

February 1994

babies of romania



Registered Charity No: 10503

Dear Reader,

The Babies of Romania Office has recently moved to new premises. We are now located in Carmichael House.

Carmichael House is a centre for Voluntary Organisation, Which was set up in 1987 by Dublin Corporation in Premises generously provided by the Eastern Health Board. It is Ireland's largest Centre for voluntary organisations with 36 members groups.

For Babies of Romania, this

move is very positive. The premises are secure, with a long-term agreement, as well as rent free, with only a minimal cost for this many useful facilities available to us.

The atmosphere is very positive and the people very friendly and helpful.



Sean MacSweeney

The office run by Sean MacSweeney and Onja Van Doorslaer, is the centre point for all of Babies of Romania activities. It deals with all the administrative matters involved with running the organisation, from recruiting volunteers, processing applications, training and fundraising.

BABIES OF ROMANIA
Carmichael House
North Brunswick Street
Dublin 7.

Tel: 875 5175

Fax: 875 5757



Onja Van Doorslaer

The office is also the focal point for all enquiries and is always open to new and returned volunteers who may wish to come in for a chat.

Babies of Romania are looking for volunteers who are prepared to travel to Romania for a minimum period of six weeks.

We are particularly keen to recruit Nurses, Speech Therapists, Physiotherapists and Teachers or others with a background in health care or education. However, if you are in a non medical field and feel you could be of use in Romania please do not hesitate to contact us.



Vivienne Brady, Nurse, with Fanica in the Medical Room Negru Voda

For a regular update on the Social Program in Negru-Voda why not subscribe to the Social Program Newsletter, for only £5 a year.

Contact:

Petrona Donaghue,
76, Kincora Avenue,
Clontarf,
Dublin 3.

Tel: 335457

The Chairman's Address

JAMES DILLON

The horrific scenes which faced the first Babies of Romania Volunteers at both Nicoresti and Negru-Voda now seems a distant memory. The Squalor is gone, the abuse and neglect has been replaced by care and activities. Yet three years later volunteers still see children making great progress some walking for the first time.

Programmes are in place to help the children both physically and mentally. Romanians are now involved in many of these activities and we have started at Nicoresti to pass on some of the programmes like pre-school to our Romanian staff.

Babies of Romania maintain over 30 volunteers in Romania. These unselfish people come from all walks of life and have become an extended family to the orphaned children. Our recruitment has remained quite strong to spite the fact that Romania is no longer in

the news. This is due to peoples desire to help and the hard work of the recruitment committee, who canvas, recruit, interview and prepare volunteers.

As we take on more Romanian staff and improve the various programmes, our monthly running costs continue to rise. The Sponsor a Child Scheme is planned to provide long-term fundraising for the pre-school, school physiotherapy and life skills, programs. While continuation of the Children's progress.

In the past 3 years so many people have given their time both in

Ireland and in Romania. Others have given money, which they may feel was a drop in the ocean.



President Mary Robinson with Chairman James Dillon and Tanta Druta at Aras an Uachtarain

However, the combination has resulted almost certainly, in lives been saved, children walking for the first time, children getting up to mischief who were once immobile in their cots, it's surely been worth the effort.

TANTA DRUTA

Tanta Druta, 17 who was living in the orphanage at Nicoresti was flown to Ireland in December 1992.

Tanta suffers from kidney malfunction which then required urgent medical treatment.

After spending 2 weeks in Temple Street Children's Hospital, her kidney condition was stabilised and she was treated for rickets she was then discharged into the care of Kathleen Bloom and later the Woods family.

Tanta is currently under supervi-

sion of the Temple Street Hospital staff and now awaits the right time for her kidney transplant operation.

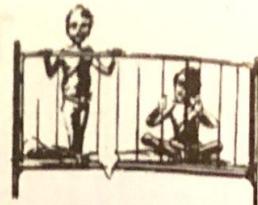
Tanta who is now so much part of the Woods family that she considers their name her own, is attending the local school, since September 1993 and is making great progress.

She has settled into her new way of life so well that this now fully mobile, lively teenager is almost unrecognisable from the wheelchair bound ailing girl of December 1992.

