

# **The Romanian Crestin Trust Annual**



## **Newsletter**

### **January 2024**

Welcome once again to our annual newsletter. Unfortunately, neither Jean Hall or Wendy Norris were able to join us on the visit to Barlad this year, they are the project coordinators for the Adopt a Family project. So it was just myself, John Amos (project coordinator for the House of Roses) and fellow trustee John Raine (project coordinator for Casa Esme) who travelled to Barlad in November 2023.

Owing to our busy lifestyles we only had one week, starting out early Monday morning and returning late Friday evening, but our short visit was full of blessings and extremely fun filled in many ways, all of which we wish to share with you in this newsletter. We hope you enjoy this short but informative newsletter and wish to express our gratitude to all of you who support our work in Romania.

## **Adopt a Family Project**

After a very long day travelling and meeting old friends in Bucharest on Monday, we arrived in Barlad in the early hours of Tuesday morning and met our Romanian based project coordinator, Oana Zanet, for breakfast.

Oana had already arranged for us to meet Teodora Tabacaru, who joined us for breakfast, and we met with the Istrate family later that day. Oana explained that her mother is still suffering from the effects of Covid, and did not wish to receive visitors and our old friend Jenita Hutanaru was not well, and unlikely that we would be able to see her.

The supporters of the project receive a detailed report and photos, but here is a precis of our meetings:



### **Tabacaru Family**

The family live on the outskirts of a small village called Manzati, which is approximately 35km north of Barlad. Teodora, who is a friend of Oana had travelled by bus to meet us.

**Pictured is Teodora (left with John and Oana)**

Although Romania have been in the EU for a number of years, the benefits are very slow to reach the poor, especially if you live in remote parts of the country.

The Tabacaru family is large and complex, and young Teodora who is 19 years of age, is currently working in a hotel in Italy and sending money home to help her parents and siblings survive!

Through the project, the family have received financial assistance from Project Sponsors and we hope to fund dental treatment for Teodora and the fitting of braces which will help her eat properly.

## The Istrate Family



It was marvelous to see our old friends Gigi and his wife Lucica again, and were given a wonderful greeting. Gigi couldn't wait to show us the bed we had purchased for him earlier in the year and his new wheelchair.

Owing to the poor path conditions a part of the chair had broken and so Gigi had to use his old chair. However, he proudly showed us a new part he had purchased and was in the process of mending.

As you can imagine, life is difficult if you only have one leg, and Lucica explained that most of their income went on medication for Gigi, and were extremely grateful for our financial support.

Gigi was keen to explain his passion in local history, especially a school that his father was associated with during the war. He showed us a book that he had managed to acquire which was able to throw some light on his interest.





## Casa Esme

Our visits to Casa Esme continue to be one of the highlights of our trip to Barlad. This school for mentally and physically handicapped children is primarily funded by Myosostis with a small amount of help from The Crestin Trust. Its run by Loredana Dobrin and a handful of people with specialist skills in Speech Therapy, Mental Health and social work. Since the inception of Casa Esme, opened initially to alleviate the problems associated with these children attending schools for children with no handicaps, the focus has changed from one of just trying to educate the child to one of trying to educate the parents. Like all children they need distinct boundaries for behaviour when at home, and Loredana and others meet with parents regularly to advise and help



The teachers work one to one with the children to build their skills both educationally and socially. Many of the children find it difficult to build relationships with other children and staff try to build this through the activities

Many group activities such as this, shown in the pictures to the right and below, are run to give social and fun inter-reaction between all



It is so wonderful to see this amazing work and such dedication to try to give these children a start in life that they so deserve.

## House of Roses

Our five young people Geta, Irma, Ionica, George and Ionut are a reminder of that awful legacy which is known as 'the Ceacescu Regime' and we, in the Crestin Trust are privileged to join two other charities; Romanian Appeal Killearn England (RAKE) and Myosotis Romania, to create a warm, safe and loving family environment for these amazing youngsters.

