12th in front of the Building and reminisced a little on what it took to get us to this point. But soon enough, we were ready to cut the ribbon and once 'Officially Opened' the Brass Band started and 150 guests toured the Facility and enjoyed a beautiful buffet lunch as they worked their way through this amazing residential home.

Many supporters of the project wanted to see the finished job. Some had been out helping with various aspects of the project during the construction years. Others had sponsored rooms in memory of loved ones or in honour of special people who had impacted their life. Some had never been but were invited by friends or family and decided to come and see. Everyone was wonderfully impressed, and the sentiments expressed were overwhelming as we all acknowledged – God Had Done Great Things!

Later in the day, we all enjoyed dinner together at the hotel Smiles had virtually taken over for our visiting guests, as the Mission Centre was full! After dinner, we all came back to Cihei to see Sunset House by night, recognising it as appearing quite different by night with the external lights on, the Internal Gardens lit up and the Roof Top looking like an airport runway, providing a perfect view of the surrounding countryside and across to the City.

But with everyone on the roof, they were perfectly placed for the Surprise of the Day – a first ever 'Smiles Firework Display'. And what a display it was! Set to the incredible song by Andrea Bocelli 'Because we Believe' the display lit up the sky just beyond Sunset House, and with 150 people on the roof, there could be no better place to enjoy such a display.

I was personally thrilled the day had gone so well and this seemed the perfect ending to a perfect day, which God had blessed beyond our wildest dreams, with beautiful blue skies and a faultless programme from beginning to end. Praise be to God!





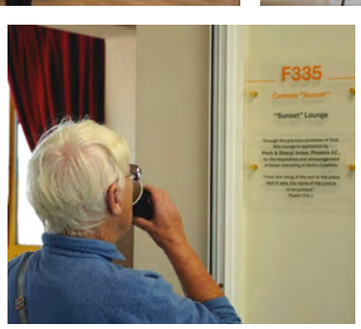


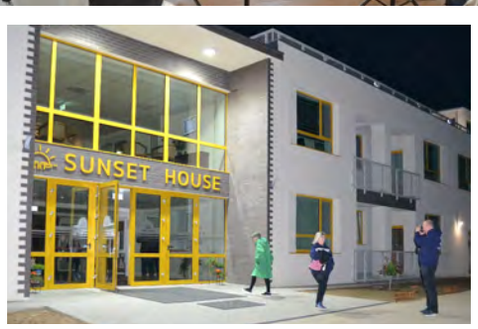














But that was only Day One – having focused on the Celebration during Saturday, Sunday was to be our Thanksgiving Day and we clearly had so much to be thankful for. Sunday morning, we gathered for Worship in the Function Room of Sky Hotel, Oradea. It was great to have Warren Smyth and Avoda with us, primarily for the Concert Finale scheduled for Sunday evening, but they agreed to also lead the Worship for our Thanksgiving Service, which was extra special of course.



We were also delighted to have our Trustee, Mike Wildsmith sharing the message that morning, which was a scripture-based inspiration on God's Goodness and Provision. Sunset House is a living testimony to just how Faithful our God is, and we had a wonderful day Praising Him for everything. After the dinner Sunday evening, the Praise event of the weekend started. Warren Smyth and Avoda kicked into action, and for 90 minutes they and the entire room of guests, Praised God in Celebration and Thanksgiving for all at Smiles and for Sunset House, Cihei.





As part of our weekend, it was also announced to include a special offering to help clear the Sunset House Construction debt. At the end of August 2024, the Debt was £135,724 / $169,655.

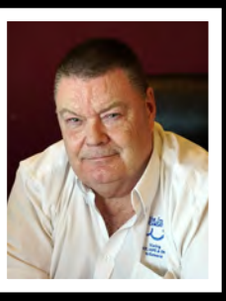
In September, £8,185 / $10,231 was donated, and the Special Offering on October 13th amounted to £34,201 / $42,751. A wonderful act of love and support from those present.

This leaves the balance outstanding, as at October 14th - £93,338 / $116,672 – just 3.45% of the original Construction budget. Many are still supporting, fund raising and even sponsoring rooms that remain available. If you can help or would like further information, contact us, go online or use the QR Codes established for donations in Sterling or US Dollars.



We look forward to keeping in touch and meanwhile, trust you enjoy the news from all our projects, staff and beneficiaries.

My sincere thanks for all you do, prayerfully and practically.



