



School For Life

Newsletter Edition 13, Jan 2005
Registered Charity No. 1062953
Patron: Robert Carlyle OBE

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE AGM 2004

by Dave Emptage, Trustee

Școală Pentru Viață

After a report from Sylvia Gurr, Trustee, we launched an emergency food appeal to supplement the unsatisfactory food provision in the adult institution in Siret (due to inadequate funding in Romania). The institution had only been receiving 50% of the necessary budget from the authorities. We raised a total of over £3500 that quickly gave badly needed food to people in the hospital. We wish to thank everybody who contributed so generously. We also compliment the staff team in Romania who effectively communicated with the authorities in the institution to make a real and very necessary difference to the people who live there. We have been donating one pig per month and will continue to do so, reviewing our donations when the hospital receives its budget for 2005.

STAFF DEVELOPMENTS

The SPV administrator Petrica Stoian left the organisation in August 2003. We now have a new Director of Administration, Doina Haresmuic and Director of Education, Stefan Hutanu. Sixty adults from the institution receive input from the teaching staff of SPV.

The physios are working with 20-30 children from the community.

The numbers vary because some of the physio input is carried out for a finite period of time. Since November 2003 we have also employed a music teacher who provides a two hour music session every week for the students.

Including the teaching assistants we now have a staff team of 18 people: Six teachers including

Students on an excursion to Sucevita; "A big picnic and party in the mountains!"



Stefan, Director of Education; four teaching assistants who live in the SPV school building; the music teacher; a medical assistant; two physiotherapists; a caretaker; an on-call Fire Officer; an accountant, and Doina the Director.

WORKING IN THE HOSPITAL

SPV have managed to secure a large room in the hospital to work with some of the residents. The work in this hospital room has been ongoing for about six months. In July I attended a morning session when one of the teachers, Carmen, was teaching her group of 15 students who were working individually with rotational input from the teacher. One student was doing mathematics, others were colouring, another was doing a jigsaw using both their good and impaired arm to

sort pieces, using appropriate language when asked about the content.

On the lockers were photographs and pictures from magazines that were used to stimulate conversation and recognition of different objects, scenes and animals. A ball was available for throwing and catching. Mobiles were hanging from the ceiling with

big, small and medium-sized items for counting, colour recognition, and to illustrate the concepts such as big, small, up, down, under, on,

over, and behind.

PARTICIPATING IN THE COMMUNITY

Another huge success has been the day excursions to Sucevita; a big picnic and party in the mountains. The excursions are a testimony to the commitment and strength of the SPV staff team. Teachers used their own vehicles and brought friends and partners to help, and really went 'the extra mile' to make this happen. The mayor of Siret was passing the barbecue site by chance and joined everyone for a drink and a bite to eat.

The teaching assistants see the SPV school building as their home. Because it is a working building there are many opportunities for the assistants to meet people in the community

and feel part of their community in the centre of the town. Our students are looking healthier and better dressed and the stigma that they suffer is now less apparent. They are accepted and participate within their community. Some of our students have been working in shops, for a builder, or cleaning in the town. They are being paid for this work.

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BUILDING AND PREMISES  
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In October SPV requested funding for central heating. This was due to new fire regulations, and will present a substantial economic saving in the long run.

Work started on the central heating system in May and was completed by July. We would like to thank all the staff at SPV who helped to achieve this, especially Radu Harasemiuc who voluntarily co-ordinated the project. Although costing twice as much as originally estimated we believe it is a good investment for the future. The work also resulted in a redecoration of the buildings, both inside and out.

We now have a Gazebo in the garden that provides excellent additional space for working with groups outside during the summer months, and perimeter fences are being replaced around the school.

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STAFF TRAINING  
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In August 2003, SPV benefitted from a visit by some UK-based Montessori teachers who exchanged ideas and worked alongside the teachers and the students. Unfortunately due to teaching commitments in the Montessori School an Easter visit to the SPV school had to be cancelled.

