The Smiles FOUNDATION

Latest updates from Smiles in Romania

newsletter

series 4, edition 10 - AUTUMN/WINTER 2025

Welcome to our Autumn - Winter 2025 Newsletter

Welcome to a new edition of the Smiles Newsletter, another 8 pages, packed with information, celebration and announcements on all that is happening in Romania through the Ministry and Projects of the Smiles Foundation. 2025 is proving to be a very challenging year, although I admit to having thought that for the past few years! Maybe life is more challenging or as the Projects grow in number and demand, so the daily challenges increase. I also believe, without any doubt, that when the Lord is doing Great Things, the devil is more focused on causing difficulties and disruption, which can be distracting, demoralising and desperately difficult to deal with.

We must always remember the promise we have in Scripture - Romans 8 v28:

"And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." This verse serves as a reminder that **even in difficult times, God is working for the ultimate good of those who love Him**. It emphasises the belief that God has a purpose for each and every one of us and is actively involved in our daily lives.





Kevin Hoy
Founder & Chief Executive
The Smiles Foundation

Indeed, at times, it is very hard, verging on impossible, to see what 'good' can come from bad situations, but that is why we need **FAITH** so as to believe and trust, even when we don't understand. There will be situations in each of our personal lives that challenge us to claim the promise of *Romans 8 v.28* but I have also seen in the past year of Smiles, many situations causing us to wonder 'WHY?'

The nightmare of Fire Departments in Oradea and Arad challenging us to invest so heavily in Fire Upgrades at the Tileagd Complex and Dezna Outreach Centre. Tileagd is finished, and Dezna nearly half completed, but by Christmas, Smiles will have invested over £350,000/$455,000 to fulfil the upgrade requirements. It has been and continues to be a huge challenge, but God's Purpose in expanding His Kingdom and drawing many closer to Him is our belief as to why Tileagd Community Complex and the Dezna Outreach Centre are so much a part of His Divine Plan.

The challenges experienced at the new Cihei Property with Construction deficiencies which we were not aware of when purchasing, have caused us to wonder at times, was this the right thing to do. So many of our Mission Guests visiting the project, hearing our plans, praying over the property, encouraged us to believe what an amazing place it will be for fulfilling God's Mission to the children of Cihei. What a privilege it is to be part of the ministry and used by God in such a powerful way to achieve His objectives.

We hope this Newsletter and the reports within it, will continue to encourage you to see the future of Smiles will be as exciting as any part of the past 25 years. We are confident God has Great Plans for this Work.

I trust you will enjoy reading the various reports. Please do share the news with your friends and family and if you want more copies to spread around, just call the office and we'll send all you need. There is more covered and updated on the website every month, so if you want even more up to date news, please visit our webpage - **www.thesmilesfoundation.org**

My thanks for your continued support prayerfully, practically and financially to the Smiles Foundation. I look forward to seeing many of you either in Romania or closer to home.

Sincere thanks and God Bless you.

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MISSIONS PILLAR

Maria Hava
Director of Missions Pillar
The Smiles Foundation



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.***



New Home

Yes, you read that right - the Nursery has a new home!

After 20 wonderful years in our old building on Main Street, on **April 14th 2025** we officially **moved** into our new facility - just up the road, at the **Smiles Community Complex**! It's an amazing facility, offering more room, better resources, and endless new possibilities.



Today, we care for **60 children**, divided into **four groups**. We continue to provide them with **three nutritious meals a day**, **healthy snacks**, and **educational materials** to support their growth and learning.

None of this would have been possible without the incredible support of people like **you**. Over the past **21 years**, your kindness and generosity have turned dreams into reality.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for believing in us and standing by our mission!



It's hard to believe that 2025 is in its final stages! The Christmas season is just around the corner, and after a year filled with both challenges and blessings, I am truly overjoyed to once again do what I love most during December - sharing God's love and His Story through the delivery of Christmas gifts across Bihor County with our Sack of Smiles Project.

In past years, we've had the privilege of reaching over 500 people of all ages, each encounter filled with warmth, gratitude, and joy. This year, we hope to do even more - to bring light and hope to those who might otherwise receive nothing this Christmas.



