

Hands of Hope

Summer 2009



Summer draws to a close in Romania, the nights are getting longer and cooler, though maximum daytime temperatures are still around 26C. It has been a very dry summer with no rain to speak of for months which has affected the crops.

This area of Romania is still extremely poor, though on the first glance there are signs of improvement (smart new brick pavements on the main roads in the town, the town hall closed for refurbishment etc) but when you look behind the surface there are still people in the town and villages living in extremely impoverished conditions and with little or no income. Costs here are rising all the time with many consumables costing more than in UK.



The house which was built in June is now completed and the family have moved in. They are all really glad to have more space and Mum Iuliana is busy keeping it clean and tidy and looking after the 6 children (soon to be 7). The family have their own cow and a cowshed was built at the back of the and during the summer the cow has been grazed on land owned by the charity or Ruth & Chris.

Another charity (Matthew's house) which we work closely with is donating a pregnant cow to one of our other families. Chris has been busy building a barn on our land behind the charity houses and this will be used for the cow and other animals and also for storage. Having a cow is a big commitment but also a huge blessing and enables the family to have a more nutritious diet.

The father from one of the families we help fell off his bicycle last weekend and fractured his clavicle. He was seen at the local hospital and the x-ray confirmed a fracture. He was given a note and told to go on Monday morning to the bigger hospital in Botosani about 35 miles away. I was able to give him some paracetamol for the pain and on Monday drove him and his wife to the hospital. The main hospital has had extensive renovations recently to the reception area, but once you get beyond that the corridors are unlit and basic. We found the correct consulting room but were told that as he did not have an employment card he could not be seen until 2pm that afternoon. I had other things scheduled so left them at the hospital (with cash for journey home and some spare). Later in the afternoon they arrived home but he had

not been treated as they wanted 300 RON (£60). The next day we were able to give him the money and he went back to have the shoulder reassessed and strapped up. For many of the families some social support can be accessed via the local government but it often involves lengthy procedures with paperwork. Over the past few weeks Ruth has been assisting the families to process this paperwork and many of them will now be eligible for a load of free firewood worth around 250 RON (£50).

The children in Romania have 3 months off school for the summer holidays and will be going back on September 14th. We have been able to give out school packs (exercise books, pens, crayons etc), winter coats and shoes to many of the children in the families we support. Many of these were donated from people in the Isle of Man and came out in the container in May, top up supplies were purchased locally with donated funds.

Over the summer Ruth & Chris have refurbished one of the rooms in the old cottage that they own at Cobila. The cottage is around 100 years old and built using daub & wattle construction. The room has been transformed and is now used as a play room by the children from all the families and also has a computer for the older children to use for home work etc.



The children have spent many hours playing at the cottage over the summer, toys out in the garden and bikes on the field. Some of the younger adults from the church that we attend in Varfu Campului have also visited to help with the activities. The other room in the cottage has also been refurbished for a newly married couple who had no home and little income to live in.



Many of the clothes and resources the charity distributes arrive in Romania each year by container. This mammoth task is organised at the Isle of Man end by James and Selina this when they are not selling Romanian glass and goods to raise funds. They can be seen at many events around the island and permanent displays of the wares can be seen at The Well Book Shop, Douglas or the The Flower Studio, Tynwald Mills. If you are looking for a different Christmas present for family or friend, look no further and drop us an email.

Over the past few weeks Chris has been supervising work on the drive which runs down between the houses. In past years we have had problems with this area being waterlogged and very muddy. The drainage ditch is now almost finished and stones down so we hope it will make the access to the houses much easier for the families when the weather is bad.



Marion Thomas from the Isle of Man was with us for 2 months May to July and was a great help and amongst other things spent 2 days a week working as a volunteer in the day centre for children with special needs.

In our June report we mentioned that Dru Hamm from the Isle of Man had volunteered to enter the IOM Parish walk to raise funds so that the children and their parents could have a few days holiday.

The Hands of hope team did very well and raised around £1800, this enabled children and parents from the centres in Dorohoi and Botosani to have a few days holiday. Marion, Chris & Ruth went with the group from Dorohoi and spent 2 nights in a guest house in Ocna Sugatag. This is a salt water spa resort in the centre of Romania. On the way there we stopped off at various places



Everyone had a wonderful time, the parents were able to relax and enjoy time with the



children without all the day to day chores to do. They were very grateful to all who had made this holiday possible.

Ruth & Chris will be back in the Isle of Man September to November and are happy to come and talk to any groups who want to know more about the charity and its work.

We have a reworked website, have a look.

Hands of Hope is a Manx registered charity (no. 938) helping the poor and needy in Romania. Trustees are Selina and James Vickers based in the Isle of Man and Ruth and Chris Baker home sharing between Romania and the Isle of Man. Email info@handsofhope.org.im and Web site www.handsofhope.org.im