



NEWSLETTER SPRING 2004

Easter Day at Good Samaritan Beius

by Elena Verdolini



Gabriel Vancea, Simon Sandor, Elena Verdolini, Melinda Petrisor and Greti Varga

Important days like Easter and Christmas have always been for me a special time that I spent with my family. Easter is a time of joy. We celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from death. We give thanks for Jesus' life and for his sacrifice. Easter was also a time for our family to reunite. Youth that could not experience life in a family missed these experiences of sharing time, joy and food. They missed many generations (mothers, daughters, grandmothers) working together to prepare meals.

They did not have enough and did not learn how fulfilling it is to share and give. For many of them, the group of friends living with them in the orphanage is the only kind of family they have ever known. This year, I spent the Easter holiday among the youth of Good Samaritan Beius. We wanted to give them an occasion to be together as a family. On Holy Friday, some members of the staff met with the youth and painted eggs, an Easter tradition in Romanian families.

Many of the youth came to the

Good Samaritan restaurant and were surprised to see that we had organized such an activity. Many of them left when they realized that there was not free food involved and that they would not be allowed to listen to music or play a decision made to respect the day in which Jesus gave his life for us.

The others were excited to have a chance to paint eggs. For them, it was a totally new activity and they were trying to do their best. They produced about 30 painted eggs. On Saturday, Good Samaritan youth gathered to cook a Easter meal.

I designed this day to give everybody a lesson of real family life at holidays. Like in the Verdolini tradition, the first rule was that if someone did not perform a task in the kitchen, he or she would not get the meal.

I thought that everyone would be upset because they would have to cook for themselves. I was surprised to see what actually happened in the kitchen.

Simon, Costica, Dorina and Iosif

cleaned and cut potatoes. Greti fried the *mici*, typical Romanian sausage made of three different kind of meat (pork, veal and sheep).

Marius and Remus, who usually despise group activities, prepared the meat for battered steaks, Silvia took care of the small kids, Buli set the tables, and Costica was named official photographer and learned how to use a digital camera to take pictures.

The kitchen was bursting with activity. I was supervising, but consciously pretending I did not know how to cook, so that they would figure it out by themselves. Now and then I would give advices to solve a situation that otherwise would have become a crisis. They were allowed to listen to music but a limit was put on the volume level. We also took out the rackets and started playing tennis table. And for a little while, I felt like I was back home. Carol, just like my grandfather, kept pestering to get a taste of all that was made. People were discussing table layout, whether the steaks were done or not, and the sizes in which the fried potatoes were cut.



Costica, Iosif, Simon and Dorina cleaning and cutting potatoes

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Experience in Romania

by Kathryn Terry



Katy Terry and Justin Gale

Last year, I was one of two graduate students from the University of Washington in Seattle who worked as an intern at Good Samaritan for the summer. This was the second summer that a generous GSB donor sponsored this internship. I was very excited to come to Beius, experience Romanian culture, and work with GSB.

My previous experience had been with Russia, so I was delighted when we first drove into Beius and saw a town full of churches. (In Russia, they would have been destroyed by the Soviets in the 1930's.) Although I had expected Romanian and Russian cultures to differ, I was surprised by the extent to which they did. Romania feels much more European, and Communism has affected at least one less generation. Romanian culture seems more intact, especially religion and civil society. Good Samaritan is a testament to Romanian culture and the citizens' willingness to work on societal problems that the state is unwilling or unable to address. One area that was familiar from Russia was the legacy of institutionalization. Before going to Romania, I was aware of the dis-

mal condition of orphanages in the former Communist bloc, but I did not understand the continued problems that people who had grown up in those orphanages faced as adults. I gained a much

better sense of these problems during the summer. Clearly, Romania has great potential, but it currently has limited resources to care for its orphans, much less the young adults leaving state care. Yet I was immediately impressed by the efforts of the GSB staff to leverage resources - most importantly, their own time and abilities - to help the young adults in Beius. It was encouraging to see how members of the staff dedicated themselves to help GSB's participants improve their lives and showed great perseverance.

The internship at GSB was personally rewarding. In addition to exchanging ideas about organizational practice, the staff graciously helped us learn about Romania. My summer was a fabulous cultural experience: especially the evenings at home on our host families' porches, traveling to the Midsummer music festival in Sighisoara, and the Girl Fair on Chicken Mountain. The staff and community at Good Samaritan enveloped us with hospitality, from the barbecue with GSB's participants and staff at our arrival, to delightful meals at the homes of our co-workers, and visits to the home villages of our co-worker and hosts. There were also lessons on how to cook Romanian deli-

cacies such as *cascaval* (fried cheese), *clatite* (Romanian pancakes), and *zakuska* (one of my favorite local delicacies, particularly the variety made with roasted eggplant). Beius is one of the loveliest places to spend a warm summer evening.

