

NEWS UPDATE JANUARY 2011

January was a month of extreme trauma for all in the Botosani County small town of Dorohoi who are still today not re-housed since their dwellings along with all their personal belongings were destroyed by severe flooding last summer. Snow blizzards, ice and extreme sub zero temperatures, plus heavy winter freezing fog that covered many parts of North East Romania saw vulnerable refugee families suffering from the winter elements including children and the old living alone.

Again our sincere thanks go to our sponsors with who's help we have been able to supply Humanitarian emergency aid including food supplies, fresh bottled water, natural fruit juice and many other essential items including some furniture supplies throughout the sub zero winter January month.

RCHF in its voluntary actions in Dorohoi shows that a small charity can make a difference to the lives of families suffering extreme hardship amongst the many families we help in their time of need, which will be ongoing for many months until all of these families are finally re-housed once reconstruction work is finally completed.





Slithering across the ice to deliver a chest of drawers to a refugee family above.
Below - Ongoing food aid for Dorohoi refugee families.





Ongoing food aid also includes buckets of essential food supplies which include cooking oil, sugar, canned meat, baking flour, rice and other items as well as food products purchased via RCHF funds



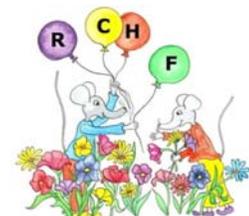
Traveling to and from Dorohoi was difficult in January because of the heavy snow and ice on already poor Romanian roads, but we succeeded to be weekly on-site in Dorohoi so that vital aid supplies could be distributed to those in most need as well as meetings with the Dorohoi local authorities.



Not only could we deliver essential food aid but again thanks to our sponsors we have been able to supply families with supplies of bedding, covers, pillows and winter clothing items all in as new condition, washed, ironed, pressed and folded.



New toys and new clothing for this young boy who was luckily to escape with his life in the flooding in Dorohoi last year and who since then has lived with his Mother in a Tent supplied by RCHF and an outside hastily erected wooden shack





A plastic sack filled with clean bedding is donated to a another needy family in Dorohoi

Supporting the European Commission Action on Drugs (EAD)



Our work in the educational domain of public health also includes education on the subject of narcotics. We have a new in house produced learning tool in the form of a new book to help educate young people about the dangers of drugs.

This valuable book is of interest also to parents and contains valuable advice about the dangers of drugs and how these products endanger life of users including weed shop hallucinating products.

The book is produced in the Romanian language first with other international languages to follow later.

To compliment the narcotics educational 66-page book is also a series of RCHF informative brochures again in the Romanian language, including a brochure on hallucinating weed shop products and their dangers, this being the first educational and informative brochure produced on this subject within Romania ever.

Joy for children!

Rural children in both Romania and The Republic of Moldova certainly know at a fragile age about life's hardships as many are children in families where there is no income apart from state benefits, which are insufficient to sustain a child's upbringing in Romanian today with European food prices that rise monthly and a similar situation within the nearby Republic of Moldova. Many a child has to go without the normal items a western child enjoys in its childhood because of family poverty. We actually know children who have no toys. In these circumstances RCHF again via and thanks to our sponsors have been able to deliver children in deprived rural areas freely donated teddies in both December and January, plus will also continue with these fluffy toys in February also until all are delivered to children in areas where the standard of life difficult. As you can see from the photographs the joy these gifts brought was overwhelming and every child was so happy to receive a fluffy new toy to take home from their class in their respective village kindergarten.





Rural children suffer from poor educational standards

Rural education in Romanian is far behind European standards. Children attending schools are at a distinct disadvantage to their urban counterparts, with a lack of facilities including winter heating often, lack of motivated teaching staff who are underpaid and lack of interest in rural education by the Educational authorities overall.

Thus these children have little chance of passing into high school not least because of a poor standard of education but also for the ones who do manage to overcome this it means either traveling daily from the village or renting a small room in the town to live in educational periods as there are no high schools within villages, plus of course food and educational supplies which

every student needs to study successfully with. This is unavailable to the brightest rural child so many times because the family simply has not the means to support the financial aspects of their child's ongoing study despite the fact this is vital to their future and a professional well paid career ahead. Within RCHF we know a rural child who has done well at school and monthly we support funds towards this child's higher education in Iasi City so that this child's full potential can be raised followed by a decent career which will help lift at least one child out of a future life in a rural village where there is no chance of a decent career.

Providing support to those who are in senior years

Throughout Europe there is a growing ageing population today. In the last years poverty caused by the financial crisis has hit these most vulnerable of citizens who worked a lifetime for their Country and now are left with a pension that all too often does not cover their daily needs.

In Romania there are some 5 and a half million pensioners the majority who find difficulty in living from month to month on the low pensions that they are paid. In the last year the Romanian Government has even further reduced the support to pensioners by cutting pensions in a move seen as uncaring by the nation. Thousands of pensioners including military pensioners have held demonstrations in the capital City Bucharest and almost all major cities across the Country in protest – a protest that has been greeted with deafness by the Government.

Many live in small apartment without facilities like heating or hot water even in the sub zero winters that are hard in Romania because they simply cannot afford to pay for such items that are still today luxuries for many families. Those living alone are the worst hit, often sick and frail their lives are cut short by the situations they find themselves in through no fault of their own.

There is a distinct shortage of elderly care homes in Romania for those in need of special care thus the frail are left all too often to fend as best they can at home behind closed doors where no one sees or hears their pain. Many of the elderly care homes that do exist are not anywhere near European standard some 3 years after Romania joined the EU. Overcrowding and a lack of trained staff that are underpaid and without modern facilities all adds to the sad picture of old age care in Romania.

Illness is a time of fear for pensioners because of extra costs involved in purchasing medication that many simply can't afford, thus go without and as a result suffer further pain and humiliation in their senior years. Many suffer from diabetes, pulmonary illness and other ailments associated with old age, which requires a special diet often, again which the average pensioner simply cannot afford on their meager pensions.

These pensioners it must be remembered paid in their many years of hard work for a communist state that is no longer here to a pension fund collected from their salaries and it is an abuse of human rights to find a Government suddenly decides to reduce their pensions. What happened to the huge pension funds we ask, where was it invested and at what rate of interest over the last 20 years? We also take into consideration that there are many in Romania who through illness do not reach pension age and taking this into consideration there is no reason why if funds had been invested with professionalism that there is now a lack of funds.

The answer to the above questions we will never know, but the plight of senior citizens in their final years of life is of concern to us within RCHF and we support where we can the most needy.



Within these few photographs you can see at first sight some of the senior citizens that are being helped by RCHF not only with aid supplies but by spending time speaking and via exchange of conversation bringing some happiness and feeling of warmth back into the lives of these wonderful people all of whom deserve a better life in their senior years than they have at present. We recognize within RCHF that there is more to aid work than giving consumable goods as care; empathy and compassion also need to be shown!

