

# Noreen's Kids



## *The Newsletter from Romania December 2011*

As we end another fruitful year, we want to take this opportunity to thank all our supporters, but especially to those who have taken the time and trouble to come and help us directly in Romania...our volunteers. You have enriched our lives and those of all the children you have helped.



### **Fundraisers**

In this difficult financial climate we are so grateful to everyone who helps raise the money which keeps us going. Sadly costs have increased considerably in Romania with a tremendous hike in the cost of fuel being one of the main ones. We are working hard to minimize the effects of this but inevitably providing community care becomes more expensive, we would like to have been more active in the community than funds have allowed. There is such a big need for community support for poor families coping with serious illnesses. If you can help with a fundraising event – coffee morning barn dance sponsored walk or run etc. We know families here who would be so grateful for the funds they generate.

Our heartfelt thanks to all those who have held fund raising events this year. There are too many to mention individually but without your help we could not continue to operate.

We wish you all joy and peace at Christmas and many blessings in the New Year.

## Residential Unit

Once again, it is time to bring you up to date with all that has been happening here.

We have eight young people in the unit. Starting with the youngest – **Christina**, who is doing so well – she seems to have just about doubled in size since the last newsletter and can be a real pickle –  
**SO NICE TO HAVE CHILDREN WELL ENOUGH TO BE NAUGHTY!**



**Catalin** – one of our oldest young people at 22 years is going home to be with his family for Christmas.



**He is always happy to visit his family but is even happier still to come back 'home' to us!**

His general health hasn't been up to the mark this year but that has not stopped him being incredibly excited and enjoying every moment with the many visitors during the year. Alison, thank you for undertaking the journey, pregnant and all, to visit him and make him the happiest young man in town!

**Monica aged 23** misses Catalin more than anyone when he is away. She loves his constant chatter to her and his undemanding friendship. Like Catalin, Monica has also lost ground during this year but she still enjoys life in her own way.

**It seems likely that we are the place where Monica will always be happiest and while she needs us we'll be here for her.**



**Claudia 17** has had her ups and downs and as I write this she has been in hospital in Bucharest for a few days for treatment and investigations. Hopefully she will be home in the next 2 days.

For someone with the degree of difficulty which she has she copes amazingly well with her trips to hospital. She always has a big smile when she sees any of the carers from the unit – we make sure that she is never without a carer from the unit when she's in hospital, it is so important for her to be surrounded by people she recognizes when she is in unfamiliar surroundings.

**Despite the extra work our staff hardly ever complain and provide the devoted care, without which we couldn't run.**

**Adnanna 17** She still needs 2 people to move and position her and is sometimes difficult to get comfortable but she loves to go out and is in the open air whenever it's possible – like all children with her disability she likes things to stay the same and introducing change needs plenty of patience. She's also a very slow feeder. **Without the expert one to one care of the staff here it is very doubtful that she would have survived.**

**Abel 11** One of the most vulnerable children we look after and a good example of the devotion needed. It takes about an hour and half to feed him – **patient positioning and constant vigilance to make sure he doesn't get some of his food in his windpipe have been rewarded with him gradually gaining weight.**

His carers are dedicated to making him the best he can possibly be in his circumstances.

**Adi 10** He has not had a good year. The increasing pain in his hips and spine has been distressing, not only for Adi but also for his carers. He is no longer able to sit in his chair and making him comfortable in bed can be a real challenge. He loves his music – often lies down clutching the radio and he's learned to turn the volume up!! **We are making arrangements for him to be seen by a specialist in Bucharest, hopefully resulting in a solution to his hip problems.**

### **Mirela 11**



The dedication and devotion of the staff towards our little princess has changed the life of this little one for the better. In her own little way, she communicates with her eyes and is interested in everything around her. **She loves when Catalin sits beside her and plays his loud music for her.** She enjoys sharing her room with Cristina even when Cristina is being naughty!

## **VISITORS & VOLUNTEERS**

We've had so much help from a string of visitors and volunteers...**much has been achieved and they too have shared in our times of sadness and disappointments and joy** during the year.

### **Dr Robin Dunn**

- made three visits to Slobozia this year. His lovely Anna came with him to help in April.
- As usual, his days were long and filled with achievements, not to mention the exhausted staff he left behind in Slobozia!! **As always, he is our rock of support.**

### **Alex Wilmott**

- a trained nurse from U.K. came out in March and went home in September..
- the children loved her entertaining ways and she was able to help with passing on skills to the carers and helped at the holiday camp in Cataloi twice during the summer.
- **She made a lasting impression on our residential unit with her creative skills and art work! We are so grateful for her help in the unit and in the community.**
- We wish her all the very best with her nursing career she is back working in the Oxford hospitals.

**Paul and Alison, Hannah and little Daniel** came as well. Alison and Paul are well known visitors here and everyone was greatly excited when they arrived. (Alison was a previous long term volunteer.)

Paul, helped by Alison, Hannah and Alex did an incredible amount of work in the unit. Paul returned for a second visit in July to install our new kitchen and complete the work he has already started. [Because of his experience working with challenging behaviour in the UK he offered us invaluable help in our efforts to change Cristina's behaviour and teach her new 'tricks'!!!](#)

Then along came our vivacious **Penny** to teach Dan and ourselves new physiotherapy skills and improve the positioning and handling techniques for our children. Taking a wheelchair apart, reshaping and rebuilding it is no challenge for Penny!