Babies of Romania Committee

James Dillon
Rebecca Burrell
Jean Hall
Maria Broderick
Vincent Crowley
Gerard Byrne
Vincent Woods
Deirdre Regan

HELP TO GIVE A CHILD A FUTURE BY JOINING THE BABIES OF ROMANIA "SPONSOR A CHILD SCHEME"



THE NEED FOR SPONSORSHIP

Our long-term goals require long-term commitment and that is why we have introduced the "Sponsor a Romanian Child Scheme".

The funds raised will go towards the projects in which the individual children are involved. We will keep the sponsoring family well informed on the progress of the child, and we believe that this information, together with photographs, will prove extremely encouraging. There will be two reports per year written by the volunteers working with each child. A full report on how money is spent will also be furnished.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

You can sponsor the child by signing and completing the enclosed standing order and if you feel you cannot make this commitment please promote the project among those who can.

WHAT INFORMATION WILL YOU RECEIVE?

You will receive all available information on the child including the following:

- A recent photograph
- A brief medical history
- General background
- Details of the orphanage
- An on-going progress report of the aims from one of the Irish volunteers working with the child.



Ionel

HISTORY OF THE "BABIES OF ROMANIA" CHARITY

Babies of Romania have been working at two orphanages caring for 360 children. These experiences for the last 3 years ensures that all funds are best used for the benefit of the children. Our team consists of Doctors, Nurses, Care Workers, Builders and General Carers. This team has been expanded by 15 Romanians – both volunteers and staff.

Our construction work has brought the buildings up to a stage where they are now habitable. We've installed running water, toilets and windows. Fifteen trucks of essential aid have been sent from Ireland for the project, while all goods available in Romania are locally bought.



Gigel

WHAT ARE FUNDS USED FOR?

The Babies of Romania "Sponsor a Child Scheme" is designed to ensure funding for programmes including pre-school, school, physiotherapy, food supplement and clothing. The funds supplied by a sponsor will go towards the projects in which the sponsored child is involved in. Any shortfall will be made from the general existing Babies of Romania activities fund. Each child sponsorship provides a means of stable funding which would otherwise not be achieved. One hundred per cent of funds raised through the sponsorship scheme go straight to the orphanage. No administration cost or commissions of any type are deducted.

NEGRU - VODA – Gillian Osbourne

WHAT A welcoming committee! I arrived at 2.30 am to the Casa (volunteer's house) to be greeted by 25 eager and expectant faces. I was touched by this show of kindness to a raw recruit, till it became apparent that there was an ulterior motive - chocolate from home.

A reception of another kind was awaiting me the next morning. Nothing can prepare you for the shock of first entering the Camin. As you walk through the door the smell of boiling clothes and food and urine hits you. Upstairs, children who look like babies, but who in fact may be up to fourteen years old sit on beds, or on the floor, their legs deformed from being cramped or tied to cots. Downstairs, the bigger children clamour round you, most in ill-fitting clothes, trousers tied with string or held up with a free hand, some with plastic coke bottles or other "toys", they've found clasped possessively to them. They pull at you, shout into your face, some even nip and bite, all crying for your attention. All that is, except for the few, the heartbreakers, who just sit quietly on the beds and

rock, to themselves, unaware of what's going on around them.

All types of children live here, from disturbed and very mentally or physically handicapped to children whose only disability is deafness or a squint, to those who were just one too many for their families to cope with in Ceausescus



Gillian with Amidica

Romania. Even these normal children have become very institutionalised, having lived in the Camin for most of their lives.

The initial reaction is of hopelessness, you think how on earth can anything we do make any difference to these children's lives. I know my own first thought was "how soon can I go home".

But gradually you acclimatise and an insidious change of heart takes place. One morning you think - But I'm not at home, I'm in Romania.

You stop comparing it to the stable affluent, Western culture, you stop looking for scapegoats to blame, and you start to imagine, what it must be like to live here. The revolution has had little impact in poorer country regions like Negru-Voda. The main difference is that the prices keep rising and now there is no guarantee of a minimum wage. Many of these people are worse off now than before the revolution. Little wonder that some feel resentful of the aid coming in for the children in the Camin, when their own lives are so hard and they have difficulty getting clothes and food enough for their own families.

