



School For Life

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Reg. Charity No. 1062953
Patron: Robert Carlyle, OBE

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a coală Pentru Viață

We would like to thank everyone who so generously supported us with our crisis appeal this year. This has raised over £3000 which has relieved the immediate problem of food shortages for those who live in the hospital.

We have organised the buying and delivery of essential and nutritional food and our staff oversee mealtimes to ensure those in the most need are receiving food. We are concerned that without adequate supervision, the weaker residents will be less likely to benefit from the additional food within the hospital than the stronger, more robust residents. We are keen to assist the hospital to boost the current staffing levels in a way which will assist a better distribution of food.



Although we are still looking into how this crisis has come about these are some of the factors which appear to have contributed to the situation. Firstly, the Romanian political environment over the last year has seen three ministers of health in parliament, who have activated changes in how the health budget is distributed which has had a direct impact on the hospital's budget. In addition to this and further worsening the situation, last year's heat wave across Europe has destroyed the majority of crops

in the country, which has led to huge increases in the price of basic food supplies.

The Guardian reported that, "The searing weather, especially in central and eastern Europe, has forced countries that usually export food to import it for the first time in decades. Several, including Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania, are experiencing rising food prices". The Ukraine has seen a 75% decrease in its harvest on normal years and Moldova an 80% decrease, both of which border with Romania. The United Nation's Food and Agricultural Organisation, "has sent a mission to assess the emergency, losses are being compared to those of 1945, the worst harvest in memory" (reported by John Vidal and Heather Stewart, 11/9/03, www.guardian.co.uk).

All these factors have contributed to the appalling situation I found the residents of the hospital in during my visit in September 2003. We have now been able to support the hospital in this crisis in the provision of basic food supplies.

Thank you to everyone for your generosity and support during this appeal.

Sylvia Gurr, Trustee

Scoala Pentru Viata mark the festive season in Siret.... Small Christmas gifts were distributed to children in the Hospital in Siret by Doina, Director of Scoala Pentru Viata, and other members of SPV staff. Doina and Radu held a New Year's party for the teaching assistants at the foundation. The Siret Hospital Director came, as did the Mayor, and some of the students from similar projects in Siret. A lot of fun was had by all! We hope to have some photos in the next edition of the newsletter.

A very Happy New Year to you all from SPV & SFL.
Thank you for your on-going support.

a Word from our Wonderful teaching assistants

By Katie Goodier and Ruth Brown

School for Life has four wonderful teaching assistants working in the school; Daniella, Viorica, Rodika and Lenuta. These young people formerly lived in the hospital and have been trained up by the teachers to work with the students. They live in a section of the school building that has been converted into living accommodation, and are supported in developing their independent living skills by a number of staff employed by School for Life. The charity's long-term aim is to buy a home in Siret for the assistants that is independent of the school building, in order that they will be able to live fully independent lives. Lenuta works alongside Stefan in the afternoons with a group of young men from the hospital, and Rodika works in the mornings with Angelica and a group of young ladies. They kindly agreed to be interviewed this summer in order to share with us their experiences at School for Life.

Gavriluta Elena (Lenuta) aged 25 (right) :

"Before I came to work for SFL things weren't so good. I didn't enjoy sharing a room with other people. I helped staff from the hospital iron clothes. I was helping them clean the staff offices. I sometimes played football.

There were twenty-four of us in the room. We kept our personal things in boxes under the bed. I was very used to people stealing my things. At the foundation (SFL) it's great. Everyone speaks very nicely to us and they help me if I have a problem. We don't have a lot of space in our rooms but I have freedom and I go on lots of trips.

People treat me with respect and the same as other people. I really like being able to go into town when I want. When I was in the hospital I had to ask permission and could only go out for a very short period of time. It was very limited. I love my work here, teaching the lads and working around

the house. I love teaching them sport and how to look after the animals, and the colour games, and how to draw. I also enjoy teaching them how to look after the garden. I am very happy to help the students from the hospital, they are just like me, there is very little difference. I feel confident about the future and what I am doing, and feel that I'll be able to do whatever I choose to. There is nothing about SFL that I would like to change, I love it here".

Making biscuits- a new experience!



Rodika, aged 24 (above):

"Living in the hospital was sometimes good, sometimes bad. It varied. I was beaten by people there, often by the biggest girl in the salon. The food was okay, but here the food is much better. The only thing that I did in the hospital was clean it and wash the floors. The big girls watched TV, we were smaller and not allowed. We went to bed at 8pm and woke up at 6am. We ate at 7am, midday and 6pm. I went to school in the mornings. In the afternoons we stayed in the grounds. In winter it was too cold so we stayed inside. I was only allowed out to go to church. Occasionally in the summer I was allowed to walk to the 'Gradina de Vara' ('Summer Garden', an area of grass land close by the hospital). We didn't have any toys to play with though.

It is better here than in the hospital. Here there is not any noise, nobody fighting or beating me. The people who are working here are good. I'm not bored. I go into the town, prepare our food, watch television, listen to music, embroider. I like my work very much. I like the students and enjoy talking with them and helping them. They are very pleased to come here. They like it very much. If they are unable to come one day they will stay in their room and cry. I talk with them and explain that it's okay and that they will come the next day.

I am learning to look after myself. I don't like to cook very much, but I have learned to make Somaes (a traditional Romanian dish) and to cook potatoes. I really enjoy looking after the garden, and weeding. I love the chickens, and I look after all of the animals. There weren't any animals in the hospital to look after. Lenuta is good at cleaning inside, we help each other.