The GSB organization was very receptive to using us as resources. I appreciated being able to share my background in donor relations, financial management and internal infrastructure building. It was rewarding to be able to use these skills to try to address communication and other issues. I am interested in continuing to work in this area, and I am currently writing my masters thesis in conjunction with GSB. I feel extremely fortunate to have become involved with Good Samaritan Beius, to have experienced Romanian hospitality first hand, and to have worked on such an important issue. GSB has great potential and is working in a vital area of need. It has been a pleasure to be a part of it.



The GSB staff would like to thank Katy.

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Ester Day at Good Samaritan

We told jokes, commented on how many kilos certain people in town put on in wintertime and made plans for the summer. I came back to reality at the time of giving out portions. In a second, all the youth I worked with in the kitchen started behaving like hungry wolves.



Margi and Mandrut play table tennis

Some put additional food in bags to take home without making sure that there was enough food to feed everyone.

Others were stealing from each others' plate and stuffing themselves as much as they could. I had to resort to the old phrase "I will penalize you if..." to get people to thank the Lord for the food they received.

We all learned from this day.

Marku learned how to cut small steaks out of a bigger part of meat and Marius learned that wet potatoes should not be thrown in hot oil. I learned that the youth know each other's skills. They immediately split up the tasks in a very efficient way: less experienced people to do the prep work and the more experienced to cook.



Greti fries the mici, Melinda and Simon fry potatoes and Feri prepares battered steaks



Playing backgammon

I am even more convinced now that what these youth need is not only a job, but the family atmosphere that they lacked for so many years. I also became very aware that for all of them it will be extremely hard, probably impossible, to forget their past and the privations they experienced. For us, who are working to help these youth become responsible adults, it is fundamental to find ways to help them understand that they are now adults. The rules of behavior for their lives should be different than the ones that ruled life in the orphanage. This will take all our effort and patience and a lot of time. But if we can only transform one of them, we will have accomplished a great deal.



Remus preparing the meat

THANK YOU!

Easter, a celebration of the new life made possible thanks to Christ's sacrifice

We also want to thank you for the support you give to GSB, allowing us to offer the hope of a better life to our orphans.

A.O. McGill
Andrea Stevens Grice
Bruce P. Langrick
John L. Roadside
Lorri McNaughton
Vincent Strawbridge

Freshfields Bruckhaus
Deringer-Paris Office
Habitat For Humanity Banbury
Incarnation United Church of
Christ
The Shan Daywi Foundation

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Story of success!



There are people who can't be changed however much one might try. It is sad when we, Good Samaritan Beius, find a young person in our program who will not positively respond to our assistance and efforts. Ionita Catalin was a young man who spent two years, 2000-2002 in our construction program.

In these two years, he repeatedly showed that he was unwilling to change his established negative habits: he was late for work over and over again, he was sometimes absent, and when he did work, he rarely carried out a task from his own initiative.

Because of Catalin's constantly negative behaviors towards the organization and his job, the GSB leadership decided not to accept Catalin into the program for another year. For the first time, Catalin realized that the help given him by GSB would not continue throughout his life, and he was forced to seriously take responsibility for his life. This was the turning point in his life; the moment when Catalin understood that it was up to him to change his ways in order to survive. Thus, Catalin went to Oradea looking for a job and a place to stay. In the first month, he stayed in a night shelter, but only between the allowed hours of 1700 to 0700; during the day he was forced to look for a job. After some time, he succeeded in finding employment with a construction firm, where he continues to work. Construction work was the occupation for which Catalin trained while he was in GSB.

Once Catalin was employed, he succeeded in finding a flat in the city with decent rent. Living in this flat was a big step in Catalin's integration into society. Catalin's

neighbors are Christians who became attached to him and, as they understood that he came from a placement center, they started to give him material and spiritual support. Having a good environment at work and at home and understanding that it was solely up to him to change and survive, Catalin quickly turned into a different person. The belief of his neighbors urged Catalin to go to church, eventually becoming a believer himself.

Catalin's story teaches us that the positive growth and change in a young person from the placement center depends on several factors, the main one being the young person having a desire to change.

Only then can the environmental and work factors begin to have an effect. The effort that Good Samaritan staff put into teaching Catalin proper behavior did not have an effect because Catalin had no interest in becoming a more responsible person. Good Samaritan's "tough love" – not accepting Catalin's poor behavior and dismissing him from the program – pushed him into surviving solely by his own means. Once he realized a need to change, Catalin was able to use what he learned at Good Samaritan – construction work – as an asset for his new life. Now that Catalin has given proof that he wants to change, Good Samaritan will support him financially and morally in his efforts for a better life.