Next came **Dr. Renee** and **Maryann**, from the USA, to work with the children and their parents at the holiday camp. Both of these young ladies are highly skilled in their field, Renee in occupational therapy and Maryann in art therapy.

**Senan** was our man of the moment from Ireland. He is a man of many skills and put those to good use here and in the community. Thank you Senan for arranging to have the special cot made for Cristina and we eagerly await its arrival...hopefully the solution to our problem or is it!!! Lovely to have you back Senan.

The delightful **Jenny and Christina** followed on from Senan.

What a pair, never a dull moment while they were here, always on the move and looking for new challenges!! We are so sorry **Brenda** that you were not able to make the journey. We missed you ever such a lot and wish you a speed recovery.

**Dr. Pat Mann** made her annual visit in October. Like Robin, her days were filled visiting families in the community and her professional help and support for those whom she visited as well as for us is invaluable. Pat, your lovely gentle bed side manner made a lasting impression on everyone. Lastly but not least, **Vicky**, her daughter **Shelby** and friend **Tony** came prepared for any eventuality in their pursuit of beautifying all whom they met! Vicky, skilled as a hairdresser and beauty therapist and Shelby's expertise with nails was the 'icing on the cake' for many who could never afford to pay for such luxury. The time and loving care they devoted to the special needs young persons made each one feel very special.

With two of our staff, **Tony** used his skills as a builder to work on a house for a single mother with two children, one of whom is wheelchair dependent. Having purchased necessary materials, they installed windows and doors, put up ceilings, finished the roof and the outside of the house to prevent any dampness getting in during the winter.

**TO ALL WHO HAVE HELPED IN SO MANY WAYS OVER THE 12 YEARS WE PASS ON OUR DEEPEST THANKS FOR YOUR HARD WORK, LOVE AND SUPPORT.**

## **COMMUNITY**

**Under a government regime that makes nothing easy for the disadvantaged**

**A vital part of the work we do is advocacy for poor families.**

**Flori our social worker knows the regulations intimately, and she ensures all our families get what they are entitled and has sometimes persuaded the authorities to offer additional help.**

**As long-term supporters of our charity you will know that here life balances precariously...but we are ever looking for the diamonds amongst the rust... here are some examples of both.**



**Alin Cretu pictured left is an 18 month old little boy born with a congenital heart defect. By linking up with a charity based in Tel Aviv we have facilitated this little chaps operation. He would not have had this done in Romania where it was too risky but is now making excellent progress following his op. in June. HE SHOULD NOW HAVE A PRETTY NORMAL LIFE SPAN.**

help little Anamaria, who suffers from a very serious heart condition. Many of you have followed her progress over the past four years and her excitement each year when she had her holiday in Cataloi. It was with a heavy heart we received the news that the Israeli team can't help her because of the complicated nature of the open heart surgery she needs and close follow-ups she would require.

**Please keep Anamaria and her family in your prayers as she bravely copes with an uncertain future and deteriorating health.**



Sadly the same Cardiologists who operated on Alin can **not**

You may have followed the story of **Florentina** and her two children - like ourselves will have thought that no more bad luck can come their way.



**Unfortunately, it has.**

Florentina died suddenly in April leaving her two children alone with their disabled granny. At the moment of their mother's death, life changed for ever for the two boys. They are now living with foster parents but granny is all alone trying to cope the best way she can. Again, I would ask you to pray God to comfort the boys and their granny. She, too, is grieving for the loss of her only two daughters and her husband and the separation from her two grandsons.

## **HOLIDAYS AT CATALOI**

Once again we have been able to provide holidays for poor families many of whom have never been on holiday before. It is an opportunity for the whole family to come and stay in John and Jean Gutteridge's purpose built holiday home Casa Valentin built for their charity the Sunflower Fellowship in 2001. It has provided holidays for thousands of children in the lovely Danube delta region of Romania.

**THIS YEAR ALONE, THANKS TO YOUR GENEROSITY, WE HAVE PROVIDED HOLIDAYS FOR MANY DISADVANTAGED AND SICK CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES.**



*“We have drugs for people with diseases.....but these drugs do not treat the main problem, the disease of being unwanted.....the sick and poor suffer even more from rejection than material want. Loneliness and the feeling of being unwanted is the most terrible poverty.”*

**MOTHER TERESA**

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

- **PRAY FOR THE KIDS AND OUR WORK... WORK THAT IS DIRECTED BY THE LORD.**

**PUT ON A FUND RAISER IN OUR NAME..... HELP PROVIDE A HOME FOR A VERY POOR FAMILY.**

This *‘house’* is home to one of our families.



- father almost blind,
- mother mentally challenged,
- plus a toddler of 2 years and a 2-month old baby.
- This family deserves to live in decent conditions...these are clearly not.
- **Just surviving this winter will be a major achievement.**

Please can you help us build them a **basic home**: 2 rooms, kitchen, well in the garden and outside toilet?

**Please help change the world for this family.**

- **COME TO SEE US...MOST WELCOME ☺**

### **. Contact details for Noreen’s Kids**

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### **If you wish to donate on line**

Please go to

<http://www.purecharity.org/noreenskids>

or <http://www.justgiving.com/noreenkids>

### **To visit the web site for Noreen’s Kids**

<http://www.noreenskids.org> for information about the charity, fundraising events, gift-aid forms an on-line copy of this newsletter etc.