Kevin Hoy
Founder & Chief Executive
The Smiles Foundation





You can support the SHC Project, through a donation, right here and now, by using these codes:

for UK

for USA



RESIDENTIAL PILLAR

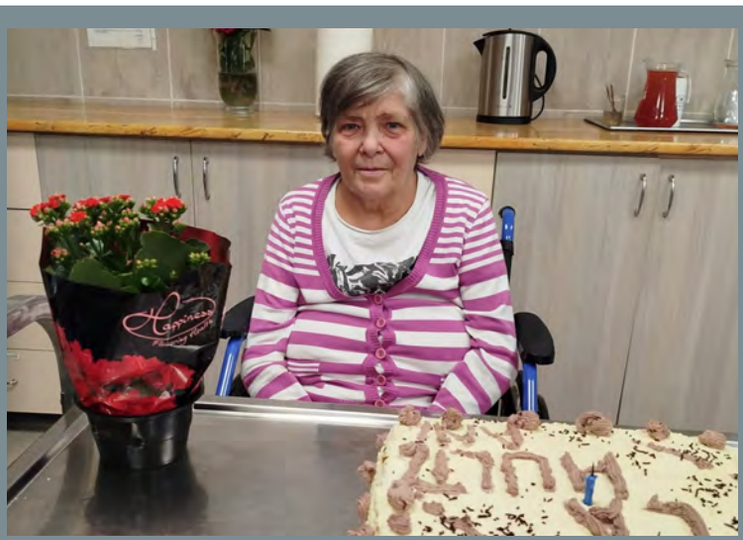
Residential is a key-pillar of Smiles - demonstrating God's love and compassion for the elderly and disabled in our communities. Substantial facilities with trained and dedicated staff, enables Smiles to be a leader in the development of Residential Care in Romania. We rejoice at God's provision as stated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



I can't believe it is already autumn. It seems that time is flying by and whilst we cannot stop getting older, I would like to hope we're much wiser! Of course, each new day brings new challenges, emotions, joy but sometimes sadness as well. A day in the centre looks exactly like a roller coaster: we may start the day in laughs and happiness and a few moments later we find ourselves holding our breath, hoping for an outcome that will not be a dramatic one.

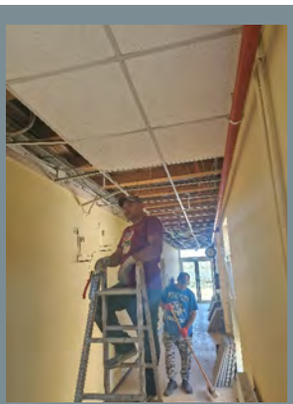
This summer was a hot and busy period at TAL (Tileagd Assisted Living). Starting from July, we had 3 months of heavy work. In order to obtain the fire department authorization, we had to change all ceilings, conduits, cables, detectors and so on. With a number of 37 beneficiaries, we put all requests on hold and we started the process. Just like with a puzzle, we had to move beneficiaries from their rooms into activity and physiotherapy rooms until the work was done. Although they were informed and prepared for this stage, they were confused, sad because they had to move, but also curious about how everything will look afterward. It was interesting to see the men residents becoming 'professional experts', starting to give advice to construction teams on how to finish their jobs quicker.

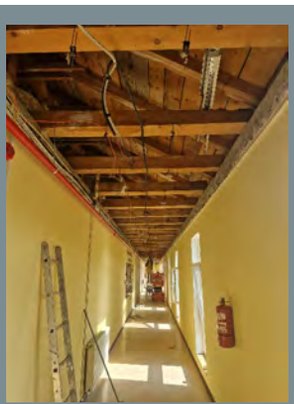
That is because there was a lot of dust all over the place, noise, strange people coming in and out became something normal in our daily routine. All staff were involved and helped getting through each day, with the tasks they could participate at.

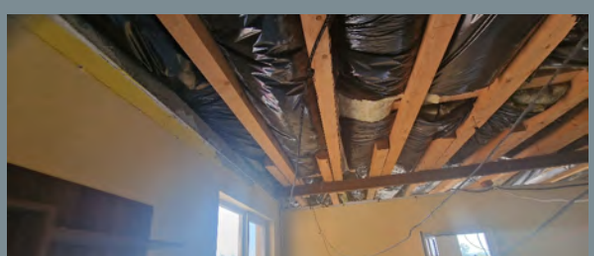












Now that the hard work is done, we are praying that in the next month we will obtain the authorization.

The centre life is back on track, many events in October, full of birthday celebration, 8 to count. Of course we all know what that means: cake each time! Whether we are young or old, we all love sweets. And of course, after all that eating, our physiotherapist makes sure that our beneficiaries are exercising to keep in good shape.

We are thankful to all our guests and friends who visited and contributed in achieving the purpose, in making our centre more secure for our beneficiaries.

Please continue to pray for our residents, as they all have various challenges, be they of a medical or emotional nature, or anything else. We try to be there for them with all they need, but sometimes it is just beyond our means - so prayer will always be very helpful.

Simona Tosity,
Smiles Director of Residential Care

ENTERPRISE PILLAR

Simona Tosity
Director of Enterprise Pillar
The Smiles Foundation



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.***

Hot summer… extreme temperatures…. beautiful autumn!!!!!

I know our supporters are the most conscientious and well-informed supporters ever, because you actually read all our reports and newsletters, and that makes my life harder, I can't repeat myself, I need to tell you something new…. and that's not always easy.

Since I am not a good fiction writer, or just a good writer generally…. I better stay with reality!!