Similarly you stop thinking of infermieres (women who look after the children) as unfeeling and obstructive, and you realise that these women, mainly from the village, have no training in dealing with disturbed and handicapped, children. They work long hours for little pay, they are understaffed and tired most of the time. Also, the attitude of their employers in the past

has been that these children are irrecoverable, hopeless cases, and the priority has been to just keep them quiet and out of sight as much as possible. Bearing this in mind it's amazing how good humoured and generous they are, and how many of them welcome the changes being brought about in the Camin. Most are more than willing to help and to learn to care for the children more humanely.

Most of all, though, you start to see that these children are like any others anywhere in the world. They need to be washed and fed, loved and stimulated and respected. And that's what's happening in Negru-Voda. You get such a kick from waking up and knowing your whole day is going to be spent doing just that.

When you think of the scene that the first volunteers experienced here, children starving, sick and naked, left for hours in their own urine and bathed once every three months, never let out of their crowded bedrooms, hearing nothing but the cries of the others, seeing nothing but four walls and a patch of sky, no hope of anything in the future but being moved to another institution if they didn't die first. Then you realise how far they've come. Now the children are fed

three times a day and even the weakest get enough, they have showers twice a week and are allowed time to enjoy them, there are classrooms and workshops to stimulate them and teach them skills; there is music playing on every ward and the children can come out of their gloomy salons to dance and sing along in the corridors. Most of all they now have a second chance - a programme has been set up to trace the families of the children, take them out of the state system, enabling them to be adopted, go to school, or to learn a trade and so avoid the progression to another mental institution which would once have been inevitable.

I think the biggest surprise is that you go over to Romania thinking you're giving something for three months, and realising that what you get back is so much more.

I won't say it's not draining because it is. It can be disheartening and frustrating. It can take so long to get so little done but even now things are still changing slowly but surely.

Every few months another child takes a first step; another child picks up a spoon and starts to feed himself; every few months another child meets his family for the first time; another child leaves the Camin to go to school; every few months another child helps a weaker one to eat or to dress himself, another child learns to interact and play; every few months another heartbreaker stops rocking and holds out his hand to be touched and to be loved and another child gets the respect he deserves.



A group of Infermieres, Negru Voda

ROMANIAN DIRECTORS VISIT IRELAND

AT THE last two A.G.M.s we have had two special guests.

In October 1992, Dr Virginia Buliga, the director of the orphanage at Nicoresti, was brought over to Ireland for seven days. In November 1993, Dr Ernici Calit, the director of the orphanage in Negru Voda was also brought over for a week. The co-operation between the directors of the orphanages and our organisation is a vital key to the success of our projects in Romania.

Part of Babies of Romania's long term strategy is to promote good relations with the authorities in Romania.

The success of Dr. Buliga's trip in 1992 is evident, co-operation and understanding has greatly improved and we are confident that there will be similar results from Dr. Calit's visit.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the agencies that facilitated the doctors and ourselves in their visits and are confident that knowledge gained from visiting the various institutions will be of value.

It is as the authorities in Romania begin to understand the aims and objectives of Babies of Romania that they are beginning to meet our requests and therefore we can ensure that progress will be ongoing.

TRANSPORT

Thanks to the generous donation from Fergal Murphy and his co-workers in the charity shop in Castlebar, Babies of Romania have been able to purchase another mini-bus this time for the orphanage at Negru-Voda.

The new mini-bus purchased in Belgium was once again driven across Europe by Peter Fahy of Bolton Street College and Gerard Byrne along with Fin Naughnane.

We hope that this mini-bus will provide a long term and reliable form of transport for the children and volunteers of Negru Voda.

HOT SHOWERS !!!

The water situation in Nicoresti has been an ongoing saga for years. However the lack of run-

ning water in the orphanage as well as the living accommodation was tolerated and volunteers used their initiative when it came to washing the children and themselves.

In April 1993, after continued work the Echo Team sorted through the red tape, rusty pipes and water supply problems and installed a whole new system of pipes and tanks and finally the hot water flowed through the pipes in every salon, a very memorable moment for all.

The water situation in the ranch could not be solved in the same way due to supply problems, however many long hours of discussing submersible pumps and water systems finally paid off when a system by which water is pumped up into a tank in the attic and provides hot water for the day.