Under Construction... But Full of Life!

In my last report, I shared about a new building that God placed on my heart. I've already begun working on it, but as always, what matters *most* is not the building itself - it's the people. That truth applies to every project we have within **The Smiles Foundation**. It's the people who bring life, warmth, and that special "wow" factor to everything we do.

This Summer, even though the **After-School House** is still under construction, I gathered the children together for activities, fun, and fellowship. It was wonderful to see this new little project come alive! The journey hasn't always been easy, but I know the purpose is right and the calling is clear.



One evening, as our mission team and I stood praying on the veranda of the afterschool building, someone said: *"Maria, this place will be where LOVE comes out and is shared."* That moment touched me deeply. I could feel God's presence so clearly it reminded me that everything we do is because of the Cross.

Throughout the summer, we enjoyed many activities here in **Cihei**, both on the Smiles site and beyond. We finished our program with a special event we called **"The Kindness Day."** We spent that day in a beautiful place near the city - petting animals, playing endlessly, eating great food, and laughing together.

We even have our own hymn now, called **"SHINE!"** The words say:

Shine from the inside out, for the world to see, You live in me!

What a powerful testimony - to know that even as children, we can be shining lights for Jesus!

Please continue to **pray for us** as we begin this new journey. If you would like to **support financially**, I would be so grateful. I'm currently in the process of decorating and purchasing furniture for the After-School House. Some funds have already been received, but we still have needs to cover.

And I'm looking forward to welcoming many of you **next year** on our mission trips - not only to see the new place but to get involved in the work God is doing here!

Until then, remember to **SHINE FOR JESUS wherever you are!**

While we all have long shopping lists this season, there are many around us who have little or nothing to look forward to. For them, we would like to step in and help - with your support.

Every contribution, no matter how small, makes a difference. If you would like to join us in this mission - either by donating or by coming to Romania to help in person (and maybe even enjoy a bit of snow !) - we would be truly grateful. Your generosity helps us continue to share God's Love in Action.

Thank you in advance for your kindness, and we look forward to keeping you updated on the joy your support brings!

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.***



The Summer season, busy as always, reveals many aspects of our work that are new, surprising even for us, sometimes. That is, because we have the Mission Trip visitors with us, and we get to do things which are usually more difficult to do, with the extra help and talent! We had some amazing time with the teams doing COPs, we visited several places, but one stood-out, by the sheer number of children, and also, by the effects of the team! Of course! I said it before, doing COPs is the best practice for becoming a singer, an actor, an artist of any kind, your launching platform for stardom!



Actually, I could say the teams were stars for sure. From bringing some new craft ideas that inspired us for the future, see the chain of prayer made by the kids (oh, behind the pulpit there is a mysterious box, what could it be?!) to the very enjoyable music programme, games and fun, all was excellent! The children did have a blast! By the way, how funny it was, before we arrived at the venue, we were told there will be about 50, maximum 60 children. Then, when we are there, over 80 children were anxious to get into it! That was a big number! But, as always, we found ways to deal with the unexpected situation and we decided a second programme, in the same location, was a must for that particular group!

It is rather difficult to share a lot of details on a such limited space, when it is about Field Visits. Instead, we just want to re-affirm how important this work is - to actually go out and see various needs and then find ways to intervene and why not, to try to make a difference for long term! This is always the mind set we go out with; we always hope we will find not only problems, but also common ground to help moving these people forward.

None of the people we get to know are in a very happy position. We might encounter some physical challenges, in many cases there are mental, or behavioral deviation. For instance, a number of our beneficiaries were raised in the orphanage, they are forever marked by the experiences they had in their early years, as you can imagine. And that has a severe impact on their capacity to have order and structure in their lives. We are there to help, either with documentation for getting support from the state, or with regular food delivery, counselling and spiritual support.



There is no magical solution for anything, in life, we have seen this again and again. There are only bits and pieces we can try to tie together, any progress is good, because overall, we don't believe our people will ever be perfect! But, if by being encouraged to trust God through their problems, by receiving some support and by knowing there is someone who cares, we can get them to be better, in some areas at least, we say it is success and we are grateful to God for it.

