



School For Life

Newsletter Edition 15, Dec 2005
Registered Charity No. 1062953
Patron: Robert Carlyle OBE

Școala Pentru Viață

Welcome to the bi-annual newsletter for School for Life. Please feel free to pass it on to friends, make copies, or request an electronic version (pdf) from ejkeetley@hotmail.com. Merry Christmas and happy new year to all of our friends and supporters; thank you for your ongoing interest in the Romanian project.

School For Life is a registered UK charity dedicated to funding, educating and training children and adults in Siret, Romania, so they can develop the skills they need to lead fulfilling lives. The money raised is sent to our sister organisation in Siret, "Școala Pentru Viata", which is led and staffed exclusively by people from the local community. All donations and funds received go directly to the project in Siret (except for bank charges to transfer funds to Romania). All other



Two of the SPV students in the School ("Foundation") in Siret

costs, including regular trips to Siret to support the project and feedback to the UK charity meetings, and all publicity, are met by the Trustees and School For Life Friends themselves. So more than 99p of every pound you have given goes directly to the children and young adults who need it. And 99p still goes a long way in Romania as you will see from the Financial Report on the back page!

The model of working with the children and young people from the Neuropsychiatric Hospital in Siret developed by SFL/SPV has proved over the last 11 years to be successful; but our teachers are full of good ideas and are keen to reach out to more of the children and young people who remain in the institution with little therapeutic input. The new Hospital Director and Psychologist who run the institution where our school children and young adults live are keen to work closely with Școala Pentru Viata, as you will see from the Trustee's report on page 2. It is up to us in the UK to help SPV find the funds to work with those children, many with profound disabilities.

Many of you will receive embroidered samplers with this newsletter made voluntarily by the children and young people of "Școala Pentru Viata". On my recent trip to Siret the children asked me to pass on their thanks to all their supporters in the UK who have given them a new life, and this is just one way they chose to show you their appreciation. Let's keep up the momentum and let 2006 bring promise of sustained support to the project, as Romania attempts to enter the EU, with all the uncertainties and possibilities that will bring. On behalf of all the Trustees, SPV team, and the 65 children we currently work with, thank you!

Lizzy Keetley

Update from Siret

from the August report by Katie Sessions and Sylvia Gurr, Trustees

Positive changes are afoot in the large institution where the students who attend the SPV School (or “Foundation” as it translates from Romanian) live. At the beginning of July, 25 young people moved from the Hospital into a smaller group home in Siret, called “Neptune”. There is an activity Club at Neptune, but no official schooling as yet. Due to a resulting shortfall in staff numbers in the main hospital, the Director of the Hospital approached Stefan (Director of Education, SPV) to ask the SPV teachers to work with larger groups of young people in the Hospital itself. This is hoped to be a temporary arrangement, but

a positive one, as it shows the possibilities of partnership working with the State-run Hospital and suggests their value of and respect for the work of SPV.



SPV teachers hold regular sessions in the hospital to include young people unable to attend the SPV “Foundation”

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*Positive change & partnership
 with the Hospital*

Developments have also been made to the SPV buildings. The School (or “Foundation”) building is now more clearly distinguished from the building where the 4 young people originally from the Hospital (Dana, Viorica, Lenuta and Rodica) live, and a cosy living room has been created for them. New windows have been bought for Lenuta’s room, who previously had no natural light source at all,

and £600 has been requested to pay for sand and tiles to finish a patio area. Lenuta works so hard with extra cleaning jobs in the town (that she has chosen to do in addition to being Teaching Assistant), that she managed to save money to buy her own bed and table, and is saving up for a washing machine! Coming from an institution where it was almost impossible to own your own clothes, we could never have dreamed this was possible.

The students have progressed incredibly over the last two years, appearing so much calmer and socially more confident and appropriate in their interactions with each other, and other people. They had a strong sense of group identity, displaying a very caring attitude towards each other. Stefan said that three of the boys are also beginning to speak for the first time. During this summer visit, the group went to the river for a walk and a swim, the boys thoroughly enjoying playing in the water with balls, with Lenuta the teaching assistant encouraging them to play together. Stefan set up his fishing rod and they were all fascinated to see the fish he caught! A wonderful natural learning opportunity.



During a summer visit the boys' group had a trip to the Siret river- wonderful natural learning

Katie and Sylvia also attended a teaching session in the Hospital with Marianna, one of the SPV teachers. Again there was a very calm and happy atmosphere, with all the young people working individually on a variety of activities. Some were sewing, some were colouring in shapes of different fruits and items of clothing, several young people were completing jigsaws and other activities. There were various pictures and examples of work arranged on the walls which the students were keen to point out!

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The last afternoon of the visit from the School For Life trustees was spent in the gym with a large group of students. Whilst things were pretty hectic at times due to such a large group being in a confined space, the young people really enjoyed themselves, and had a great time playing parachute games in the gym before moving to the school room for individual table top activities. The session ended with a slice of watermelon each outside on the patio. It was lovely to see two of the young people being encouraged by the teaching assistants Lenuta and Rodica to go to the chicken pen (where the chickens are named after the UK Trustees according to size!!) to feed the left overs to the hens. A really wonderful atmosphere.