Once again the Echo Team based in Kent, England have resolved another complicated task. Babies of Romania and all the children and staff at Nicoresti are very grateful.

The Summer Camp Bucumeni 1993

THE ORPHANAGE in Nicoresti is home for over 100 children, the majority of these children had not left the orphanage since their arrival, until July 1993, when the idea of a summer holiday for the children was realised.

Bucumeni, 15 Km from Nicoresti, a Romanian run holiday camp for children, was the setting for many, their first ever holiday.

The camp was organised and run by Liam McGrath, Joseph O'Brien and Mick McHugh.

Groups from each Salon took turns to spend 3 days away from the spital. Their time was spent going for walks, paddling, playing games, trips in the infamous 'Machina Rosu' to the zoo in Tecuci, stopping off in the cafe for juice and a snack, for some a meal in a restaurant, a first for all.

The excitement was electric and every child returned to the Spital with glowing suites and shining eyes, counting the days for their return to Bucumeni.

The organisation and work

involved in the running of the camp required long hours and many helpless nights, however, all concerned could not doubt its worthiness, the children's reaction proved this to all.

Another summer camp for 1994 is planned. It is hoped to avail of a similar camp this time in Constanta at the Black Sea. Sun, sea and sand for all to enjoy.

WANTED!

(Everything from orthopaedic boots to washing machines)

BABIES OF ROMANIA is constantly on the look out for supplies and equipment which are needed in the orphanages. Our record to date in acquiring such essential items as food, clothing, medicine and building supplies at no/low cost has been excellent.

These supplies are taken out to Romania on a truck which is organised and driven by the airport police from Dublin Airport, to whom we are very grateful. The space on the truck is shared between three different organisations which work in Romania.

We are very grateful to all the individuals and companies who have donated supplies and equipment for the orphanages. The fact that we have gotten almost all of these supplies free of charge has made an enormous difference to our finances, which have plenty of other demands on them.

Gearoid O' Nolan has been responsible for the past year for the procurement of all these supplies and equipment and he almost always persuades the owner of the companies involved to give them to us for nothing. If you have any supplies or equipment which might be useful in the orphanages you can contact Gearoid on 01-933611.



Gearoid with Carman Hussain sourcing supplies in Romania

THE SOCIAL PROGRAM – Fin Naughnane

THE SOCIAL PROGRAM seen as a natural progression for Babies of Romania's aid project as Camin De Handicapati, Negru Voda was instigated in February 1993 to elaborate on the care program already in place since February 1991. The objectives to increase awareness of the importance of family relations, source missing documents from children's personal files, to complete the identity and the family profile, develop relations with relevant authorities in order to enable us to work in harmony with Romanian heads of departments in realising our goals. There is a big emphasis on education and the movement of children to institutions invaluable advantage to the child's future well being. We have full support in this area from the Inspector of Handicapped and the orphanage director Dr. Calit and the infirmaries even take pride in the fact that their children are now ready for school.

Our main concern is that a better quality of life is provided for each child by whatever means deemed necessary. In some cases it is just an operation to make the child's sitting position more comfortable, in other cases it is eye or ear attention and in a lot of cases it is the longing to find their mother.

The program covers the medical, dental, educational (including speech therapy) and emotional requirements in whatever way possible using the facilities in Romania and in some instances assistance is sought from outside ie..medical and educational in Ireland, England and the U.S.A.

Every possible avenue is taken into consideration in order to reach what we consider a more acceptable future for each child, this also covers the areas of a child returning home for a short visit, a child returning home permanently, transferring children to other state run institutions with emphasis on education, transferring a child to private education, assisting the Romanian adoption committee by furnishing the relevant documents in order for children without other alternatives to be considered for life outside Romania, accepting that a lot of the children will remain in the institutions and insuring the necessary care to which they are entitled is given in abundance.



Sima visiting his family before going to school

The success of this programme is very obvious, the family relations with a large number of children was made very apparent when the orphanage was swarmed by concerned parents at Christmas. Children are going home for week visits and some longer. A number of children are currently at home on a long term trial basis with a view to staying permanently. Orthopaedic surgery has successfully taken place and the children are receiving a lot of attention from concerned infirmaries as they recuperate. More than 20 children have been tested

and fitted with glasses, an ongoing dental program is still in place with routine visits to the poly clinic in Managalia. 15 children have been transferred to more suitable education centres, 2 to a private school in Constanta which incorporates family support and the children go home for the weekends and the school holidays.