Thank you for supporting us and for praying for the people we help!





These programmes are the perfect opportunity for when children are off school, during the Summer particularly. In the present times, when the internet, the mobile devices and social networks are keeping the kids way too busy, we provide alternatives for their time and attention - and we believe they are very good alternatives, as they are direct communication. We tell children about Jesus and His ways, we learn together, we have fun together! What is not to like?!

We might be biased, but we believe Smiles' COPs is great and truly a wonderful programme under the Outreach Pillar! We are happy to offer these activities, as part of the Mission Trip experience, with the purpose of sharing some Bible teaching along with our personal testimony, and we are very grateful for the input of our guests, thank you ladies and gentlemen!

The plans for Children's Outreach Programmes is to develop this segment of our work into a more detailed partnership with churches, we will elaborate on that at a later time. The next generation is very important to be raised properly.

From our Founder & CEO

Kevin Hoy

The 35 years of Smiles Mission in Romania has been an extraordinary journey. From my visit in 1990, just a few months after the revolution to end Communist Rule, to the established Democratic Country it is today, I have seen and faced many difficult and challenging situations. Not least of those challenges, has been how to continue funding the essential work being done by the Smiles Foundation staff and supporters, on the ground, day by day, month by month, year after year.

Establishing the early work, focus was on the horrendous humanitarian need for those living in poverty, suffering extreme hardship while endeavouring to find freedom and expression - politically, socially and spiritually after 42 years of Communism.

The Smiles Foundation benefitted tremendously from support that enabled us to establish significant work amongst the Families, Homeless, Minority Groups, the Sick, Disabled and Elderly. Many of our Projects today are grounded in the needs we faced at the beginning and whilst things have greatly improved, there are still many needs we face that we seek support from Churches and individuals to help us provide.



Kevin Hoy
Founder & Chief Executive
The Smiles Foundation

Fifteen years ago, we started to see how the State would better support the work, after 20-years of providing life-changing services. The authorities were beginning to show signs of recognition and willingness to contribute, which has provided crucial underwriting of the operational costs of some key projects.

However, there are very specific areas of our Work that the State will not support and can only realistically be covered by those who believe in the importance of our Mission to Children, our Outreach to the Family and Communities, and our Residential Care to the Elderly, Disabled and Vulnerable.





In February 2024, I launched the initiative we call **Outreach Partners**. We recruited Churches and individuals who would specifically help us employ the right staff, reaching out to serve Families, the Homeless, Communities as well as operate the Dezna Outreach Centre. Much of this work concentrates on the Message of the Gospel being the inspiration for people to make progress with the challenges faced in life.

The Smiles Family responded wonderfully. And our Outreach Partners are making a significant difference to the ministry we can provide month by month.

I began to concentrate on similar initiatives for other critically important aspects of our projects that need Christ Minded people to get involved in supporting our objectives to show God's Love in a special way to those of all ages. I am praying we can do in the two other Pillars of Smiles, just as we have been able to do with the Outreach Pillar.

Firstly, the **Missions Pillar**, led by Maria Hava, our longest serving Romanian Smiles employee.



Having been responsible for the Tileagd Kindergarten Nursery since it opened in 2004, Maria is about to embark on the operational aspects of a Children's After-School and Out-of-School programme just 2-minutes around the corner from Smiles HQ in Cihei.

Endeavouring to meet the difficulty of Child Care for working parents, especially during long school holidays – Maria will provide educational support and supervision within a Christian environment for those aged 6-14 in the **Lighthouse Project**. After nearly a year of preparations, Maria is now ready to function and is launching the **Missions Mate** initiative, asking people to help support the programme where Bible Teaching, Christian Songs along with Great Fun, Prayer & Fellowship will be the focus every day.

This is a new Project with a 2026 operating Budget of £24,000/$31,200 for the year. We are praying for new monthly support or one-off gifts for the year ahead that will meet the monthly budget of £2,000/$2,600.

If you can help, please sign up today so Maria can start budgeting for this exciting and greatly anticipated project in the heart of Cihei. A **Lighthouse** for all to see.