Thanks to Mihai, the director of Myosotis Romania, we were able to spend several hours with them and hopefully the photographs and words will convey some of the blessings we experienced:

On Wednesday, we had a special lunch and were delighted to welcome Peter and Janet Wastall, who are longstanding friends - Corina and Mihaela were assisted by the youngsters in preparing and serving the meal, which was enjoyed by everyone, especially George who sat next to Oana, and eagerly ate what Oana couldn't manage! After the meal I asked Mihai to start what is known as a Romanian tradition of singing songs. Our youngsters sang songs they had learned from their annual camp, and Janet and the two John's gave everyone a rendition of "there's a hole in my bucket" which had to be heard to be believed!!!

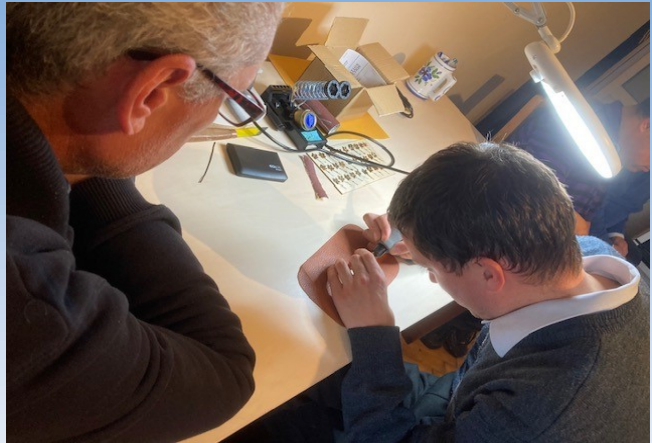
After lunch we accompanied the youngsters to 'the workshop' where we watched Irma and Geta working on a sewing machine, watched over by Corina, and the boys, working on etching the Myosotis logo on to key rings. They go to the workshop twice a week for two hours and clearly is a highlight of their week.







Irma and Geta presented the two Johns with bags to take home and the boys gave us key rings to take home for Wendy and Jean



The following day there was a special treat – a visit to the cinema. As you can imagine this created a great deal of excitement. It was great to walk down the hill into the center of town with our youngsters, who greeted people and were exceptionally polite to passersby – a real credit to our family! As for the film, which was about three guys who had bought and lost a ‘winning’ lottery ticket, left everyone except Geta lost for words! I sat next to Ionut who with one hand held mine throughout the film, and with the other hand devoured a large tub of chocolate flavored popcorn – bless him!!



And finally, after the cinema we returned to the house to find that the staff and volunteers had been busy preparing a ‘surprise 37<sup>th</sup> birthday party’ for Ionut. More singing, dancing, eating and drinking, fun and laughter!

## Free time

On Thursday morning Oana informed us that our old friend Jenita was still not well so we had a free morning!

As John is a chef I thought he may be interested in the local market. It is a few years since I have been to the market and was pleasantly surprised by the general layout but absolutely overwhelmed by the vegetable produce area, which John had a field day in extending my knowledge of a multitude of fresh vegetables, herbs, spices, honey etc, but did note the prices which is why the local supermarket Lidl is so popular!

After the market and on our way to lunch in the center of town we spotted what appeared to be a modern art gallery. Curiosity got the better of us and as we entered were met by a young lady who we assumed to be the curator, who spoke English!



Whilst John was in conversation I wandered around looking at various paintings by a local artist, and then could not believe my eyes – what was Rowan Atkinson (Mr. Bean) doing in this remote part of Romania?

It appears that he is very popular and judging from the way the curator spoke has one very ardent fan!



## Conclusion

It remains an impossible task for us to convey the pleasure and blessings that are bestowed upon us during our short visits to see old friends and make new ones.

Above all, we wish to thank you, our supporters for your continued love and generosity, which help us make a huge difference to ordinary and extraordinary people's lives.

Please feel free to circulate this newsletter to your friends and colleagues and if anyone is interested in joining our band of supporters, then please contact us:

Adopt a Family – Wendy Norris on 07902600158

Casa Esme – John Raine on 07919992941

House of Roses – John Amos on 07963701327

or for general enquiries you can email John at

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**The Crestin Trust would like to wish you  
all a very Happy, Healthy and Prosperous  
2024**