The commission responsible for diagnosing the mental ability of the children and subsequently suggesting which school they would attend have been to the orphanage in Negru Voda (at our request) to see the group of students who will move in 1994. They assisted in the preparation of a school curriculum to be adhered to by the Camin teachers in order to prepare them for the future and to eliminate any misdiagnosis that has happened so often in the past.

One major achievement of the Social Program was the acknowledgement by the Inspector of Handicapped

that a lot of the children at Negru Voda had in fact been misdiagnosed with such suggestions on their files that they are C.I.E. (chronic infantile encephalopathy) sufferers or are severely mentally handicapped, it was proved when 2 children were taken to her office (without an appointment !) to introduce her to our so called mentally handicapped children and her reaction to their conversation and excellent communication skills in general moved her into guaranteeing that a misdiagnosis would never happen again, she also appointed a new social

assistant to the Camin and has taken it upon herself to enquire from the Ministry of Handicapped the exact definition of C.I. E.

THE PLANS FOR 1994 INCLUDE:

(a) The building of the Transitional Living Centre which will house the teenage children who are ready for the world but who need attention in order to develop social skills. They will receive education in all areas of communication with the outside world and through the T.L.C. will have an impression of what real living is all about. They will have an increased standard of hygiene, develop self awareness and be given tasks to perform and rewarded accordingly. They will be under the supervision of Romanian house parents and the long term plan is that each child in the house will be deemed employable.

(b) Each child this year will get away from the Camin for a holiday at a Tabara (a Romanian holiday home) and all the children gone to other schools in Romania will also come back to meet their old friends and enjoy the freedom of the beach.

(c) The monthly visiting program will continue which means that each child having left the Camin either to go home or go to school will be visited by a volunteer in order to monitor progress and confirm the friendship which has been established since 1991. Those visits will also support the parents and teachers involved.

(d) The searchers will continue for those parents throughout Romania with the assistance of a Romanian social worker and a very helpful police service.

(e) We plan to continue also the emphasis which has been put on

relation with the infirmaries and other Romanian staff, the locals in the village and the authorities and hopefully develop a bond strong enough for us to be confident to leave all of our plans in the hands of the Romanians and be assured that they will be as convicted as we have been to giving each child his entitlements.

With information such as awareness of legislation, rights of the handicapped child, monitoring entitlements etc, that we will convince the parents first to accept their children with whatever flaw they might have and with the co-operation of the authorities and the support from the benefactors in Ireland that we are able to open doors for these children and believe that the doors will remain open in our absence.



Fin with Juliana

Juliana Omacea aged 7 and a half with six years of institution life under her little belt was introduced to her parents in the summer of 1993. She melted their hearts and they have begun the long complicated process of taking her home permanently.

She underwent cleft palate surgery in Temple Street Hospital, Dublin and has made remarkable recovery, is responding well to

basic speech therapy and is currently packing her toys and new clothes for her return journey at the end of the month. She will be met on arrival by her parents and will receive intense speech therapy when she has settled into her home in Navadara with her brother and sister who are thrilled to discover that their so called "handicapped" sister is in fact an adorable little character who for so long suffered at the hands of the system.

She was a victim but survived, the future looks bright and if that does not prove the worthiness and effectiveness of the Babies of Romania Social Program I rest my case !

During the harsh winter months in Romania, the Social Program, under the supervision of Liz Cussack has been concentrating on home visits and parental visits to the orphanage. The main programme resumes again at the end of February when Fin Naughnane and Carmel Brandon return to Romania.

It is with the ongoing support from the Babies of Romania committee, the Social Program committee and returned volunteers that we are confident the Social Program will go from strength to strength.