Secondly, we need a similar concept of support for our Residential Care. Not directly to cover the residential costs, but many of the extra needs we have that help provide the exceptional service and care we believe makes the difference between a Smiles Residential Care Home to any other. With a total 175 potential residents in our 4 Centres – some of the 'extras' we provide add a considerable burden to the budget, and I believe people will want to help us continue providing the services that prove so appreciated and significant to the Quality of Life for our residents.



Days Out which have proved so popular this year.

A Birthday Cake and Celebration for every resident and with up to 175 residents, that's a cake and celebration every other day throughout the year.

Our Sunset House **Salon for Hair & Podiatry** is proving so popular we arrange for our friendly Christian Hair Stylist to visit every 6-8 weeks to cut and colour as our resident's request.

Then the crucially important service of **Physiotherapy** which can transform the quality of life for those able to benefit from the service. Being able to run the classes each day and provide the extra sessions when needed requires support, so we are launching the **Resident Companion** initiative and again need people to sign up. With an anticipated annual budget of £31,000/$40,000 we trust many will have the heart and desire to help us meet this important objective.

So – which could you help with?

Missions Mate - Children's Care and Spiritual Development.
Outreach Partner - Support the Team sharing the Gospel in practical ways.
Resident Companion - Providing a Quality of Life to make a difference.

Use this QR Code for support information or telephone the office or drop me an e-mail with any questions or suggestions of how you can help.
kevin@thesmilesfoundation.org

With sincere thanks for your faithful love and support!

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.***



Help, Trust, Relief

Before I chose to study social work, I searched for the meaning of this work, and I found this definition: *a profession concerned with meeting basic needs of individuals, family, groups or communities.* A short phrase with a huge responsibility; and I realized at that time, this is not a one-person job. I understood this shortly after I started employment as a social worker. In the beginning it was emotionally hard and difficult to see what life had in store for some people. Sickness and Disease never care who you are, what work you did or how you spent your life.

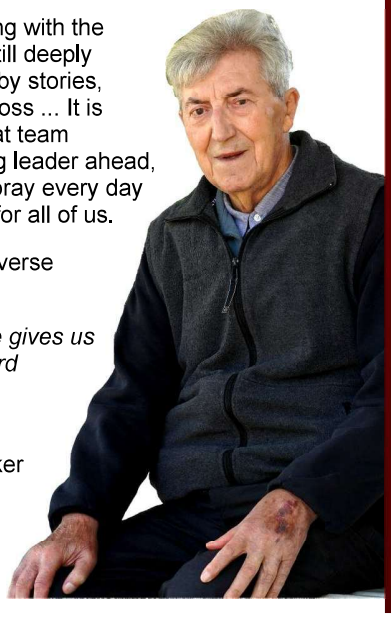
Throughout the years, I met people who were doctors, nurses, teachers, police officers, engineers and heard many successful stories. A new beginning started in April 2025 with the opening of Sunset House. A big, beautiful facility, ready to open its doors for people in need. I was ready to face any challenges ahead of us. Little by little, all things started to take shape. New colleagues, new families and new beneficiaries.

It is known that when a problem hits us, we all go through these 5 stages, which are also known as stages of acceptance: **Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance.**

For families, it is always hard to accept that they can no longer fulfil the needs of their loved ones. It happens in our centres as well. Many families come to us when they hit the fourth stage: **Depression.** They come with tears in their eyes, feeling hopeless, thinking they are letting go of their mother, father, grandparent or other loved ones, a part of their soul.

They come in fear of not knowing what is going to happen next. At that moment, the whole team is ready to take charge and support the family and the individual in need. We try to make the transition as smooth as possible. Staying connected is key for building trust. We continue to stay in touch with all families, we are available for discussion, and they can visit anytime they wish to. After a while, families reach the fifth stage of the process: **Acceptance**, it comes with the package of trusting their loved ones are in good hands.

After three years of working with the Smiles Foundation I am still deeply touched every single day by stories, situation or even sudden loss ... It is never easy. Having a great team alongside me and a strong leader ahead, is such a blessing. And I pray every day for strength and wisdom, for all of us.