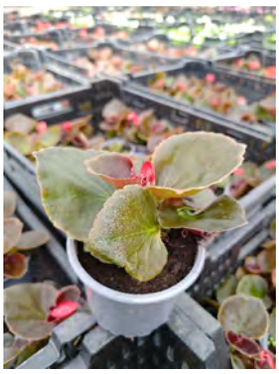


This summer was one of the most difficult ones regarding the weather, 40 degrees temperatures that we had for almost 2 months, and no rain…. challenged us more than we planned. The agriculture sector suffered a lot, the field crops were lost because of drought, and I know this was all over Europe. In Romania that was the cause, in other countries because of the floods…



This summer we had in the Glasshouse over 37000 chrysanthemums, all contracted by Lidl with delivery term in October in full bloom! (our customer request). Our delivery reality was different even if our plants grow indoors, in controlled climate, still the weather is our main partner, that can bring us success or failure!

Many of you know, many may not, but flowers have their growing peculiarities and requirements. Especially chrysanthemums, in order for them to bloom, they need long cold nights, and that we definitely didn't have, even in September – we didn't have cold, so our flowers continue growing with sun and warmth, the perfect comfort zone for them… no stress around to signal them – hey… it is time to bloom!



So, I was completely panicked, when we had to deliver over 37,000 plants, with a value of over £62,000/$77,500 but to have just 'open buds'!

There were many dark thoughts all running thought my head… what if they won't accept them to the reception? What if they send them back? What if the plants won't sell in the shops and Lidl won't give us another order for 2025? How can I explain to Lidl that plants, which should be in full bloom, are having 2 weeks delay, because of good weather? They don't have the detailed knowledge, but they don't care about our problems anyway!



At the same time, our Dutch Bulb producer, who we have worked with for 7 years now, calls me to tell me that he can't deliver to me the 350,000 bulbs due to arrive at the end of October, but only about 40,000 bulbs… because of the bad weather and too much rain they had during the summer, the harvest was less that planned… so they cut everyone's orders with a certain percentage.

Going back to our delivery, our flowers arrived in all Lidl stores and 2 weeks since the chrysanthemums were in the store, Lidl called to say they sold the products over 90% and they already gave me the order for 2025… isn't God just wonderful?



One more lesson learned: God says "Simo, do your best, work hard… and let me do the rest!"

ANOTHER HUGE TEAM-EFFORT AND GREAT RESULTS!!!

Now that the Chrysanthemums are gone, we start the cycle all over again: primroses, hyacinths, tulips, daffodils, cyclamen, all in the Glasshouse, ready to be planted for the Spring of 2025.

A big thanks to all those who helped us during this year, your contributions mean a lot, not only in money saved in extra daily workers, but you are also I great example and encouragement to the staff.

We know we are not alone, especially in the critical times!

Please pray with us!

We feel we have a lot to give thanks for, as God did so many amazing works for and through the Smiles Foundation! We have experienced new depths of Grace, as we concluded the major building process of the Sunset House; but not only in this major project we've seen how wonderful He is. All programmes we run have seen God's hand at work!

Psalm 139:14 (NIV) proclaims *"Your works are wonderful, I know that full well!"* And this we can say as well, so let's pray together, expressing our gratitude and appreciation to God! Equally, as we are dependant on Him, let's ask for help and guidance as well:

1. *Yes, we did it! The Sunset House building process is done, at least in its major sense, and for this, we can only be grateful to God and to you, our supporters. This milestone was reached, but we still have a lot to do, continue to pray!*
2. *Moving into Winter, many of the people we see out there on the field, will have difficulties and heating, as well as food, could be a major concern. We will try to help as much as we can, but please pray that God's protection will be with them!*
3. *As we've learned in the past few weeks, there are challenges for everyone - our supporters are not exempt. We all need prayer! Do pray for each other, do share your concerns, about Smiles or otherwise, so we can all be part of God's answer!*
4. *Some of our colleagues face medical issues that already kept them away from work for a while, but also there is a lot of uncertainty for the future. Please pray their hearts will get strong and their health will get better soon!*



As you already read in the updates on the Grand Opening of Sunset House Cihei, we will rather write here about something else, the one very wonderful sentiment that we had on the special week-end of 12-13th of October, at the thanksgiving service.

As we all here were preparing for the Opening, we realized at some point how many people will be present, and we thought how complicated things could become. Sure enough, logistics were very complex! And all was good to the end, no problems.

Through all of these, we understood, once again, something of the greatest importance: we are not alone in this work! There are so many committed and dedicated supporters involved in Smiles, sustaining our efforts in Romania and making sure, each one on their own capacity, that our common goals are pursued and reached, for the benefit of those we serve every day!

This is such a heart-warming and reassuring thought! Not only do we have God on our side, but we have each other, we are one single heart and that makes us all strong and successful! Thank you for that, on behalf of the entire Team in Romania!



Thank You!

Finishing the Sunset House Construction was the main focus for us in 2024, but all the other regular programmes still needed to continue on and so, needed your support and generosity.

For helping us and being such great supporters of all the work we do, we express our sincere appreciation and we thank you for your kind hearts, both in financial contributions as well as in prayer.

Of course, we count on your support also for the future, so please stay connected with us and may God bless you richly!



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Latest updates from Smiles in Romania

newsletter

series 4, edition 8 - AUTUMN/WINTER 2024

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