

Reaching Others with Love and Compassion in Romania

On July 22 my daughter, Christie, and two of her close friends, Lindsay and Allison Hamm, arrived in Romania. The girls, together with Scott, Brenda, & Daniel Palazzo (missionaries to Romania from Northwest Arkansas), Alina Iorgulescu, the official team translator, Mihaela Socaci, our Romanian director, and myself traveled throughout Romania for two weeks. The team ministered in hospitals, orphanages, churches, and at a children's camp through music and the Word. I have had difficulty determining which stories to share with you of our time together these past weeks as there are so many to convey. I have decided to chronicle the team's ministry time in Romania over the next several months. I pray the accounts I share will stir your heart as they have so deeply touched mine.

Transitions

As we arrived at the children's hospital a crowd of children excitedly ran out to greet us. Surrounded by a throng of children, we walked down the gravel path leading from the vehicle to the hospital entrance. In the midst of the commotion I noticed a little girl standing solemnly by herself at the edge of the courtyard. It was soon revealed that this young girl had been brought to the hospital only hours before our arrival. My heart was moved with compassion as I looked into her dark brown eyes. At such a young age, how bewildered and overwhelmed she must feel. Did she understand why she had been brought here? Whom had she left behind? What had life been like for her?

As the day passed by, I watched as the other children, hospital staff, and team members endeavored to draw her in. Gradually, her countenance began to change. By the end of the day she was running, playing, and laughing with the other children; a changed little girl! "While a smile costs nothing, it gives much. While it takes but a moment, the memory of it sometimes lasts forever."

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch.

Account By: Christie Bullock

The Children's Hospital

The children's hospital, situated in the beautiful Carpathian Mountains, is home to more than forty children. While some of the children reside at the hospital because they require ongoing medical treatment, many have been brought to the hospital because their parents are ill and unable to care for them. Other children are brought to the hospital as there is simply no place else for them to go.

Though some of the children stay temporarily, many will remain there until they come of age. Though the weathering effects of time are evident as you walk through the corridors of the old hospital, it is apparent that despite a lack of ample resources, measures have been taken to improve the living conditions. As you can imagine, it is no small endeavor to provide for these children. Times are difficult and the needs are great. The director, staff, and children hold a special place in our hearts as they were amongst the first to receive assistance from Child Life International in its early years of development. Your faithful prayers and support have and continue to enable us to take the love of Christ to these children. Together we are reaching out to the children with the love and compassion they deserve.

Abandoned but not Forgotten

This young boy was dropped off at the hospital just a few months ago. Despite inquiries into the youngsters' identity, the staff had been unable to acquire any information on him aside from that which the little boy has been able to disclose, the accuracy of which is unknown. Though his true identity remains a mystery to us, our Heavenly Father knows him by name; for He knew him before he was formed in his mother's womb. "Before I formed you I knew you. Before you were born I set you apart." Jeremiah 1:5

Provisions

While the team was in Romania I received word that the four 40 foot ocean containers carrying 75 metric tons of dehydrated soup had arrived at the Constanta seaport. The arrival of the containers required my prompt attention. As the team continued to travel to the north, our Romanian director and I traveled to the South to clear customs. My heart was blessed as I contemplated the ministry efforts going forth in both the north and south, simultaneously. God is so good! After many long hours of manual labor, the containers were unloaded at their respective destinations. Distribution is now underway. I would like to extend our appreciation for all of those who helped in the unloading of the containers. Unloading 75 metric tons of food is not by any means an easy task. We praise the Lord for His provisions!

The Journey is Far From Over

It is hard to believe that seven years have passed since the inception of Child Life International. The foundational purpose of Child Life International from its infancy was to declare the love of Christ to the children, the elderly, the poor, and displaced of Romania. God has called us to not only share the love of Christ in word, but in action and in deed. It is our express desire that our lives will be a testimony of Christ's love even in the silences when words are not enough.

As we reflect over the past seven years, we realize what a worthwhile journey it has been. God has walked with us each step of the way extending guidance, protection, and strength. We give God all the glory for the fruit which has been made evident. It is our heart that as you have read this letter you were encouraged by the stories of the children whose lives have been impacted as a result of your commitment to share the love of Christ with the Romanian people.

The journey has not been without hardship. My family and I have walked through, perhaps, the most difficult trials of our lives during the past seven years, but God's grace has been sufficient to sustain us, and through the fiery trials God has strengthened and refined us. Though we have come a long ways, the journey is far from over. Thank you for your continued pray & finical support.

May God richly bless you as you continue to walk in obedience to His calling.

Frank Bullock