



NOROC NEWSLETTER

Vol. 10.6 Feb. 2014 Editor: Anca Oancea

GIFTS of Christmas

All the knitted hats and scarves, pajamas, stuffed toys, small cars or dolls, art supplies and other goodies you send, we distribute to institutionalized children in Tulcea County--over 300 of them! Each bag bears the child's name, packed with love and care for that one particular beloved child.

The reward for the long packing process is seeing the faces of the children receiving their gifts from Santa and his bunny (in Romania, Santa arrives with a rabbit)! At the homes for the youngest, each child recites a poem or sings a carol, as is customary. Sometimes groups of children sing and

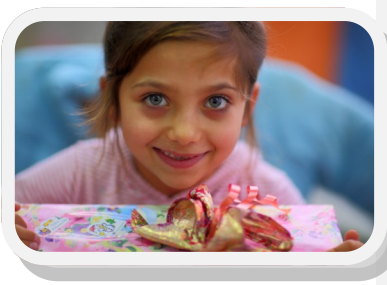
recite, as they did at Somova and Sambata orphanages. S

Sometimes they give NOROC staff gifts, too. Delivery to Sulina orphanage requires a boat trip from the mainland, and an overnight

This year each bag included a copy of "The Greatest Gift," which talks about the real meaning of Christmas and the birth of Christ in our hearts. AND, each child received a copy of "Why the Chimes Rang," a lovely and inspirational story about a small poor child whose sacrificial offering of a penny on the altar made a great miracle happen. Anca Oancea translated "Why the chimes rang" into Romanian.

This is the first imprint from "NOROC Press."

In 2014, we hope to ready gifts early so we can relax a bit more at Christmas. We welcome what you send anytime, but thinking "Christmas in July" helps us budget and assemble what we need before the Christmas rush.



Christmas Boxes

Tulcea County churches-work together to deliver gift boxes assembled and shipped by Operation Christmas Child. These are delivered beyond the institutions and orphanages.

NOROC delivered over 400 boxes to families, foster parents and school children in schools with a high proportion of poor children. At each of these visits, we all sang carols, talked about the birth of Jesus Christ in our hearts, delivered copies of "The Greatest Gift," and took photos of the kids for them to receive later.





Christmas program

Every year, the Bible Study group dusts off the costumes, gets out the shepherd's crooks and kings' crowns, and rehearses a traditional Christmas program with Marilena and Adriana. This year over 40 teens and youth participated--a very GREAT group indeed! Of course the most coveted parts are Mary and Joseph, as well as . . . yes . . . Santa and the Bunny.

Driver Barbu shuttles participants to a number of sites, including the Senior Center and the presentation for foster families, where NOROC also delivers gift bags. It's a real blessing to the seniors and foster families, and to the performers as well!

Louise Covington Learning Center

Thanks to a memorial bequest, the Louise Covington Learning Center is becoming a reality in a small apartment near the largest Tulcea orphanage complex. In addition to books and magazines, the LCLC will support computer literacy classes, online tutoring and research, learning CD-Roms and DVDs, story hour .

The hope is that the the Learning Center can be staffed and open a few hours a day. Children and youth from many institutions and group

homes can read, talk to safe adults,



draw, play music, and learn in the center.

Building relationships: sharing the love of Jesus Christ

Weekly small groups are like family, or like best friends. Small group leaders are a safe, caring, stable adult in relationship with children of trauma, many of whom have attachment disorders. Often we learn about special needs or challenges during small group time, so we may intervene before it's too late.

In Bible Study, we share joys and concerns, pray together, study the Bible from a practical perspective, and keep in touch with many of the youth who have

aged out of the system. Bible Study has grown to nearly 50 members and often must meet on two nights to fit everyone into the Clubhouse .



Perhaps it seems like a small thing to have a cake for a child's birthday, but over and over again we hear: "No one EVER celebrated my birthday before!" or "I NEVER had a cake for my birthday." These "firsts" often come at an advanced age. Here is one of the 3girls celebrating their 17th birthdays at one grand celebration in Marilena's small group of young women.



Pray

Small groups of older boys are a special challenge. One 16-year-old in her group is needing special prayer and care as he battles cancer. Tori has been taking him fresh foods to help develop his immune system, but the prognosis is not so good. Please keep him in your prayers. Many children develop diseases early because of living in toxic environments as they or their birth mothers were at a vulnerable stage.





NOROC, Inc., a Christ-based 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, nurtures orphaned and abandoned children in the state institutions of Tulcea County, Romania. The Romanian word "NOROC" means "God Bless." NOROC seeks to address the root causes of poverty by serving the spiritual, developmental, social, emotional, educational, medical and relationship needs of traumatized and at-risk children and youth. A disproportionate number of institutionalized children are ethnically Roma (Gypsies), a stigmatized ethnic (and migrant) group in Europe.

Thanks to the support of congregations in many denominations, but especially the PC(USA), as well as individuals, Liz Searles serves NOROC as a mission co-worker.

<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/elizabeth-searles/>

Over 50 Romanians minister through "Big-Hearted" programs that offer children daily ongoing relationships: Grannies, tutors, friends, small group leaders, psychologists--all share in NOROC's healing work.

Please support this ministry of critical presence and care: Contact Carolyn White:

NOROC, Inc. 200 Hedges Rd., Abilene, TX 79605 (325) 692-2143 <NOROC9@suddenlink.net> or donate online at "noroc.org"

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Thanks to your generosity, 2013 has been a great year of service and new programs. Going into 2014, we hope to sustain horse therapy, speech therapy, more Grannies with more resources in new institutions in Tulcea.

Outfitting and staffing the Louise Covington Learning Center, offering conferences and workshops to NOROC's staff and to social services workers, ongoing psychological counseling, advocacy for children and families, small group meetings, overnight and day camps--these are critically important to the development of the children we serve. And these programs are costly. Please donate now to ensure our 2014 budget will be met.

"EU POT" / "I CAN" SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROGRAM

The "I Can" School Attendance Program was designed to reward children with 100% attendance in a given week with a photo of themselves in a special photo album. Fifty children contracted to attend school in the first semester, and thirty had 100% attendance. This is SIGNIFICANT! NOROC took the "100% CLUB" out to a special movie activity at Coral Plaza. A good time was had by all!

For the second semester, 70 have contracted in the program. These include the children from Gradinari--handicapped children--who recently were moved into the Speranta orphanage. This means a LOT of photo albums and a LOT of photos to print every week, but the results are worth it!