An SPV student feeds the chickens

.....
 • A desire to develop expressive
 • arts...
 •

The partnership between Stefan and Doina (Director of Administration) is working well. Doina has expressed how she sees her role as a colleague and facilitator to the SPV team and draws on each persons' strengths, supporting them where she can, rather than telling them what they should be doing. She has every confidence in Stefan's role as Director of Education. Stefan himself is very interested in developing his skills and ideas in the teaching of expressive arts (drama, art, music, PE etc). This is a very new area within traditional Romanian teaching, and he was introduced to it through a number of workshops at the conference he attended in a nearby town in Romania last year. He is currently following up contacts of organisations who will provide such training in Romania, such as Music as Therapy, Impart Training in Music, Art, Movement and Play provided by the Romanian Relief Fund. If we in the UK can help SPV access additional funds to meet the cost of this training, we think this would be very worthwhile.

Any ideas?

The teachers are keen for new ideas for activities and resources, such as sensory activities, circle time, and specialist approaches for working with people with profound multiple learning difficulties. Skill sharing with a Montessori- trained teacher who visited the project previously is being considered. Katie is chasing up books on the Impart manual list, some of which are written in Romanian; Stefan's English is excellent and Will and Olivia Gould provide an invaluable translation facility, so if anyone has any practical idea books, please let Katie know!



Stefan, SPV Director of Education, with his new baby daughter



Doina, SPV Director of Administration, offers invaluable support!

Stefan's wish list

As well as the ongoing budgetary requirements (see back page), Stefan is especially keen access a video camera, an electric piano and a slide projector. Can you help?

Please contact any of the Trustees, or Stefan direct.

Music session in the gym →



The School For Life AGM was held on 8th October and the Chairman's Annual Report is available in full (contact ejkeetley@hotmail.com).

Main points:

- The hospital, where the young people live, has undergone major reorganisation this year with the appointment of a new Director and Psychologist, keen to split the institution of some several hundred young people into smaller residential units.

- SFL's application to the National Lottery was unsuccessful, partly because we do not employ people in the UK (which to us is a great strength of the SFL/SPV model), and also because Romania is due to enter the EU.



Olga helps a student

-SPV feel the planned extension is not as important as a minibus for the project, to reach more young people and support socialisation and integration, and to broaden their experiences.

- Additional fundraising remains crucial, standing orders do not cover the running of the project. Grant applications to be pursued from UK and Romanian end, perhaps in partnership with the Hospital Director.

- Key developments in the reorganisation of SPV "Foundation" living arrangements, initiated by Doina and Stefan and fully supported by SFL. Improvements in students' abilities, confidence, independence, group identity. Improved integration of the young people into the local community observed consistently on Trustee visits to the project.

- Development of community outreach work by SPV to young people who no longer live in the Hospital.

And from the Trustees Meeting: Welcome to Katie Goodier appointed as a new Trustee to SFL. Information on the Trustees (who's who, relevant background information and training) will be published shortly.

Dates for your Diary:

Next Trustees Meeting: Sat 18th Feb at Marianne & Keith's
Charity Fundraiser: Dinner and Ceilidh at the Royal Scots Club, Edinburgh October 7th 2006

Fundraising ideas!

How about...

No uniform day at school? (They don't have uniforms at the SPV Foundation yet either!) Or wearing uniform inside out/ back to front if money raised for SFL? Sponsored events; chain events can work well, ask each child to walk/run/hop a certain distance, and combine the efforts to marathon level! Bottle stalls; ask everyone to donate a bottle, attach raffle tickets, and pick out a number to see what you win...

Sponsor forms and thank you certificates available from Keith Lownsborough.

A sponsored quiz about Romania...or a wordsearch? See page 5 if you are interested!

White teeshirts with the SPV/SFL logo are available to support your fundraising event, £10 each, contact ejkeetley@hotmail.com.

Coming soon, courtesy of Sessions-Goodiers; SFL notelets, "presents direct" cards...watch this space!

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Search for words linked to School for Life

-and help raise money for the charity!

50p



Please photocopy this word search as many times as you like, and give it to family and friends for 50p a time- and send that money to School for Life, Romania Registered Charity no. 1062953. Please make cheques payable to School For Life, and send to Keith Lownsbrough, 59 Eastgate, North Newbald, York YO4 3SD. Words are hidden in all directions!

