

From little acorns mighty oak trees grow

Richard reminisces on his first 20 years of helping the needy in Romania.



2012 has been a memorable year for me as it marked the 20th Anniversary of my first visit to Romania and the conception of The Romanian Aid Foundation. When I made that trip in November 1992 with Jon Norman, our first destination was Timisoara and then we went up north to Dorohoi. It was Dorohoi that I felt drawn to because of the poverty and scars which Communism and the Revolution had inflicted on that area. Orphanages were overcrowded; the stench of urine and the unloved emptiness in those poor children's eyes are experiences I will never forget. Old people's homes were in similar condition.

So the question was "WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP ?"

As Christians, Jon and I were able to share these situations in Dorohoi with our respective Churches ie. Horley Baptist Church, Surrey and Emmaus Christian Fellowship, Lampeter, and were encouraged and supported by them to reach out and help. To begin with we had assistance with transport and warehouse facilities from Jon's employers Royal Mail and subsequently Parcel Force and, with the support of both Churches and the wider community, we were able to collect Aid in many forms and deliver it to Dorohoi on a regular basis. (Compare the warehouse in 1999 with 2012 below)



As the needs grew so did the support and very soon it became necessary to form a Charity and hence RoAF was born. This was followed by the setting up of Asociatia Neemia (AN), our Romanian counterpart, to ensure the efficient distribution of the goods taken out. The success and smooth running of this operation owes much to the effective administration by the co-ordinators Beni and Ionela who have been involved since its formation. Initially a small ground floor flat was purchased in Dorohoi to serve as an office and base for the work of AN but as the work grew it became necessary to buy a warehouse to assist in the storage and distribution of the ever increasing volume of goods being received.

In 2000 permission was granted to sell a small percentage of the clothes donated so a shop was acquired and refitted, in the centre of the town, to become a focal point for the work, giving much appreciated employment, providing sufficient income to finance the running of AN and in addition giving support to many local families e.g .for medical emergencies, winter fuel and other incidentals - the list is unending.



Many changes have recently evolved in the UK; having a large new warehouse at Billingshurst managed by the Horley Team and an additional warehouse in Cardiff managed by Chris and Elena, Paul and Gloria, has made it possible to send out 7 40-ton-lorry loads of aid in 2012.

In December approximately 3,000 "JOY-IN-A-BOX" shoeboxes were collected for Dorohoi. I was privileged to fly out and assist in their distribution, seeing firsthand the extra workload this puts on the AN team who in spite of the severe weather conditions ie. (SNOW 2feet deep) carried out the delivery of these precious gifts under the excellent organization of Beni, bringing a Happy Christmas to so many families, especially the delighted children.



A very special THANK YOU to everyone involved.

In summary, our 20 years of helping the needy people of Dorohoi have been a real blessing to them and to me. Over the years we have known many answers to prayer, making the seemingly impossible possible. God has always been faithful, He has never let us down and never will.

As expenses increase (it now costs app £3,000 to send each load) so we need your continued support both financially and prayerfully to carry out this work. My latest trip in December was my 67th journey to Romania and as I reach the ripe old age of 70 in June please pray that I continue to enjoy the health and strength needed to play my part in this worthy cause which brings Glory to God's name in Dorohoi.



Thank you to ALL who have and do support His work, may you be Blessed in helping those much less fortunate than yourself. **Matthew ch25 v40**

Richard Burgess

p.s. one day when my wife is not busy I will write a book!!

