



# Light for Children Autumn 2016

Registered Charity Number 1120680 UK

As we approach the end of 2016, we would like to take this opportunity to update you on the work of *Light for Children* in Dorohoi, northeast Romania.

We are very grateful for the **good relationships** that we have established with local doctors and other specialists, allowing the children and teenagers who live in the state run apartments to have their medical needs met. A local GP, speech therapist, dentist and optician are all particularly supportive. In partnership with suppliers of frames and lenses, our **local optician** has recently offered free appointments and new glasses to 20 of our children and young people. This is a very generous and much appreciated gesture.



The **teenage boy** who was fitted with a **prosthetic arm** during the summer of 2015 struggled with it for a long time, both practically and emotionally. For much of the year he chose not to use it but on the first day of the new term in September, courageously decided to wear his arm to school for the first time. His school friends were very interested and supportive and he hasn't looked back, now wearing it every day!

During the year, we helped to care for two **terminally ill** young ladies in their final months, before they sadly died in different hospitals in Botosani. We also planned their funerals and were very appreciative of local friends, medical staff and priests who did everything that they could to support us in such sad and difficult circumstances.

The children living in the state run apartments attend a number of different schools, receiving their basic stationary from the local authorities. However, there is no provision for the text books which their teachers order and on which their lessons are based. In September, we once again funded the children's **text books**, at a total cost of over £500. Wherever possible, we have encouraged the children and teenagers to continue with their education for as long as possible, also supporting three siblings from a local family with some of their **university expenses**, relieving somewhat the burden on their mother, who is a widow with six children in full time education.



The young family who waited 10 years to be allocated a house by the local council were finally able to move into their **new home** in June 2016, twelve months after receiving the keys to an empty building with no utilities. As well as providing the majority of their furniture, curtains, kitchen appliances and units, we were able to help them to connect to local gas, electricity and water supplies. They are now able to enjoy a much higher standard of living, with central heating and hot running water.

A considerable amount of our time and energy continues to be invested in a number of **young people who now live independently but require assistance** in Dorohoi and Botosani. This can mean helping them to shop or accompanying them to hospital appointments. Also, guiding them through the process of applying for disability benefits annually and ensuring that they keep on top of paying their rent and utility bills.

Several of our **young people have now moved to other parts of the country or even abroad to work** but when they have holidays, they return to Dorohoi and ask if they can stay with us for a few days or weeks! It has been very encouraging recently to see how these young people come back to Dorohoi and make a point of helping those who are either still in the care system or who are living independently in very modest conditions and struggle to support themselves.

In September, one of these young men paid for a group of the apartment children to go on a day trip to the mountains, whilst a young lady took one of the young girls from the apartments to buy her new school shoes and to have her hair cut! Several of them, now in their mid twenties, have told us that when they look back at their own childhoods, it was really important for them that we were there to offer them **love and support** and that they now want to be able to do the same for others.



Several times during the year we have supported a group of 30 young adults who are unable to live independently in the community and so continue to be cared for at **a centre in Botosani**. Several of them spent their childhoods at the orphanage in Dersca and then grew up as teenagers in the apartments in Dorohoi, so we have known them for many years. They enjoy participating in a variety of activities, including gardening, cooking, painting and embroidery. A group of the girls have learned to make traditional Romanian blouses, which are beautiful and can be sold. During the year, we have donated craft materials to the centre and helped the young adults to celebrate their birthdays. In September, we were able to cover some of the costs incurred in enabling them to enjoy a day out in the mountains. A wonderful time was had by all!

**Weekends** get off to a busy start, with **orchestra and choir** rehearsals on Friday evenings at our local church. The children in the orchestra have recently enjoyed playing together in the open air at a local monastery and at the harvest festival of a village church. This year, we have introduced alto and tenor recorders, as well as broadening our repertoire to include “When I look into your holiness” and John Rutter’s “Look at the World”! We are now busy practising Christmas carols, such as “O come, O come, Emmanuel” and “Little Drummer Boy”!



Throughout the year we have continued to care for **a nine year old boy** each weekend. He has very much become part of our family and it has been great to see him make progress in so many ways. He has now learned to ride a bike, to read fluently and to build Lego cars, tractors, helicopters and caravans! He has learned quite a lot about Britain and is particularly interested in red buses and black taxis. He was genuinely surprised when we returned from our trip to England in October without photographs of HM the Queen!

This year, **teams** visited us from the CRES parishes near Stafford, St John’s Community Church in Chase Terrace and Alba Aid in Scotland. Each visit gave us the opportunity to share something of our lives here in Dorohoi, to organise fun activities for the children and to emphasise to them once again just how much they are loved and valued by people who live thousands of miles away.

**Thank you very much indeed for your continued support, which makes all of these things possible.**

*Helen and Costel Cosman*