Two very positive developments regarding training and development of staff have been made: Ruth Brown has made a connection with a Romanian charity

“Hope and Homes” based in Baia Mare (Romania). They have been involved in the break up of large orphanages into group homes and will be a very useful link for SPV. Hope and Homes have experience of advocating for people’s legal rights and securing funds from within Romania.

Sylvia Gurr has researched and contacted an organisation “Relief Fund for Romanian Arts; Play and Music Therapy Training”. They produce excellent publications which are a valuable resource. They also provide training courses and conferences in Romania. A training

Working hard at the school



package detailing training opportunities in music and art therapy has been sent to Doina and Stefan.

The trustees have sanctioned funding to enable 2 of the SPV staff to take advantage of this training, which will take place in Sinaia (Romania).

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FUNDRAISING  
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We would like to thank everyone who has continued to support SPV with regular standing orders; these are the life blood of the organisation and have made it possible for us to continue our work for the last ten years. We would also like to thank everyone who has made efforts to raise funds by organising events and through

sponsorship. Without these efforts we would be operating in deficit. Extra fundraising has made the continuation of the project possible.

Until August 2004 Sylvia Gurr and William Gould had been working hard to secure funding for the following:

- A building and plot of land for supported housing for the assistants in the hospital.
- Funding for staff for the above.
- Funding to maintain teachers’ salaries.
- A minibus.

The bid will actually be revised, to fund a loft conversion in the existing school building giving the assistants more living space. The bid has been revised for the following reasons:

- 1) A building on another plot of land would be a major undertaking increasing the size of the project by 75-100%.
- 2) Inflation and rising costs are a real issue in Romania as the economy makes ready for entry into the EU. We will have to work harder to meet and sustain our current financial obligations.

We therefore agree it is better to stay on one site with a smaller staff team rather than expand the project over two.

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PUBLICITY  
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Ruth Brown has produced a fabulous publicity leaflet and we thank her, Simon Russell (for the design) and Paddy and Mark Sessions for its production. There is one sent with this newsletter- PLEASE HAND IT ON to someone you think might be interested in supporting the charity.

Thank you also to Emma Hutton for the School for Life website at: www.schoolforlifefromania.org This will include an online donation page and “access to communication”.

From top: SPV picnic in the gazebo with Dave; Katie & Will auctioning at the 10th Anniversary, displays by Ruth in the background; Drawings by SPV students; Phil & Will at the Anniversary

FINANCE

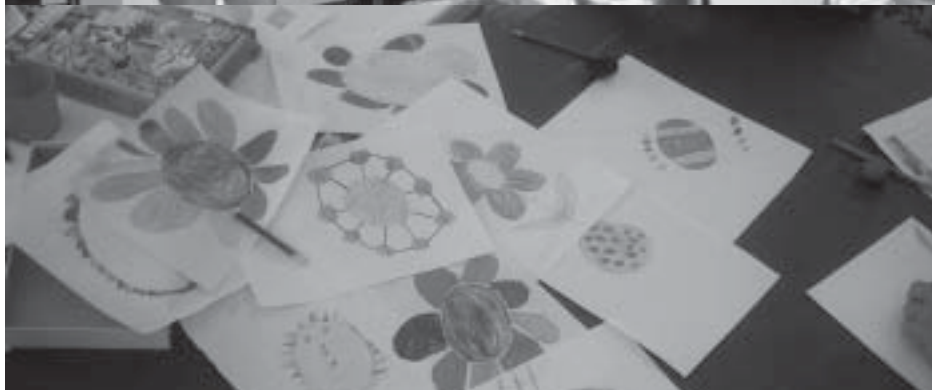
Thanks go to Keith Lownsborough for his work on the accounts and to Stephen Willey FCA from Buckle Barton Accountants for auditing the accounts and for waiving the professional fee.

Fundraising is imperative: There are two types of monies that come into a charity. One is restricted funding – an example of this is the emergency food appeal - which can only be used for a specific purpose. Unrestricted funding is very important for the every day running of the organisation and its continuation. Unfortunately very few grants provide for this. We therefore must increase our standing order base, and ultimately seek funding from within Romania itself.