At the end of the day this verse comes to my mind:

"But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
1 Corinthians 15:57

Delia Mezea (Social Worker at Sunset House)



BEING RELEVANT ! From **Simona Tosity**

Yesterday I received a phone call from one of our suppliers for carton boxes that we use to deliver flowers to LIDL. We have a long relationship of collaboration; they are based also in Oradea.

Obviously, I was expecting a discussion about the delivery terms, change in the pricing policy etc – but she actually said to me: "Mrs. Tosity, my phone call might sound strange, but last night I was searching on Google for an Elderly Care Centre for my father, and I found SMILES along with your name as the Director of Residential Centres! For the first 3 seconds, I thought it must be a pure coincidence. But let's face it, your name is not common at all, so I said to myself, let's make a call. It might be the same person!"

And surprise, surprise! It was the very same person!

So, we established a meeting at Sunset House and at the end of our meeting, after we discussed through all the 'technical aspects' she asked me: "So, a Glasshouse and Residential Centres? How are these two linked?"

Of course, my answer was a bit superficial, talking about how smart I am (not) being already late to my next meeting! But on my way back home - while I was driving and listening to Katie Melua, I started to think a bit more about her question and how I really feel about it.

I basically share my working life every day, between 2 separate worlds; a world where people are counting the years and another world where flowers are counted by their beauty and in sales potential and money value.

Even if it seems completely opposite, both worlds speak about cycles of life and how we define 'relevance'.

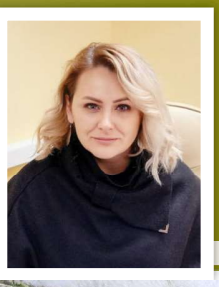
Flowers are being defined by seasons: they grow, bloom with a spectacular beauty and after that, they dry and die. People have their own seasons, spring with plans, summer with activity, autumn with accountability and winter with peace.

We appreciate flowers, if and when they are in bloom, for Easter, Christmas, International Women's Day, Weddings - everyone is buying compulsively, but once the period passes, no one is interested anymore and millions of beautiful flowers become trash and compost – because they are not relevant anymore!

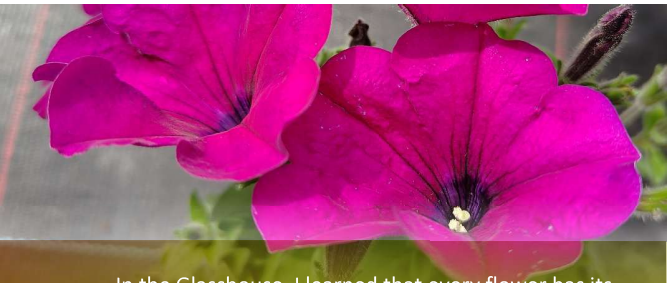
Society also tends to appreciate people, as long as we produce. While we are an asset, we contribute to the world, when we lead and we are visible - but once we get to the age of slowing down – society puts us on this 'invisible list' – we are just not relevant anymore.

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.***



In the Glasshouse, I learned that every flower has its moment, and their value is beyond their blooming time, and even when they fade, the roots are deep in the soil working for the next season.

A similar situation is with the Elderly – even if they are less visible in the society – their roots are actually the rock that holds the whole world together. We benefit today from their hard work of yesterday.

Our society should not establish how relevant or not that is, but should look at the heart. As long as you can offer a smile, a piece of advice, a hug, a lesson learned – where there is still life, in any kind of shape – there is relevance.

Relevancy should not be measured in how popular we are, but in what we leave behind – our Legacy.

Flowers don't bloom only because you put them in a posh shop window or on a fancy table. They bloom as a result of your care, and people are the same. They bloom in places where they are loved and cared for. Whether residents in our Centres or flowers in our Glasshouse, they all need Love and Care to fulfil their potential.

My apologies if you think I got a bit too philosophical. Just my reflections from speaking 'Residential Care' to a 'Supplier of Boxes' to deliver our Flowers to Lidl! Quite a combination.

I know you also love the numbers, just like I do, and you are keen to read that in October, immediately after we delivered the 30,000 chrysanthemums and 9,000 lavenders, over 600,000 bulbs were waiting for us, plus over 52,000 dianthuses, and over 17,000 lavenders were waiting for us to plant!

