

The Romanian Aid Foundation
UK Registered Charity Nr 1060828



The Romanian Aid Foundation Newsletter February 2003

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Joy at Christmas: The Joy in a Box Appeal for Christmas 2002 was again very successful. In previous years we have sometimes had problems with people "storming" the office once they knew the boxes are available. This year we were able to give out the boxes as part of the normal aid distribution programme and this proved to be more satisfactory. Once again, families in the villages were included in the distribution of the Christmas boxes. There was a lot of joy and happiness as the boxes were opened and we are happy to convey the thanks that are due to those who prepared these gifts.

Great Knits! During the past year a number of individuals and groups have 'discovered' us, to our mutual benefit. These people have something in common - they all enjoy knitting - and we have been able to provide an outlet for their labours by taking knitted garments, blankets and toys to some of the needy families in Romania. Wool, needles and patterns are needed in Romania but now some wool can be converted into ready-to-use articles for those who may not have the skill or time to knit their own.



Click on the photo to see some of the work done by our knitters.

2003 RoAF Supporters' Visit: A RoAF Supporters' Visit to Dorohoi is being planned for the week 12th to 19th May 2003. It is some years since we ran a mixed age group and several people have requested an opportunity to see the work first hand. The trip will bring to life many aspects of the work of Asociatia Neemia and the Centre of Hope in Dorohoi. A leaflet is available giving a suggested itinerary and [details of the trip](#) have been posted on our website.

Beni writes from Dorohoi ...

Dear friends, a lot of work has been done in November, December and January. There were about 150 families every month to make boxes with clothes and distribute them. Also except the holidays the office was opened and busy. During December and January the families received shoeboxes with gifts. The AN office continued the same kind of activity as before. Many people came to share with us their problems and difficulties with the hope that we may help them in some way. We always try to help, either with the goods they need, buying them some medicine that the doctor prescribed and they cannot afford, wood for heating during the winter or paying some duty taxes that they cannot afford to pay. Sometimes we give them some food or give them an invitation to have a meal with their family at the Centre. We have been able to help many families in this way during these three months and this has been appreciated by very many people.

SHOP: The shop has done well in November and December and very well in January. This was possible by supplying the shop more regularly with variety of items (not just clothes) but crockery, toys, stationery, decoration items - things which are not sold in other second hand shops. We did have also a concern at the middle of January when someone broke the window of the shop and a hi-fi and

an electric mini-oven were stolen. We do not know yet who has done that but the police are investigating the case. We still have clothes to put in the shop for all February but not for more than that. Also we have some clothes left for giving to families but just a few for special situations.

FARM SERVICES: *Nelu has worked in November with the tractor and was able to bring some income that helped a lot. Also he has done some work for free to a few poor families. At the end of the winter he will be able to start again ploughing the land.*

BIROTICA: *Laurentiu tried as much as he could to repair the electrical items that have been sent from England; generally the computers could be mended, and most of them have been donated to people and schools. He also helped during December when I was away. [Beni is a member of a music group - [Grup Otniel](#) - which was invited to sing in Austria, Germany, Italy and Spain during December.]*

WAREHOUSE: *Cornel, Iulian and Ionela had to cope with the very cold temperature of this winter at the warehouse, as most of the work of sorting clothing had to be done there. There was no possibility of heating any of the rooms there, as we do not have electricity anymore. [The supply was from the adjacent motel, which was severely damaged by fire late last year.] We still have plenty of tinned food in the warehouse, which is a blessing for many people of this area. We are able to help many people with this food and also we donated some to another charity in Dorohoi that runs a canteen for feeding children. Also we have some chairs and beds with mattresses that we will donate to families in the next time and with the clothes that we still have, we hope to continue for a while.*

ADMINISTRATION: *Laurentiu and I started to have weekly meetings for discussing AN items, we find them very useful and important for making important decisions. The work and the trust of AN has grown a lot last year in this area, we felt God's support in all we did and in all decisions we made, we thank God for this, but this means more responsibility and dedication from us. I want to thank you for all your support, which is vital for this work, and wish you a very blessed year.*

... Benoni Mirauta, for Asociatia Neemia

'Raise-the-Roof' 24 hour Sponsored Table-

Tennis Marathon: Last year we were able to help about 1,000 families in Dorohoi with clothing or food. We now have 30 tons of food and clothing in the warehouse at Salfords ready for dispatch. These items are unloaded into our warehouse at Dealu Mare prior to distribution as

required but the warehouse roof has a wooden decking that has rotted and is allowing water to drip onto the stored items. We will need about £7,000 to erect a new permanent roof, restore the electricity supply and make the building weatherproof, and the table-tennis marathon will be part of our effort to deal with this. We will be starting the Marathon on 21st February at 7pm and continuing until 7pm the following evening. Of course we are looking for players so please contact [Bernard Bellingham](#) to add your name to the list of players. Please specify the hour you can play - we will require 48 players unless you are especially keen! We have sponsorship forms available and we suggest 1p per point



to instill a competitive element!

Focus: Aid Transport: As Beni says in his report, stocks of clothing are running very low in Dorohoi. He has very little clothing to give out although there is still some food for the next two months. Conversely, stocks of clothing in our Salfords warehouse are very high - quite literally. Boxes of packed clothing ready for Romania are stacked up to 14 feet high, with a further 9 cages of clothing awaiting inspection and packing. Every week, more items arrive and, whilst we are certainly grateful for them, it does become a challenge to fit it all into the warehouse.

So why can we not send all this aid now, when it is so desperately needed? A major factor is the weather. The direct route to Dorohoi crosses the Carpathian Mountains in central Romania. The roads are narrow and not well suited to heavy vehicles, particularly in the winter conditions, which can persist into April. Some of you may recall that one of our convoys was stranded in a snowstorm for 14 hours or occasionally having to extract lorries from ditches. It is unacceptable to put this extra strain on our volunteer drivers or risk the vehicles that have been entrusted to us.

There is another route that avoids the mountains but this is considerably longer, both in distance and travelling time. It can take up to a week instead of five days by the direct route and, after adding time for loading, customs clearance and unloading, this becomes too long to be away. One possibility would be to use a commercial haulier costing about £3,500, which is twice as much as transporting the aid ourselves later in April or May. This is the dilemma - do we address the immediate needs and compromise the opportunity to make a bigger contribution later in the year?

An Opportunity to Help: We receive clothing in a variety of ways but most of it arrives in black plastic bags. Certain types of clothing are not acceptable to the Romanian authorities so all the items that we send must be inspected prior to dispatch. There is a team of dedicated people who carry out this task but more help is needed. The team meets on Friday afternoons at Horley Baptist Church and new helpers will be especially warmly welcomed.

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This newsletter is published on behalf of the Romanian Aid Foundation and Asociatia Neemia. For further information or to be added to the newsletter mailing list please use our [response page](#) or write to us using the contact details below:

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