

# LIFELINE ROMANIA

with

## CHESTERFORDS AID

Autumn 2020

Registered Charity Number 1061999



## Deaf, dumb, and downtrodden

Some people in Romania have many problems; Ionuț is one of those people. We met him and his children in spring 2019, at the time he was dealing with the sudden death of his wife at the age of 33 years. He was never told why she died, but he thought it may have been a heart attack. There were 6 children, and they all lived in a one-room house. His eldest daughter has now left home and life is no easier for Ionuț.



The next daughter, Estera, has communication problems due to an infection when she was a baby, which left her almost totally deaf. When her Mum was alive, Estera went to a special school in

another town, which was exclusively for deaf children. After Cristina died, Ionuț withdrew his daughter from that special school and all learning stopped for her. Estera's future is bleak. Without speech, hearing, and education there is



very little she can do. Cris advised Ionuț to get Estera back into school, but he didn't want to know. She is likely to have a future begging on the streets of Mărășești, holding a card saying, "I can't hear, I can't speak. Please help me".

Two years ago we gave the family a bed. They no longer have it. During the summer Ionuț noticed a blood blister on his hand, then several more on his arms. He checked the children and they also had the blisters. He looked around him and saw movement in a crack in the wall. There were many cracks, and they were filled with bedbugs. All the furniture was thrown out, the walls were disinfected and replastered. They slept on 3 dirty old mattresses on the floor.



We gave them another bed, and a truckle bed, clothes, bedding, and some other furniture.

## Can you help?

We are planning our next lorry to Romania in **April 2021**, but we need the goods as soon as possible, and ideally by the **END OF FEBRUARY**. This allows us time to pack them and complete the paperwork which has to be done before every trip. Please don't leave goods until the last minute. We have more than enough to do in the last few weeks and it really doesn't help if we go there already exhausted!

### **THESE THINGS CAN BE NEW OR SECONDHAND.....**

**Bags** – shopping bags, rucksacks, holdalls, transparent plastic bags.

**Beds** – single, bunk, cot, sofa-bed, Z-bed – *must be clean and in good condition.* No double or king-size beds please.

**Bedding** – single and double, but double size is especially welcome because we never get enough of it. Sheets, especially flat sheets, pillows and pillow-cases, blankets, duvets, and duvet covers. Must be clean. No cot bedding; they don't have cots.

**Boots, shoes, slippers, sandals** – if used, must be sturdy, very clean and in good condition.

**Building materials** – doors, small windows, roofing, wood, and other simple materials for building houses. Also basic tools. Paint.

**Clothes for adults** – all sorts! Costume jewellery.

*Must be clean and in good condition.*

**Clothes for children over 3 years old – WE NEVER GET ENOUGH CLOTHES FOR CHILDREN!**

**Educational goods** – exercise books, pencils, pens, crayons.

**Furniture** – small furniture is sometimes useful; please phone and ask us because some furniture is not useful in Romania, and some does not travel well. Cupboards, chests of drawers, dining chairs and tables are needed.

**Household goods** – crockery, cutlery, saucepans (especially BIG pans), towels, rugs, irons, mirrors, clocks, spindriers, etc.

*Anything electrical must be in perfect working order.*

Christmas trees & decorations.

**Mattresses** – Standard sizes. Must be clean and in good condition.

**Medical** – wheelchairs, crutches, zimmer frames, walking sticks, plasters, bandages. *We can't take any kind of tablets, medicines, creams, etc.* **Ear defenders.**

**Money** – without this, we cannot pay for the lorry to take all the other goods. Cash, cheques, (payable to LRCA), trust-fund vouchers etc.. If you are a tax-payer we can reclaim a further 25% of your donation from the Inland Revenue at no extra cost to you.

**Socks and tights** – we never get enough to meet the needs.

**Toys for children over 3 years old –**

Nothing that requires a knowledge of the English language.

Educational toys are particularly useful.

Must be clean, complete and in working order.

### **THESE THINGS MUST BE NEW.....**

**Clothes for children under 3 years old**

**Toiletries** – basic toiletries only. Soap, shampoo, conditioner, toilet rolls, sanitary towels, toothpaste, toothbrushes. **NO AEROSOLS.**

*Must be well within use-by date.*

**Toys for children under 3 years old**

**Underwear** – *must be new for ALL age groups.*

## **For further information please contact:**

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## **LRCA Committee**

Chairman	Roger Amos
Vice-chairman	Dave Maskell
Secretary	Marvyn Amos
Minutes Secretary	Anne Kirkwood
Other member	Sharon Bridgeman

## **Less news**

Once again Covid-19 has prevented us from going to Romania and being involved with the distribution and sale of the things we take. Consequently we don't have very much news from Romania, so only 4 pages this time!

In England, we are asked to stay at home if we have Covid, unless we become very ill and have to go to hospital. In Romania, a positive test means the patient is compelled to go and live at the hospital for two weeks. Many people refuse to have a Covid test, because they don't want to be in hospital. This is why, in the early part of the year, Romania seemed to have a low infection rate – people had the illness but it was not being registered.

Now, in December, their infection rate has shot up. The areas that we work in are now rated as “red areas” – what is called in England “Tier 4”.

## Something different in 2020

The year of lockdown in both England and Romania meant that many things had to be done differently. One of the differences was when we prepared the bags for over 80 children in the Romanian churches; each child received clothes, stationery, toiletries, and toys. This job started at Sawbridgeworth Evangelical Congregational Church, as usual.

After that, it was different.

We would normally complete the bags in Great Chesterford Congregational Church, but due to the problems of social distancing, that church was just too small. We had to pack in the Church of England in Great Chesterford. There was enough space there (but we all had to walk twice as far!). The bags were then stored in the barn.



We would like to thank the churches for letting us use their space!

In April the bags were put on a Romanian lorry and taken to **Panciu Baptist Church** (left), where they were given to the children. Some bags had to be taken to other Baptist churches in nearby towns and villages.

## Christmas distribution

Many people concentrate on giving to children at Christmas time. Many charities do the same, and some children receive gifts from many sources. We do something different; we give to the pensioners, who are often forgotten and neglected.

This time we were unable to do the distribution normally. The pensioners were frightened to leave their homes, and so they would not respond to our invitations. Cris and Cătălin went for "Plan B". They loaded the church minibus and drove around the town looking for pensioners.



They met **Emilia** for the first time, simply because they saw her zimmer frame outside the house, and they investigated. She was amazed to receive visitors, and gifts! All the pensioners were given a new bucket, filled with basic foods such as rice, pasta, sugar, tinned meat, fruit, and much more. The food was bought with the profits from our charity shop. The pensioners were also given bedding, toiletries, and a Christian calendar. Emilia thanked Cris and Cătălin profusely for her Christmas surprise.

Altogether about 50 pensioners received gifts.

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