

Steve and Anda's Newsletter

Number 7 – April 2009

Dear friends, Firstly I'd like to say thank you to everyone who has given money to support my work in Romania. Our appeal at Christmas raised enough money for me to continue my work here until the end of the summer. We really appreciate your generosity, particularly in these difficult economic times.

One positive thing that has come out of the economic crisis is that the mortgage payments on my house in England have come down a lot. This has made it possible for Anda to leave her job as a teacher and to start working with me. This has been a big help and has enabled us to take on some new projects which you can read more about below. Thanks for all your interest in our work. With love and best wishes, **Steve Dodwell**.

A school for gypsy children

In this part of Romania there are a large number of Romany gypsies. Many gypsies do not send their children to school. This is partly cultural and partly because gypsy families are usually very poor and can't afford to provide their children with the school uniform, textbooks and stationery that they need. Officially it is against the law not to send your children to school, but the authorities don't seem to enforce it. Therefore many gypsy children do not know how to read, write, or to do simple maths. Without these skills it is very hard for the children to better themselves and they are consigned to a life of poverty just like their parents.

Anda has built up a good relationship with many gypsy children and their parents through the Saturday morning children's programme that has run at Vestea Buna Church for many years. This relationship has enabled her to start a 'school' with seven girls aged between 10 and 13, on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. She aims to teach them some basic literacy and numeracy skills. So far, this has been going well - the girls have been coming to every lesson and are enjoying learning.



Gypsy children at Anda's school in the church office.

Gheorghe Doja



Anda working with our new English group in Gheorghe Doja

For over a year we have been going weekly to Gheorghe Doja, a village close to Slobozia, to provide free English lessons. We were recently asked to start a new English class there for some young children in the first grade at school. Offering this service has been a great way to get to know the children and their families, and we have been able to invite many of them to various events we have held at the church. We hold the lessons in Gheorghe Doja in Vasile Bratu's house. He is the man I wrote to you about last year who is suffering from multiple myeloma. In January he was able to have a stem cell transplant to treat his sickness, partly thanks to the money that many of you donated. He is now back home and is doing well. Please continue to pray that his treatment will be effective in keeping the cancer in remission.

Something I have noticed during my time in Romania is how many more BMWs, Mercedes and other luxury cars there are on the roads now compared to a few years ago. Some people here are doing well and becoming prosperous. However, it is still very easy to find people living in serious poverty. One day after Christmas, I went with Dan and Daniela Pierce from Bethany House to visit some poor families. We took them gifts, and clothes and shoes for the winter, basic things that they cannot afford for themselves. We visited a very large family with twelve children. They were living in four small rooms made from mud bricks and had no indoor toilet or even a water supply inside the house. To get from their gate to the house they have to walk through ankle-deep mud, and all they seemed to possess was an old TV set. It is hard to imagine that there are people living like that in Europe in the 21st century. Also there are still many orphaned and abandoned children being raised by the State. In Calarasi, the orphanages are filled to capacity and Bethany House is also very full; Dan and Daniela are currently looking after twelve children aged eight or under. Despite being part of the EU, Romania is still a country with a lot of need.

Help wanted

Before I left England to come to Romania I was a little worried about whether I would be useful here. I haven't been to Bible school and I'm not a great speaker, so I wondered how can I be a missionary? However, I needn't have worried because I soon found that there was so much work for me serving at Vestea Buna Church and at Bethany House that I didn't have enough time to do everything I wanted to do.

Here, we have plenty of ways in which you could help, regardless of what abilities you have. For example you may be skilled in working with children or teenagers, in admin work, in practical work, in medicine, in music, in Bible teaching – whatever you can do could be used for God's service here. So if there is anyone else interested in working for God in Romania, whether just for a week or for a much longer period of time, then please get in touch.

Contact and support details

If you would like any more information about anything we have mentioned then please feel free to contact us. Our details are shown below. I also have a page on *Facebook* (www.facebook.com) where you can see additional photographs from our work. For anyone interested in supporting us financially, you can do so by contacting us directly or by donating via Hope Community Church using the attached form.

Address: Bulevardul Matei Basarab, Bl.5 Sc.A Apt.15, Mun. Slobozia, Jud. Ialomita, Romania
Telephone: +0040 (0)720 421948 Email: sdodwell@yahoo.com



Children receiving Christmas gifts sent by Samaritan's Purse.

Prayer points

- Iulian Vasile is the pastor of Vestea Buna church. He, his wife Lidia and their two young children, live in a small apartment in Calarasi, which they share with Iulian's parents, his sister and her two children, and other regular guests. As you can imagine, it is very cramped there and they have been hoping to get an apartment of their own for many years. The council in Calarasi are currently allocating families to apartments in a renovated apartment block, and there is a quite a good chance that one might be given to Iulian and Lidia. Please pray that this will be the case because they really need a place of their own where they can spread out and be a family.
- Anda is currently learning to drive. Please pray for her as she will soon be taking the theoretical and practical exams. A driving licence would be a great help to her for the future.
- Please pray for us as we organise a number of events for the summer, including a youth camp to the mountains. The young people from the church will all be bringing along a non-Christian friend, and we hope we will make this a very special event that will impact the lives of those who come.

Romania – Hope Community Church
Registered Charity Number 1108872

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