



School For Life

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Registered Charity No. 1062953
Patron: Robert Carlyle OBE
www.schoolforliferomania.org

Școala Pentru Viață

HAPPY NEW YEAR from School for Life and the young people you support at Scoala Pentru Viata, Siret, Romania.



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. Thank you for your ongoing interest in the Romanian project.

Every six months you will hear about the latest developments at the project in Siret, and our fundraising efforts in the UK and Romania to support the growth of the amazing work that is changing the lives of many young people with special needs in Siret.

School For Life is a registered UK charity dedicated to funding children and adults brought up in an orphanage in Siret, Romania, providing special needs education and training so they can develop the skills they need to lead fulfilling lives. The money raised is sent to our sister organisation in Siret, "Scoala 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 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.

Latest report from Siret:
Dave Emptage & Sylvia Gurr, Trustees SFL



Dave Emptage and Sylvia Gurr, Trustees, visited the project in Siret in October to support the SPV staff and keep us up to date with the latest challenges for the project. Their full report is printed on the next pages, but here are the main points:

- Beds waiting at SPV Foundation to house two more young people from the hospital!
- New car needed
- Still many young people condemned to institutionalised living
- Real concerns about the future of the project
- Our plan: the need to increase sources of funding

The SPV "Foundation":
providing housing and
education

The Foundation is a beautiful well resourced, stimulating environment with a relaxed family feel to it. People who attend or visit feel safe, respected and valued. It is a place where people learn, develop and grow. We have achieved a lot. We have a dedicated staff team who go the extra mile. We have obviously greatly helped the people that we work with. The lives of the young women who live at the foundation have totally transformed for the better. SPV would like to give accommodation to two more girls from the Hospital and there are two beds waiting. Because SPV already provide 24 hour cover this would not entail huge extra expense.



The "Foundation"- where young people with special needs come to learn life skills.

"Worst car in Romania-
we need a people
carrier!"

In spite of the stoical efforts of Stefan and Radu our vehicle is probably now 'the worst car in Romania' and will not last another year. A good quality people carrier would greatly enhance the work and opportunities for people supported by the foundation.

Full time hours for the
Directors of SPV needed



SPV team leaders Doina (Director of Administration) and Stefan (Director of Education).

Marianne Lownsborough, Trustee, has done some excellent work with SPV to successfully manage their own budgets and meet agreed targets. She has sown the seeds of the potential to look for funding within Romania but these are yet to bear significant results. Giving our directors full time hours would greatly help in the difficult task of looking for sources of funding from within Romania.

Where the young people live ↴



There are 86 people in the hospital Institution who receive no therapeutic/ educational input at all. They all have the potential for growth, development and a happier life, and should not be living as they are. For them life is a regime of getting up, dressed, breakfast, waiting for medication, meals and very little else.

In 2003 we felt compelled to run an appeal because there was not enough food in the hospital. Your positive response undoubtedly kept people alive; thank you.

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CONDEMNED TO INSTITUTIONALISED LIVING: no family that wants them, and no funding for alternatives



Sessions are provided by the SPV teachers in the hospital Institution, but it would be better for the young people to have a change of environment at the SPV Foundation.

EU accession creating more problems than solutions?

The EU is currently not providing money to assist the people we support. The EU accession process has helped to fuel inflation, created more legislation and taxes on a relatively poor population. Without our help the young people in the hospital Institution will remain forgotten and neglected. We are already asking the SPV team to work hard on a very meagre salary that soon will not meet their own financial needs. We are deeply concerned about the future of our project.

OUR PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

School for Life aims to achieve the following:

- Increase the work of the foundation and to work with those adults who currently receive nothing.
- At the same time work with the hospital authorities to provide smaller group houses for the people who live in the hospital and close it.

At the Trustees meeting we agreed we would launch a 2007 funding appeal to achieve these aims. Please help! And please read on for Sylvia's plans for the closure of the Hospital.

Thank you all for your support. School for Life has been helping young people with special needs for 12 years.

Please help us sustain this project and move towards a future free of institutionalised living for the young people of Siret.

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All of the young people that SPV work with come from this hospital Institution. The environment resembles a prison but none of these people have committed a crime. They just have no family to live with.

The SPV teachers do their best to provide sessions inside the Institution. There is capacity in the SPV Foundation to provide more support to the people living in the hospital but this will be dependant on increased funding from the UK.

The biggest challenge for everyone involved with SPV and School for Life is the huge difference between the psychological health of the young people who receive support from our foundation compared with the young people in the institution who receive nothing. Our teachers want to keep faith with their existing groups because it is extremely difficult to have to turn people away and witness them regressing day by day.



A session with Angelica, one of the SPV teachers, at the Foundation. Marianne Lownsborough (Trustee) also joining in!

Request for assistance in the closure of the hospital....

Sylvia Gurr, Trustee, has been involved in working with the young people of Siret since 1992. Currently completing her MA in Integrative Child Psychotherapy, Sylvia has worked in community settings with people with mental health problems and learning disabilities. Visiting Siret regularly (and speaking fluent Romanian), Sylvia has been working hard this year building relationships and agreements with the hospital authorities to work towards the closure of the remaining Institution that houses the young people SPV work with, and many we do not yet have capacity to help. She is looking for funding to achieve re-housing for all the people who live in the hospital Institution. She writes;

“In February 2006 we received an appeal from the hospital director requesting our support in the closure and de-institutionalisation of the hospital by providing the finances for the building of group homes for the remaining 126 young adults currently in the facilities.