Only God knows what the future will hold. I would like to continue to work in the garden. I have taught the students how to look after the garden and they love it (although they still prefer to listen to music!). It is very important for the students to learn how to work in the garden because when they grow up they will have their own house and will need to learn how to look after themselves. I like everything here, I can't lie, I like it all!



A Big **THANK YOU** to Pocklington Montessori School

By Katie Goodier

School for Life has been very fortunate this last year to have had the support of Pocklington Montessori School who have been raising funds to send some of their teachers out to Siret to share their skills and ideas with our Romanian teaching team. Three teachers, Denise Hamer, Tricia Walker and Claudia Gheradelli, spent a busy week in Siret this summer, working alongside the teachers and assistants, providing a wonderful addition to the school.

Amongst some of the highlights was the fantastic musical programme that Denise entertained us all with, involving students and staff alike, and the reciprocal interactive fitness program carried out in the wonderful gym by Lenuta (teaching assistant), and Stefan (educational director).

Both the Romanian and the Montessori teachers agreed that the week had been very useful with the Montessori teaching ethos and many of its methods being directly applicable to our school's approach. The Montessori teachers are keen to continue their links with School for Life, with a follow up visit planned for early next year focusing more specifically on supporting the school's social development programme.

On behalf of School for Life I would like to say a big thank you to Denise, Tricia and Claudia for their ideas and support, and their sensitive, insightful approach. Thank you as well to the supporters of Pocklington Montessori School for all their fundraising efforts and for the gifts that they sent out to the young people in Siret. Tricia has kindly provided us with her reflections on the weeks visit. Read on for a taste of how the trip in the summer went...



Stefan making music with the students

Ski | | Shari ng- montessori methods

By Tricia Walker, Denise Hamer & Claudia Gheradelli

School For Life/ Scoala Pentru Viata places a strong emphasis on developing good relationships with the local community and with the key staff at the 'hospital' where the 150 children live.

The staff & our work

The staff at the school were fantastic. Skilled, passionate, proud, sensitive, talented, respectful and trustworthy. Stefan teaches the young men and is responsible for much of the running of the school, and Angelica teaches the young women. They were very open to seeing how we worked. We established excellent relationships with them and at the end of our trip they requested a meeting to discuss how to capitalise on our time there and move things forward.

Stefan has expressed an interest to learn more about Montessori method having seen how we were able to move the students on in their learning. We moved some students onto writing, letter recognition, freehand drawing and painting, counting, singing and using rhythm. We also spent a lot of time building self-esteem and confidence through name games, music and movement.

We went swimming one afternoon in the River Siret with the students and Stefan and we helped set up a temporary classroom in the hospital on the last morning that we were there. This classroom was a totally new venture and was visited that morning by a government official and a journalist from a Romanian national newspaper who watched us working with the students and heard us singing and making music with them - very loud music! The hospital has now given School For Life the go ahead to set this classroom up as a permanent concern, meaning that many more residents will benefit from the opportunity of education, previously denied to them.

The trip was extraordinarily rewarding and challenging and we have each been very moved by the experience. We are very confident that we can build on the links we have established.

financial report

by Keith Lownsborough, Treasurer

The cash **balance** at 3 November 2003 stood at

£15 428.44. Cash has been transferred to Romania to cover the budget until the end of December. Our **monthly income** of standing orders currently stands at £932 (up from £865 at the AGM) per month and an additional £5 per month pending, with £1 060 per annum in quarterly or annual payments. Of this, £854 per month is given under the **gift aid scheme** giving a potential tax rebate of over £2 890 next year. The tax relief claim of £2 964.08 has been sent but we have not yet received the cash. Anyone completing a tax return from next year may donate to School for Life any or part of any tax rebate that is owed to them. That donation will qualify for additional tax relief via the Gift Aid scheme. Quote reference **QAD12CG**, listed on the Inland Revenue website from April 2004. This will not alter your standing order or existing Gift Aid scheme.

cash requirement

projections (in £ sterling) :-

	2002/3	2003/4
Teachers	1 067	1080
Assistants	640	672
Director / Dep. Director	1133	552
Other salaries	4 389	4320
Training	200	192
Taxes	2 000	4080
Building Costs	1917	1496
Other Costs	520	1160
Car Costs	240	240
Girls Cost	2 400	1680
Norway Contribution	(+800)	
Travel	360	480
TOTAL	£14, 066	£15, 952

The budget for 2003-4 has only been supplied by SPV for the first six months. The above yearly figures are the projected six months, doubled.

income

at present:

Monthly S.O.	10 980
Quarterly / annual S.O.	1060
Tax Relief	2 900
TOTAL	£14, 940

Our financial policy is for the budget not to exceed the monthly income. The above figures (£14 940) of standing orders and tax relief are just short of covering the budget. The various fund raising activities make up the short fall.

fund raising

since the Gregson Music Bonanza include: Damian Bisseker, £545 for the Windsor Half Marathon; Josh Wong, £200 London 10 km run; Katie & Rob Goodier, £557 Munro Challenge; Goodrington Methodists £386 bringing their total to at least £1341, Gregson CD sales £65; Richard Davies and the START Team who have raised approx. £1500; and donations from the food appeal £3380 with an additional £492 in tax relief due next autumn. Many thanks to you all.

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Please send contributions for the summer newsletter to Lizzy by 30th May 2004.

Special thanks also to Katie Goodier, Ruth Brown, Kate Purdy, and Olivia Gould.

Thank you also to the West End Montessorri School for their generous donation, via Hannah Clements, of Montisorri teaching equipment.