SOCIAL PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Teresa May - Treasurer

Petriona Donoghue - Newsletter

Deirdre Regan - Babies of
Romania committee
representative

Geraldine Donnelly

Regina Mullen

Valerie Mason

Edel Donoghue

Sinead Davern

Carmel Brandon

Fin Naughnane

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT UPDATE - GERARD BYRNE

BABIES OF ROMANIA recruits its volunteers from a wide variety of backgrounds. The majority of our people are involved with the children in their daily work, so our main aim is to recruit people who have skills and/or experience in the health care and education fields. Professionals such as doctors, nurses, child care workers, occupational therapists, speech therapists, physiotherapists, dieticians and teachers are our prime targets in the recruitment drive. These are supplemented by a number of volunteers who, while not having specific training, nonetheless contribute strongly to our programme. Administrative/managerial skills are also sought. Approaches have been made to the professional bodies and training centres of many of the above mentioned groups, and we are grateful to these and to the press media who have helped us in our recruitment.

Other skills are also of central importance to the project, particularly in the area of construction and maintenance. The building of the therapy centre at Negru Voda which began during 1993 will be completed during 1994, so we would welcome applications from anyone with a relevant trade or with experience of construction.

Applicants attend an orientation day, which gives them an opportunity to learn about the project from recently returned volunteers. Following successful interview and checking of references, they are allocated to one or other orphanage by the recruitment committee and informed of their departure date. Before leaving for Romania they will have a thorough medical check-up and receive appropriate vaccinations and hygiene, sensory integration, speech therapy and a question and answer session. The training days are not intended to turn out multi-skilled professionals, but to introduce volunteers to the type of skills we seek to make available to the children.

In the interests of forward planning, it is important that we receive applications from prospective volunteers as early as possible. This is particularly important in the case of second (or third) time round people, who will probably wish to return to the same orphanage. Early application helps us to meet the needs of the children and the wishes of the volunteers as fully as possible. It seems likely that we will be seeking personnel to fill head of care and co-



Volunteers - taking a well earned break.

ordinator roles from summer 1994 onwards. These roles require a long term commitment and a high level of skill and experience.

Once in Romania the volunteers work under the guidance and direction of the co-ordinator and the head of care. They are allocated to specific areas of work, probably with a particular group of children or on a therapeutic programme. There our role is to facilitate the Romanian staff in learning to care for their children to as high a standard as possible. Teamwork, patience and understanding are the key to success in our work.

In line with our aim of facilitating the Romanian staff in running Nicoresti and Negru Voda, it seems likely that we will be sending smaller numbers to each orphanage in the coming months and years. This reduction may not take place simultaneously at the two orphanages. Ultimately, we will have a small group in a more supervisory/supportive role at each orphanage.

We would like to thank everyone who has volunteered to go to Romania and work on the project. 170 volunteers went out during 1993, bringing the total since we began to over five hundred people. We look forward with confidence to the coming year.



Maura Patten, Montessori teacher,
the pre-school programme, Nicoresti.

THE SOCIAL PROGRAMME NICORESTI

ALTHOUGH NEVER formally titled as the Social program, much of the work under that title in Negru-Voda, has been ongoing in Nicoresti, since Babies of Romania's arrival.

Realising every child's full potential is the key importance to our work in Romania, and therefore in Nicoresti we strive to maintain a system of programs that enable each child to learn and develop, mentally and physically, to the greatest extent possible.

The movement of Children on to other more appropriate establishments has been ongoing since September 1991, the majority going to residential schools that provide the stimulation that these children require.

As the children attend basic educational programs in the spital they are gaining the valuable stimulation that enables them to achieve a standard to continue their education away from the Spital.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE SOCIAL PROGRAMME, NICORESTI, 1993

CLIODHNA O'SULLIVAN

For the Children of Camin Spital, Nicoresti 1993 brought a whole new world full of fun, excitement, holidays and great joy that many of them are still talking about. The Children were shown a part of life that they had never experienced.

The Social programme was set up to cater for every aspect of the Children's lives from parental visits, to holidays, to moving to school, to being involved in daily programs.

Here is a diary of the year's event's.

Parental Visits

In 1993 more parents came to visit their Children. Many of them had not seen their son/daughter since the day they put them into care. For many of the children these visits have become more frequent and at last the bonding between parent/child is beginning to form. This can be seen by increase in Children now going home.

March: Daniel went home to live with his family.
May: Costel went home to live after spending six years in care.
Nov.: Andelina went home to live.
Dec.: Mioara went home to visit her family over Christmas.
Dec.: Ionut went home to visit over Christmas.
Dec.: Julian Popa went home numerous times throughout the year to visit.
Dec.: Gori went home on occasional visits.