In April '06, after a visit by Marianne Lownsborough and myself discussions started between SFL and the hospital authorities as to how we may be able to support their request. After careful consideration SFL have agreed to try and raise £1,500,000.00 to fund the capital costs for the building of new group homes.

The town council in Siret have agreed to provide land to build on. The Romanian Ministry of Health have agreed to fund running costs. The running of the homes would be through a joint committee of Scoala Pentru Viata and the hospital authorities.

The running of the project would be under the guidelines of the Romanian Mental

Health Action Plan (Dec 2005), stipulating client centred care planning systems.

In October this year during my visit to Siret with Dave Emptage, a request was also made for provision for further therapeutic / activity support.

hospital earlier this year and recommended its closure as soon as possible, the current conditions being inadequate. In addition further therapeutic and educational input such as SPV provide, were recommended.

Unfortunately the EU provided only limited funds for the closure of large institutions, which are now exhausted. To apply for these funds NGOs needed to meet at least 10% of the total cost. Romania is still far from able to provide financial support on this scale at present.

Hence our hope is that one or several individuals with the financial ability may be able to support our joint aims. If anybody is interested in supporting us in this large financial request or has any ideas please let us know, all avenues and ideas would be gratefully received and explored. Contact me, or any of the Trustees, via the details on the back page.

Thank you for your continued support. Happy New Year!”



A Carer in the original Neuropsychiatric Hospital the young people were brought up in. Now one and a half million pounds are needed to close the remaining Institution.

I have agreed to search for the funding needed to support these requests, alongside our continued funding needs. With SFL agreement I will also search for a salary for myself to return to Siret to oversee the founding of the group home project.

These requests have been made in line with WHO and the EU peer support partnership, who visited the

Fundraising appeal 2007 - can you raise an extra £10 a month?

We would like to provide SPV with the following:

- The means to give supported accommodation to two more young women at the foundation.
- Increased hours of work for our director from part time to full time, and more financial support to SPV during a time of rising inflation in Romania.
- A vehicle (people carrier) to facilitate excursions.
- To provide more teachers to give educational input for the 86 young people in the adult institution who currently receive nothing.

With our existing standing order base, if we all encourage **1 person** to start a monthly standing order of £10 (or even 5 people at £2 a month) this would result in an annual increase in income of £12,000 - with tax relief this would be in the region of £15,000.

Over 5 years this would account for a £75,000 If all of us managed to raise £100 this year and for the next 4 years between us we would raise another £50,000. That's £125,000! If our extended support base did the same we have achieved our goal! It's as simple as that!



Ideas to raise an extra £10 a month:

- Consider increasing your standing order
- Organise a sponsored walk
- A coffee morning, pub quiz...
- A raffle draw at any event is a good fund raiser
- A bring and buy sale
- A muffy (no uniform day) at school
- Approach someone fit to do a sponsored run.
- Ask a local shop or two to display a collection tin.
- Work one day's overtime and donate the money!!

How School for Life can help you to help

Standing order forms and tax relief forms available from Keith Lownsbrough
Collection tins & t shirts, copies of newsletter available through Lizzy Keetley
Publicity leaflets and posters - available from Ruth Brown.

Historical Video available through Dave Emptage

Attend/support the next fund raising ceilidh in Edinburgh Sept 8th 2007

You can e-mail or telephone any of the School for Life contacts. All of us have some fund raising experience. And don't forget the new website, www.schoolforliferomania.org

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financial report

by Keith Lownsbrough, Treasurer

The **cash balance** at the end of Sept 2006 stood at £4410.71.

Cash has been transferred to Romania to cover the budget until the end of December. Our **monthly income** of Standing Orders currently stands at £1301.50 per month, with £470 per annum in quarterly or annual payments. Of this, £1033.50 per month is given under the **gift aid scheme** giving a minimum tax rebate of £3498 next year.

cash requirement

projections, in £ sterling:

SPV staff & assistants	10776
Taxes	6960
Building costs	1680
Other costs	4255
Car costs	1080
Residents costs	2400

Total **£27151**

annual income

(less additional fundraising):

Standing orders	15612
Tax relief	3498

Total **£19110**

The fundraising from the Edinburgh ceilidh combined with standing orders from Oct-Dec and tax rebate brings the total balance at the end of 2006 to £14300.63, enabling £9000 to be transferred in December to cover salaries until April and £9000 again in April for salaries until August. **The intention is for Siret to have found additional funding for salaries by August 2007.**

Recent **fund-raisers** include:

£80 William Leith Baker Collecting Tins (available free from secretary), £2097 Edinburgh Ceilidh, £10 South Cave Methodist Church, £180 Phil and Cath Barnton party donations instead of presents, £12 Carole Grant home made Christmas cards.

Come and join the next fundraiser at Edinburgh's Royal Scots Club on Saturday 8th Sept!



Tickets £45 per person, includes glass of champagne on arrival, three course meal with wine, and scottish dancing with a live ceilidh band. No experience necessary! Seating plan is flexible; come with a party if you can and we will reserve you a table, otherwise just join the fun!

Tickets available from Phil & Lizzy Keetley.

Thanks to all who supported us last year, especially Katie Goodier & Ruth Brown who despite new babies made it happen!

*Thank you for your ongoing support. Please pass this newsletter to anyone who may be interested in our project.
Email version (PDF) available.*

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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.