When I say 'us', I don't mean me, because we have some incredible SMILES supporters – I call them friends, who visit us every year in October. They know how incredibly busy the month is for the glasshouse staff who just work, work, work long hours each day!

They all love flowers, but they love people more, and thankfully, they love Smiles!

And this, my Friends, means to be RELEVANT!

Simona

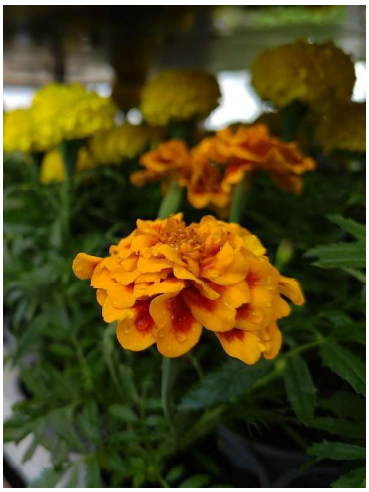














As always, we are excited to get new colleagues to join the team, in the effort of making a greater impact in the lives of the people we work with. We are particularly excited because we were looking for a while now for someone to join the Outreach team, and we believe God did answer our prayers, once again!

Claudiu is joining the Smiles team to help the whole set of activities we run under Outreach Pillar, from going out on the field for family visits, to getting involved in Dezna camps, and everything in between, which is a lot, as you know!



His rich professional experience, although in other areas than social work, as well as being a Christian who shares the Smiles values, will allow him to bring a good contribution to our vision! We believe he will contribute substantially to achieving our purposes, by spreading the Gospel, as well as helping practically, as we all do, in various other ways!

The Outreach Pillar of the Smiles Foundation benefits from a particularly special blessing - we could expand our work as much as anything, should we have the support and the right people to do it! As the human capital is the most valuable, please continue to pray for us, for the purpose-driven people to join Smiles, as well as for the support needed in order to have them! We are grateful for God's answer to our prayers and we are optimistic for the future contribution from Claudiu!

Please pray with us!

Prayer is a dialogue, we tell God what we want from Him, most of the times, but also God tells us, if we listen closely, what He wants from us! When we pray, we should always allow for His voice to get through.

Jesus says, when asked to clarify His status: *"My sheep listen to my voice, I know them and they will follow me." John 10:27, NIV.* If we ever feel like we are not sure of what and why we need to go through, there is only one thing we can do: bring it to God and listen to what He will say about it. We just need to be quiet, so we can hear His voice. Let's pray...

1 *We all experience worry and disappointment, especially when family or friends are allowed to endure serious problems - let's pray for all those situations, and ask for God's peace, beyond every understanding, to build an even stronger faith in His will!*

2 *Through all the efforts we all put in Smiles' work, emotionally and financially, time and energy, passion, hope and dreams, we shall never stop believing we will make a difference! The seed is good and will produce desirable results in the fertile ground!*

3 *Dezna Outreach Centre is currently going through the procedure of upgrading the building to the legal requirements, in order to continue its work from Spring next year. Please pray that all will be successful and we can resume the activities soon!*

4 *As we stay quiet in our prayer and seek the Lord's voice, let us trust that He is the Father of Light and indeed all good things come from Him. He will guide us into the future, carry us and provide, as He promised He will never leave or forsake us!*

Thank You!

We know it isn't always easy for you to continue supporting us, particularly through difficult times like these, but we are so grateful that you do so, as our work really depends on it!

We appreciate your financial contributions, as well as the time and effort you put in sharing our work around, and most of all, the time you spend praying for us and the people we are working with!

May God bless everything you do and reward your generosity and kindness! We pray and trust that God takes care of us all!



Whilst for right now it is rather sad to see Dezna Outreach Centre being dismantled by the contractors, it is still all for good purpose, as they make significant improvements with the cost of £200,000 / $250,000!

We hope and pray that by the end of this year the work to upgrade the building to the requirements of State Fire Department will be close to finished and soon after we'll be able to make plans for next year! This unwanted break lasted for too long!

The Smiles FOUNDATION

Latest updates from Smiles in Romania

newsletter

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