Adoptions

Feb./March: Roxana went to America.
Dec.: Catalina went to America.
Dec.: Romica went to live with Judy in the states.

Medical

Mihaela and Gelu went to Bucaresti hospital for orthopaedic surgery and physiotherapy. It is hoped that both these children will be walking soon.

Holidays

In July the Children went on summer camp to Bucumeni.

School

In September Lilanna (12) Ion (4) and Lenutsa (6) were accepted into Scoala Cinci. Lenutsa and Ion were the youngest children ever to be accepted from Nicoresti to go to boarding school.

Angel went to the boys boarding school in Gidigen. Five of the children are now attending the Kindergarten school in the village.

Programmes

Various programmes are now up and running in the spital.

Pre-School

Two pre-school programmes which are being currently run by Irish Volunteers. It is hoped in the near future to employ a Romanian teacher to take them over.

School Room

There are run by qualified paid Romanian teachers and take a large number of Children from the spital.

Physiotherapy Room

In November another paid physiotherapist was employed. This means more children benefit from the daily physio they now receive.

P.E.

Giochel runs the PE room and because we can now pay him for longer hours. This means more children are involved.

Art-room

Run by Irish volunteers, the children benefit greatly from this programme.

Soft/Relaxation room

Set up to provide a recreational and relaxation programme for the Children with profound physical handicaps and severe behavioural problems run by Irish volunteers.

T.V. Room

Provides entertainment for each salon for one hour per day. We are now trying to employ more Romanian staff to take over the day to day programmes and responsibility of the Children.

Christmas '93

The school children put on a play for the whole Spital. After months of rehearsal the Children performed in the play and it was a great success.



Christmas Concert 1993

As you see from the above the introduction of the social programme means more children are learning to walk, talk, feed, to be educated and stimulated and to take more control of their lives.

Each day they struggle to grasp their independence with the help of the social programme this is now being made possible in Nicoresti.

Here's to 1994!

A VOLUNTEERS ACCOUNT —NICORESTI

CLARE CARRUTHERS

IT WAS all over now, the workshops, the plans and preparations and the good-byes, but the real story was just beginning!

Here we were in Nicoresti in the small hours of the morning, slightly dazed, very tired having spent 20 hours travelling by plane, train, taxi and finally minibus. We arrived at 1am and received a very warm welcome at the "ranch" this was to be my home for the next 14 weeks.

Day 2, as I walked down to the Spita I was struck by the Dickensian nature of my surroundings. It was like a place lost in time with poverty and lack of facilities more familiar to the 19th century.

On my arrival to the Spital I was greeted by Marinica a well known loveable rascal and the first of the children you are most likely to meet and never forget.

As I walked into the building I was overwhelmed by the unfamiliar smells and sounds and then



Clare with Liviu and Iulian from Salon 8.

through the different Salons (wards) I must admit I had to suppress the desire to run when I saw the sights that greeted me. So many children so much to do, I realised how unprepared I felt. How would I ever remember their names? How would I communicate with them with my meagre vocabulary of Romanian. These very special children with their varied problems both physical and emotional with all the experience of their short lives written on their faces, it seemed like such a daunting task.

These feelings soon passed as I got caught up in the every day challenges that faced me. Each child became an individual personality, I gradually came to understand and know their needs. The boys in Salon 8 soon stole my heart!

There were times of frustration, moments of despair and heartache. So much I wanted to do but time and resources were

limited. Looking back on my experience in Romania these memories of frustration are overtaken quickly by my memories of each child and the special feeling each one gave to me.

