OUTREACH PILLAR *Report*

MAY 2025

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 our Outreach Report, which brings to you news about our work here in Romania!

There is something about Outreach work that makes it special, exciting and very rewarding, at least most of the time, if not always! Particularly, for our team, as we do not like sitting at a desk everyday, we rather enjoy going out and seeing people! And as expected, everyone has their own specific needs and desires and we are trying to help, as possible, to meet those needs and achieve those desires.

I am very grateful to God for the colleagues I have in the Outreach Pillar, especially the two Andreeas, who are both very willing to do what is needed and even moving furniture is not too much for them, although I have a feeling they wish this will not happen too often. And indeed, this isn't something we do every day, but sometimes we do get the opportunity.



We were asked if we could help with a bed, a cabinet, maybe a table, there are these three people living together in a small rented place, father and son and one of their friends. They moved in from the streets, so this is actually part of our Homeless support, to encourage them in their new home.

As we did have something available, through the good will and kind support of our donors, we went ahead and dismantled and then transported the requested furniture, like proper professionals, we only missed the yellow uniform and big ad on our van. But we made their day and we were happy to see them happy! They promised the furniture will be put together nicely, they have some friends to help them, and we look forward seeing what they could came up with next time when we visit!

Adi Matiș, *Director of Smiles Outreach Pillar*

FIELD VISIT *updates*



As you know, we're always busy with field visits, doing our best to support the people in our programme. I wanted to share a short update on what we've been doing recently.

We continue distributing food packages, which are a great help, and also assist with some specific needs, when it is needed. For example, just recently we provided paint for a family to renovate their apartment, helped someone pay an urgent invoice, accompanied a woman to an eye doctor, and supported a person with a physical disability in obtaining a document for free city transport.

We've also been looking for new people to support, and with God's help, we've added a few people to our program: a mother with three daughters who recently lost her husband and lives in very poor conditions; another family with two small children going through a hard financial time which we decided we will help for a while; a mother with a child suffering from an illness and was in need of some help with food; and a group of men living in a social house who needed furniture (which we provided for them) and are in need of food support.

We thank God every day that we are able to be a helping hand and thank you for your continued support and prayers.

Andreea Andrei, *Social Worker Outreach Pillar*

PILLAR *updates*

We have been sending this report to you, our generous supporters, for a year now, since May last year. We are happy to have been able to inform you about the progress of our programmes and hopefully you found our writings interesting and encouraging.

The Outreach Pillar continues to serve out in the community, by supporting individuals and families, one way or another. Sometimes we need to explore new ways, with an open mind, as the more established procedures do not always function efficiently. But we do not mind!

As a short update on staff, Sidonia is still on medical leave, she visited us recently at the office, her condition is still very much uncertain and there are slim chances she will be able to come back to work full-time. But otherwise, she is reasonably well and continues her treatment as prescribed.

Andreea Andrei does more and more in her position as Social Worker and her professional abilities seem to grow as well. The same she wants (and we want too!) to see happening also in regard of her driving skills! She obtained her driving license, but a lot of practice is needed before she can be confident at the wheel. So, when we go out on the field, she has the opportunity to develop the pilot-like abilities. We try to keep it safe!

Andreea Muresan, on the other hand, is preparing for the big event! No, it is not graduation, but something even bigger! She's getting married! On June 28th we will witness her saying "Yes!" to Marcus and we will celebrate the new family and pray for God's blessings over them!

Pastor Vasile continues to be a servant to many, he did not loose his spirit, despite the many challenges he needs to deal with. On one hand, he carries the burden of guiding people of Rapa and Tileagd churches, but he also needs to see his health problems under control. Please do pray for him, as well as for all of us!

In terms of updates, there would be a lot to write about, but these are just some highlights. As for Adi (yours truly) life is at a stage when seeing children growing and becoming more and more independent brings both joy and cold thrills, then seeing parents getting older and a little bit weaker than they used to be brings thoughts and concerns… As it goes! But all good and in God's hands!

Thank you for reading these updates and again, it is great to see how your support continues to make possible our work here. Hopefully soon we'll be able to see each other, at least with some of you, either here in Romania or when we come over.



LIFE STORIES SERIES

The Olah family, made up of a mother and two daughters, is going through an extremely difficult time. Living in a rented home, their monthly expenses far exceed their financial means. The mother, diagnosed with diabetes and in poor health, is unable to work, so the entire financial burden is on her daughters. But they aren't as able as they need to be, due to various challenges.

The older daughter is a university student, but due to a lack of financial resources, she is facing difficulties in continuing her education. She has often been on the verge of giving up, and her emotional struggles — dealing with depression and undergoing treatment — make everyday life even harder. In addition to basic needs, the family is in urgent need of support to pay for her university tuition, which they cannot afford.

The younger daughter is an important source of moral support for the family. Actively involved in church life, she finds strength in her faith to keep moving forward, but that means she is also a support anchor for all of the family.

The monthly package we provide is a vital support for the Olah family. The assistance they receive brings not only material help but also a ray of hope. They are deeply grateful for the support and see it as a true blessing in their lives.

Andreea Mureșan, *Social Worker Outreach Pillar*

COMMUNITIES *update*

In terms of communities updates, we should mention Râpa, as it is still one of the places we have a presence in and our input is still relevant, although we did reduce the work there. That is because of many reasons. Firstly, as Sidonia is not able to work, the children programme that we run in Râpa has been suspended. Occassionaly, we still get there, but there is no regular structure, for the time being. Then, on the other hand, after many years of support, we need to encourage the members of the community to take life more seriously and become more independent, as they can. And many of them did become more independent, which is always a good thing!



There has been various difficulties in the community. A while ago, Cornel, one of the brothers, died because of a long and severe substance abuse, then another one, Petrisor also died, as a result of a stomach cancer that developed rapidly and fatally. We reported on this last year.

More recently, around the Easter Celebration, there was a big outbreak of viral hepatitis type B in the community. Basically, each family was affected, mainly children, but there were some adults presenting symptoms as well. By the nature of it, this was not very dangerous, but of course it was a big problem and a reason for concern. Pastor Vasile helped them as he could, as well as we did, by facilitating their access to medical care, both locally and in Oradea's hospitals. You can see Sebi in the picture, while he was in the hospital, under treatment.

There are some new children in the community too. Octavian will bring his sixth child to be blessed in the church this very next Sunday, but there are some others who had children recently. This group tends to get larger and larger, and hopefully the new local authorities will do a better job than last time in providing better options for them, to develop not only in number, but also in education and social responsibility.

Prayer Points

"And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith." Matthew 21:22

In the past months in Romania, but probably anytime and anywhere in the world, this verse was used by many Christians to pray for one or another outcome of elections, getting a new car or a new house! Or healing, or relief, or anything else...

But consider this, when praying with the above in mind:

1. Our Lord says this while also saying our faith should move mountains, when we ask without any doubt - and yet no mountains were ever moved this way! Obviously, it's about another kind of "mountain", which builds inside ourselves.

2. There is nothing more powerful than a prayer which asks for God's intervention, but never fails to thank and praise Him! Remember the young Jews before the firey furnace, they affirmed their trust in God, while allowing for His sovereignty in their life, or death. He always knows best!

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!