THE FUTURE

A minibus is still required for outreach work and to maximise opportunities for the students to experience life outside Siret. The amount of work that could/should be done is limitless. As a totally voluntary organisation in the UK we have to recognise our limitations of time, money and the pre-existing daily commitments that we all have.

The charity has been developing rapidly for ten years. It is time to consolidate what we have and keep it as safe as we can for the future. There are, however, still sixty people in the institution who do not yet access our services. With the hospital room, gym, school building and strong SPV staff team, we believe we already have the potential to expand services to meet this need if and when we can afford it.



financial report

by Keith Lownsbrough, Treasurer

The **cash balance** on 04 Oct 2004 stood at £2047.32.

Cash has been transferred to Romania to cover the budget until the end of December 2004. With the money raised from the 10th Anniversary Event the December payment has also been comfortably made. Our **monthly income** of Standing Orders currently stands at £946 per month, with £480 per annum in quarterly or annual payments. Of this, £891 per month is given under the **gift aid scheme** giving a minimum tax rebate of £3194 next year. Anyone completing a tax return may donate to School for Life any or part of any tax rebate that is owed to them. That donation will qualify for additional tax relief via the Gift Aid Scheme. Quote reference **QAD12CG**, listed on the Inland Revenue website. This will not alter your standing order or existing Gift Aid Scheme.

cash requirement projections (in £ sterling) :

	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5
SPV staff and assistants	7229	8076	9756
Training	200	224	240
Taxes	2000	4560	5400
Building costs	685	1226	428
Other costs	1752	2450	3360
Car costs	240	240	240
Teaching Assistant costs	2400	1760	1800
Travel	360	560	600
Total	£14866	£19096	£21824

annual income (less additional fundraising):

Monthly standing orders	11364
Quarterly/annual s.o.	1060
Tax relief	2900
Total	£15324

Our financial policy for the projected budget to not exceed the monthly income is once again not met; new standing orders, donations, tax relief and other fundraising activities are needed to make up the annual short fall of £6500. Our reserve of approx. £6000 has been used to fund the central heating project.

Fundraising for the financial year 2003-2004 has totalled £1657, excluding the 10th anniversary event and the emergency food appeal. The anniversary event has raised £2781.75 with at least £414 due in tax relief. Many, many thanks to all who participated and especially to organiser Ruth Brown. Tshirts still available from Phil and Lizzy for £10!

The Team

Scoala Pentru Viata

Doina Harasemiuc-
Director of Administration
Stefan Hutanu - Director of Education

School For Life

Dave Emptage - Trustee

Many years experience working with people with profound and moderate disabilities in long stay residential homes. Worked in Romania for 2 years bringing his experience and his music to the great appreciation of those in Siret.

Katie Goodier- Trustee

A qualified teacher now works in Glasgow teaching Special Needs. She lived and worked in Siret for over 2 years and has been actively involved ever since with fund raising and publicity.

William Gould - Trustee

A University lecturer who worked in Siret for over 2 years where he met and later married his wife Olivia who grew up in Siret. They ensure good communication and translation between SPV and SFL.

Sylvia Gurr - Trustee

Experienced in working with people with profound learning difficulties. She now works as a mental health worker with homeless adults and is completing her MA in integrative child psychotherapy. Sylvia worked in Siret for 3 years and is now considering returning.

Phil Keetley - Trustee/Newsletter

Met his now wife Lizzy while they were living and working in Romania over a two year period. Phil is now in the British army. Lizzy a qualified social worker is able to bring her knowledge and expertise of independent living to the team.

Marianne Lownsbrough -Trustee

A playworker of 20 years who now runs an assessment and training centre for Playwork covering the Yorkshire region. Worked in Siret from 1991 for over 2 years bringing different expertise within the team, and leading the work of the volunteers. Lives at the charity address with her husband the treasurer.

Keith Lownsbrough - Treasurer

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Ruth Brown

A qualified teacher who lived and worked in Siret for nearly 2 years, now living in Glasgow she gives much support with fund raising and publicity.