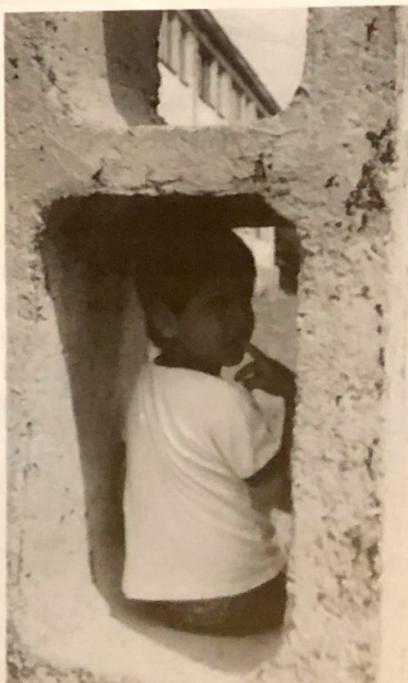
Workshops and orientation days though essential cannot prepare you for the experience of Romania and the wonderful people you will meet in Nicoresti. Jean Rafter and Nan Fitzgibbon are a fantastic co-ordinating team, with Beatrice C also doing great work. Marius who looks after the volunteers is always obliging and patient, Radu who will come to the rescue with translation often needs to sort out a sometimes tricky situation.

To all of you unsung heroes out there in Nicoresti we volunteers thank you!

Whatever I gave to the children in my short stay in Romania to me it would seem that I was the one that came away the richer for the experience.



Former administrator Jean Hall with Florentin during a recent visit to Romania.



Zanfri - Summer Camp '93

FUNDRAISING

FUNDRAISING is a most essential activity in order to maintain our services and programmes at Negru - Voda and Nicoresti, however with the many demands for funds, and in particular the number of other charitable organisation, this is becoming increasingly difficult.

Participants in fundraising and volunteers are urgently required in order to maximise the proceeds from our present projects and to organise fundraising themselves.

This is vital in order to ensure the continue success of our work in Romania.

The following are the projects which the fundraising committee have agreed on so far for this year.

(A) Skip a drink project for lent.

This is an event that has proved a very successful fundraiser in the past.

It requires relatively little work and has a lot of potential as a fundraiser.

The main idea is to approach a pub in your area, and to organise for the patrons to donate the price of a drink to Romania.

(B) Benefit Night.

There will be a benefit night in the Green Isle Hotel sometime in April / May. We have secured the services of the Garda Band and hope to have a second group of musicians. It will be promoted through posters and leaflets, available from the fundraising committee.

(C) The Wicklow Walk.

This is a fundraising venture which will take place on the weekend of the 11th / 12th June.

It will be a scenic walk in the Wicklow's hills led by experi-

enced walkers and the larger would be for each individual to raise sponsorship of £100.

A social evening set dancing and special guest appearance will follow the event and promises to be great fun.

We appeal in particular to all returned volunteers to be part of the event by raising sponsorship promoting and participating in the walk itself.

For further details contact Jenny Cuypers or Colette Brophy.

(D) Race Night.

We are hoping to organise a race night in October.

Full details in respect of the Mechanics and what is required are available from Vincent Crowley.



Fancy Dress Swim at the 40 Foot

(E) Clothes Shop.

We are currently considering opening a 2nd Babies of Romania shop. In order to do this we need an individual to work with the project on a full time basis as well as volunteers to man the shop.

A second shop has the potential to raise between £10,000 to £15,000 per annum, and would therefore be an extremely viable project.

All enterprising volunteers interested please contact the fundraising committee

(F) Sponsor a Child Scheme

This scheme has already been launched and those who can pro-

mote it further should contact the Office for leaflets and promotional material.

This is a tremendous opportunity for much needed funds to be raised and the advantage is that it will mean a continuous influx of funds.

(G) Bike Ride

The Bike ride from Mizen to Malin Head raised approximately £10,000 and those interested in participating in a similar event this year should again contact the fundraising committee. An event such as this can only take place if there is a sufficient response and it is felt that substantial funds will be raised.

We are constantly looking for volunteers to help with all events planned and for ideas and suggestions for other possible fundraising events.

For details and information on events mentioned, or any relevant enquires contact the fundraising committee.

FUND RAISING COMMITTEE

Vincent Crowley, 30 Kildare Street, Dublin 2, 6767193.

Jenny Cuypers, The Farm, College Road, Castleknock, 8202020.

Anne Murray, 24 Woodford Way, Monastery Road, Clondalkin, 593905.

Anne Lynch, 58C Palmerstown Road, Rathmines, Dublin 6, 975474.

Sean McSweeney, Carmichael House, Lower Brunswick Street, Dublin 7, 8733173.

Colette Brophy, 2 Maple Lawn, Castleknock, Dublin 15.

Noreen McEvoy, 79 Monalea, Firhouse, Dublin 24.