From the HFH site manager



Marku

During the spring months HFH Beius building team, helped by the orphans sponsored through GSB, constructed buildings in four different locations.

The Easter house in Mezieș was finished and dedicated on Easter. Also in Mezieș, two other house foundations were constructed and the walls and roof of one of these houses were built. The finish work was done on the house on Burgundia street in Beius, and this house is now completed. Finally, another foundation was built in the Habitat neighborhood.

The young people from GSB made substantial contribution to these projects. Even in the first half of March when the weather was bad they worked in the program. Until the end of March, eight young people worked in the partnership with HFH. Some of them graduated

the program, and moved on to other jobs in Oradea and in Beius. Since April, there are only three young people left: Marku, Alex and Costica. Marku has adjusted to the work, performing even skilled tasks.

Alex and Costica have difficulties, however when they want to work, they perform well. Their frequent poor behavior is a major problem, as it often disrupts the construction crew.

All three workers do not respect the work schedule, yet they feel they should receive recognition for working and be compensated for their overtime. Personal hygiene is also a difficulty in their integration into the HFH team. In spite of these problems, they are young people who contribute to building houses for God's people in need! We thank them.



Miklo Stefan
Building Site
Manager



Alex on the HFH site

Changes at GSB

In an effort to help our youth learn basic hygiene skills we arranged a facility where they can shower twice a week and we installed a washing machine in the GSB office. During winter time a Wednesday night activity program, usually with cooking and games, was led by a staff member each week to provide practical life skills training. At older age, habits are difficult to change. Now that the weather is better, a staff member spends a couple of hours with them playing basket or staying in the park. Hygiene improved significantly. Clients with no access to hot water shower at least once a week. Staff presence also improved relations between staff and clients.



The house on Burgundia Street

How can you help?

Commit to a yearly sponsorship:

Help support an orphan by sponsoring his/her wage, the taxes linked with hiring him/her legally, and the cost of a hot meal per day. A yearly sponsorship will provide the youth with the opportunity to work in one of the four Good Samaritan programs (HFH site, carpentry shop, Restaurant or Noah's Ark) and to learn a trade. While in the program, the youth receive counseling, learns life skills through practice sessions with the social worker, and participates in activities organized by GSB. Near the end of the sponsorship, we help the youth search for a job and arrange for him or her job opportunities with local factory owners. An orphan can be sponsored for \$170 per month.

Support families:

A number of Good Samaritan clients now have children of their own. While this offers them the joy of creating the family that they never had, it also can magnify their financial and developmental struggles. We would like to offer them support to pay for kindergarten/daycare. In this program, their children will be given a morning snack and a hot meal per day, but most importantly, they will be granted the chance to interact with children from all social classes and be exposed to other role models. Additionally, their parents can use this daily time to work. The cost of kindergarten/daycare for each child is approximately \$25 per month.

Contribute to our post-graduation support program:

Good Samaritan encourages the integration of orphans into society; one major step in this integration for our clients is finding and maintaining legal employment. Often, among the orphans we serve, there is little motivation to work, stemming from various environmental conditions that nurture dependence. We hope to counteract this trend through the positive reinforcement of steady employment and good behavior. We reward an orphan's great success--completing one year of employment with a supervisor's recommendation and without any written reprimands--through the gift of a home appliance or furniture. Your donation of in-kind goods or financial support will help us continue this incentive program.

Contribute to renovating apartments:

GSB owns three apartments located in the NEFA complex of Beius. The majority of this building is in neglected condition and needs remodeling, including the GSB units. These rooms only have access to cold water. They don't have showers and share a common toilet with other apartments. The orphans who rent these rooms are unable to rent other apartments in town due to financial limitations and the unwillingness of local owners to rent to people coming from the orphanages. Help us remodel the apartments by supporting the renovation costs. Contact us for the specific details of this project.

Help Good Samaritan Beius with its general needs:

Help support the administration costs of Good Samaritan. In order to run our organization, we need the skills of specialized staff. The staff provides direct support to orphans and helps to take care of their needs; they also take care of important tasks such as accounting, keeping the website updated, contacting donors, dealing with international and local volunteers and taking care of the general paperwork. Without this staff, GSB could not provide the necessary support to our orphan clients.

BANK INFORMATION

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Account # for Good Samaritan:
2511.1-89.3/EUR
2511.1-89.5/USD
2511.1-89.8/GBP

Staff profiles are up!!

Please visit

www.goodsamaritanbeius.org