



School For Life

Newsletter Edition 12, June 2004

Reg. Charity No. 1062953

Patron: Robert Carlyle, OBE

Școala Pentru Viață

TEN YEARS ON

by Dave Emptage (Trustee)

School for Life is celebrating its ten year anniversary. In 1994 a group of about 16 – 20 volunteers and a small committed group of Romanian teachers started the organisation. The volunteers had come to the end of their work in the hospital and the teachers all wanted to see the prospects and lives of the children in the hospital improve and develop.

The volunteers had emotional reactions to their work in Romania, their own ideals and other reasons that brought them together to pool sufficient money to give salaries to the teachers on an initial 6 month contract. Most volunteers were returning to England with no money and no job to go to, or to continue education income. Mad, naive; these things, intention were There was degree of



We estimated cost of a Granada (not glamorous UK) we could school building and salaries for the year. It would be “rude” not to!

with higher with a limited stupid, reckless, perhaps all of but the spirit and sound and brave. also a limited common sense:

that for about the second hand Ford a particularly purchase in the possibly fund a

We agreed that as we became employed we would set up standing orders into a bank account and encourage others to do the same. Thank you all. We also figured that if the worst came to the worst we could fund the first year on personal bank overdrafts. Things could only get better.

It was a very special day when we opened the teachers fund account in Siret with Veronica Vicol our first director.

I remember feeling a huge mixture of emotions and concerns. But the overriding feeling was one of excitement hope for the future.

The teachers started working in porta-cabins on the hospital site while we raised funds, and waited for the opportunity to purchase a property and land close to the hospital. Meanwhile we registered the charity in the UK. This was reasonably easy (with the exception of the accounts!). I'll take this opportunity to thank our treasurer Keith - one go at the accounting was enough for me and Natalie. I remember consulting an accountant. He said, 'You really shouldn't be doing this; you don't know what the hell your doing!' He was right, but he did grudgingly help us to pull them into shape. We never did understand the plus/minus bit at the end and probably never will.

(cont. over)



AGM on 16th October at 1pm

at Phil & Lizzy's, 4 Redford Grove,
Edinburgh EH13 0AH

ALL WELCOME!

Plenty of space to stay, bring a tent for the garden,
or we can book you in to a B&B/hotel if you prefer.

Contact details on back page.

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The Charity Commission is a well established organisation which we have found to be helpful and efficient. Most communication could easily be done by post or telephone. Only once did Marianne have to make a mad dash to London to get a document that cost her 50 pence. As well as monitoring charities' work and accounts, the Charity Commission also provide help, advice, and legal templates tailored to suit the kind of organisation that is required. In our case, we are a Charitable Trust.



In Romania registration took a lot longer. Veronica and Martyn had to work extremely hard. They made numerous visits to Suceava 40km away and to Bucharest - the other end of the country- to consult with the Department of Child Protection, The Ministry of Health, lawyers and solicitors. Without their stoicism, commitment and stamina the Romanian sister organisation to School For Life, Scoala Pentru Viata , would not exist today.

In the early days a feature of a visit to Siret used to entail taking out 6 month's worth of budget in US dollars cash. I hated it! It just felt so scary. I was aware that people's salaries, the whole functioning of the organisation, depended on this money. It had all been donated by you, our supporters and the thought of losing it, getting robbed or worse used to preoccupy my mind. The word paranoid would be quite appropriate. Although I have usually taken an overnight sleeper to Siret from Bucharest I have never slept a wink. Banks now reliably do international transfers and these are our only costs in the UK. Money well spent; thank you Bardays Bank.

In 1994 School for Life was a shared dream. The children in the Spital De Copii had a very profound effect on the people who worked with them. On visiting Siret, the welcome you received was like nothing else I have experienced. As you turned up in the morning there was probably 200 people around who were pleased to see you. They had a capacity for



(cont. from p.2)

fun and life far beyond what could be provided at the time. I remember going through all the authorisations to take a group of children for their first walk out of the year. It was probably March: The levels of excitement were so great it took 5 of us 45 minutes to get the boots on 20 children. I remember feeling as proud as a football manager leading a team out at Wembley stadium. They drank in every moment of the walk: Machina (car) Ratza (duck) Ciine (dog) Pisica (cat) Copac (tree) Apa (water/river) floare (flower), basilica (church). It was an explosion on their senses. Experiences of life stimulate the need for developing vocabulary and speech.

There is a man in Siret who will still tell me about the time he went swimming with Phil in the Apa Siret. Almost certainly the best experience of his life. One day George ran down 3 flights of stairs with a chair tied to his bottom because he wanted to go afara (outside); what a spirit.

I could give similar anecdotes for pages, as could many people who have been touched and moved by the children in Siret. I guess what I'm trying to say is if the children could have spoken with one voice I think they might have said, 'We want more Life'. During the first few years the Scoala Pentru Viata team under Veronica and Martyn's leadership had achieved this: They built a beautiful School building with a beautiful garden. A place which is safe, stimulating and happy. Where people have the opportunity to develop, learn, and experience life. Without your support this would not have been achieved. Thank you.



Photos by Veronica and Martyn, of a recent trip to Sucevita - May 2004

Fun Walk for Life

To celebrate the ten year anniversary of SFL/SPV we are holding a 10km sponsored Fun Walk starting at Hyde Park, London on

Saturday 25 Sept 2004

Everybody is welcome to join in with all or part of the celebrations; bring along a picnic, join us on as much of the walk as you can manage (bring kids, dogs, fancy dress...)
The walk ends at the

South Bank for an evening event with raffle, auction and games

If you would rather not walk, come along and meet up with us in the evening. If you would like to support the event and raise some money for SFL/SPV, we will be selling hand-designed 10 year anniversary T-shirts on the day for less than a fiver, or you can sponsor a walker, or seek sponsors of your own (sponsor forms available from Lizzy Keetley via post or email). Help us marvel at the fact the charity has grown from humble beginnings to the successful project it is today, thanks to your ongoing financial donations and support.

financial report

by Keith Lownsbrough, Treasurer

The cash **balance** at 30 April 2004 stood at £7275.99. Cash has been transferred to Romania to cover the budget until the end of August.

Our **monthly income** of standing orders currently stands at £947 (up from £865 at the AGM) per month, 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. Anyone completing a tax return 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. This will not alter your standing order or existing Gift Aid scheme.

cash requirement projections (in £ sterling) :-

	2002/3	2003/4
SPV staff and assistants	7229	8076
Training	200	192
Taxes	2 000	4560
Building Costs	1917	1520
Other Costs	520	1618
Car Costs	240	240
Girls Cost	2 400	1680
Norway Contribution	(+800)	
Travel	360	480
TOTAL	£14, 066	£18,366

The main increase is in the level of taxes.

income at present:

Monthly S.O.	11364
Quarterly / annual S.O.	1060
Tax Relief	2 900
TOTAL	£15,324

Our financial policy is for the budget not to exceed the monthly income. The above figures (£15,324) of standing orders and tax relief are short of covering the budget. The various fund raising activities make up the short fall.

Notable **fund raising** since the Gregson Music Bonanza include:

Goodrington Methodists £386 bringing their total to at least £1341; Richard Davies and the START Team who have raised approx. £1500; donations from the food appeal £3542,66 with an additional £492 in tax relief due next autumn; £276.57 Northcote Lodge School. Many thanks to you all, including the West End Montessorri School for their generous donation, via Hannah Clements, of Montisorri teaching equipment.

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Please send contributions for the winter newsletter to Lizzy (ejkeetley@hotmail.com) by 30th November 2004.