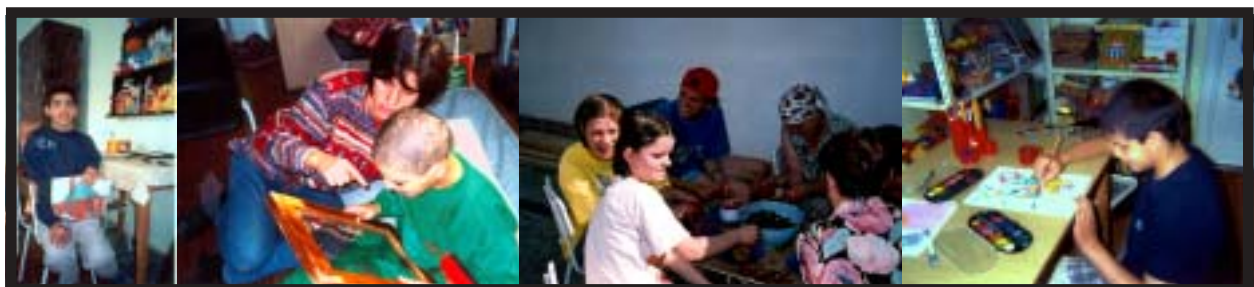
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The words to look for are as follows, and their significance for School for Life/Scoala Pentru Viata can be found in the newsletter articles or by going to www.schoolforliferomania.org :

CHICKENS
DANA
DOINA
GYMNASIUM
HOSPITAL

LEI
LENUTA
RODICA
ROMANIA
SCOALA

SIRET
STEFAN
VIORICA
WATERMELON



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financial report

by Keith Lownsbrough, Treasurer

The **cash balance** at the end of Sept 2005 stood at £6021.93. Cash has been transferred to Romania to cover the budget until the end of December 2005. Our **monthly income** of Standing Orders currently stands at £1197 per month, with £360 per annum in quarterly or annual payments. Of this, £929 per month is given under the **gift aid scheme** giving a minimum tax rebate of £3144 next year. In addition, a tax rebate of £2066 is due from one-off donations and sponsor forms.

cash requirement projections, in £ sterling:

| | 2003/4 | 2004/5 | 2005/6 |
|------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| SPV staff & assistants | 8076 | 9756 | 10776 |
| Training | 224 | 240 | 0 |
| Taxes | 4560 | 5400 | 6960 |
| Building costs | 1226 | 428 | 1680 |
| Other costs | 2450 | 3360 | 4255 |
| Car costs | 240 | 240 | 1080 |
| Residents costs | 1760 | 1800 | 2400 |
| Travel | 560 | 600 | See car costs |
| Total | £19096 | £21824 | £27151 |

annual income (less additional fundraising):

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Monthly standing orders | 14364 |
| Quarterly/annual s.o. | 360 |
| Tax relief | 3144 |
| Total | £17868 |

Our financial policy for the projected budget to not exceed the monthly income is once again not met; new standing orders, donations, tax relief and other fundraising activities are needed to make up the annual short fall of £10000 next year.

Notable fund-raisers of 2005 include:

Simon Hall marathon £386.20 with £82 tax relief; John Stancombe London Marathon £1115.35 with £229 tax relief; Queen Elizabeth School Kirby Lonsdale £1242; St Peter's School Peterborough £1856; SFL 10th Anniversary Walk £3671; additional tax relief on donations £795; Anne Leith Shop collecting box £123.50.

If you would like a collecting tin to place in any shop with the Manager's agreement, contact Lizzy Keetley (opposite).

Thank you to everyone for supporting the charity and helping to meet the shortfall. The project wouldn't happen without you.

The Team

Scoala Pentru Viata

Doina Harasemiuc-Director of Administration

Stefan Hutanu - Director of Education

School For Life

Dave Emptage - Trustee

Many years experience working with people with profound and moderate disabilities in long stay residential homes. Worked in Romania for 2 years bringing his experience and his music to the great appreciation of those in Siret.

Katie Goodier- Trustee

A qualified teacher now works in Glasgow teaching Special Needs. She lived and worked in Siret for over 2 years and has been actively involved ever since with fund raising and publicity.

William Gould - Trustee

A University lecturer who worked in Siret for over 2 years where he met and later married his wife Olivia who grew up in Siret. They ensure good communication and translation between SPV and SFL.

Sylvia Gurr - Trustee

Experienced in working with people with profound learning difficulties. She now works as a mental health worker with homeless adults and is completing her MA in integrative child psychotherapy. Sylvia worked in Siret for 3 years and is now considering returning.

Phil Keetley - Trustee/Newsletter

Met his now wife Lizzy while they were living and working in Romania over a two year period. Phil is now in the British army. Lizzy a qualified social worker is able to bring her knowledge and expertise of independent living to the team.

Marianne Lownsbrough -Trustee

A playworker of 20 years who now runs an assessment and training centre for Playwork covering the Yorkshire region. Worked in Siret from 1991 for over 2 years bringing different expertise within the team, and leading the work of the volunteers. Lives at the charity address with her husband the treasurer.

Keith Lownsbrough - Treasurer

59 Eastgate
North Newbald, York YO4 3SD
Tel: 01430 827010

Ruth Brown

A qualified teacher who lived and worked in Siret for nearly 2 years, now living in Glasgow she gives much support with fund raising and publicity.