

## *Celebrating Seven Years!*

On May 4 we celebrated the 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary since we opened the doors of the Centre of Hope and it seemed a good time to review how things have changed over those seven years and to thank God for all His blessings over those years. Since Romania joined the EU just over three years ago there have, of course, been changes but for the families that we help in Dorohoi, the situations are mostly worse. Food and fuel are more expensive, the town has no money to help with repairs to its housing or roads and there is even less work in the fields and building this Spring due mostly, we presume to the world financial crisis.

At the Centre there have also been many changes since 2002 and again we want to thank everyone who has supported and continues to support the work here over the years. Not a meal could be served or a vitamin given if it wasn't for the financial and other help we continue to receive. The children wouldn't be able to kick a football round the grass or enjoy the toys we receive (scooters especially are enormously popular!) Due to heavy usage, we have had to replace some parts on the playground equipment and goodness knows how many ping pong balls and shuttlecocks we have got through! Now, while writing this, carpets are being washed, other carpets and mats are drying over the fences (the carpet washing time has begun and it is easier for people to come here and use the hose from our well!), children are in the park and food is being prepared for the meals in a couple of hours. People will be coming for their food bags this afternoon, others will be coming for showers and after the younger children finish school at 12.00pm the park will be filling up. We have our weekly Prayer and Praise meeting tonight before which we will serve tea, coffee and biscuits and it will be 10 – 10.30 tonight before we close the gates and all is quiet! Absolutely everything we do is totally dependent on the support we receive from the UK. On behalf of all those who come to the Centre for whatever reason – thank you all so very much. These are just a few of the way things have changed and developed since 2002:

In May 2002..... we had one building surrounded by waste ground.....



***Now we have a wonderful play park, a large grassed area for ball games, and a concrete pad for the toys, scooters, badminton etc, as well as a garden where we grow some of the vegetables needed for the meals. Only last week a school from one of the villages outside of Dorohoi came to use the park (see picture)***



***We have a large garage and storage area in which we can keep things such as soap, shampoo, vitamins etc. and to store donations of food such as flour, oil, sugar etc. for the family food-bags.***

.....we started with one family mealtime a week with 24 seated and no packets (take-aways).....

***We very quickly increased to two then three mealtimes a week and currently have four sittings a week seating up to 40 and about 25 packets a day for those that can't come due to illness, age or children at school. We are now providing between 800 and 1,000 three course meals each month!***

...we ran a mother and toddler group for the first year but due to lack of understanding of the culture and language this wasn't over successful.

***We plan to restart the group again when we have full use of both buildings. We have many mums with babies and small children who are eager to come.***

....the Youth Group of about 40 was meeting every Saturday night at the Centre.....

***The Youth Group still meets regularly every Saturday evening although there are less in the Group at the present time, there are still between 15 – 20 young people coming.. They start arriving about 4.00pm to play football outside or table tennis and some have showers before the meeting and stay until about 9.00pm***

..... we started the public showers and provide soap, shampoo and towels. These have always been very well used as so many people didn't, and still don't have, constant water let alone hot water and showers.....

***The showers are now even more well used with up to 70 people having showers or bath each week. A few families used to use the mid-level bathroom which we ourselves used but now we have moved upstairs, this bathroom is used even more and particularly on a Saturday, both levels are going more or less constantly from 12 noon onwards.***

In 2002 ...we didn't have a Public Office or help with food bags, gas bottles, vitamins etc....

**We now have a public office where people come to talk about their problems and receive help. Some come to see Lesley simply to talk about their problems; sometimes for advice, sometimes just to talk as there is nowhere else for them to go. For example, last Saturday a young mum we have helped for the past 5 years or so came to see Lesley. Her partner of 12 years and father of her two children aged 6 and 9, had beaten her that morning (not the first time) because they had no money for food or rent. Her face was swollen and her back bruised. She was brought up in the Orphanage and has had and continues to have a hard life. She had a good cry on Lesley's shoulder, talked it out and went home with some paracetamol and coffee. The children were at the Club and stayed to play in the park afterwards. She came back later that day much brighter. Her partner had come back, he had managed to get two weeks work and had also apologised. On Monday evening the whole family was in the park. So many situations like this arise – frustration because there is so little or no work and partners just hit out at those nearest to them.**

....we didn't have an annex...

**The annex is nearly complete – the bedrooms upstairs are being used and the new meeting room is already being used for the older children's club on Saturdays with the younger ones meeting in the Centre as before. The Wednesday night Worship meeting is held in the new room and the children in the Centre. As soon as the new kitchen is complete we will move the family meals over and can then accommodate up to 60 sitting.**



### **A Few Updates-**

#### **Good news for Brindusa...**

*In our last newsletter we spoke about Brindusa in Hospital with suspected heart problems. We are delighted to report that after tests her heart is completely sound and it was put down to stress and problems with her back. Although life is still very hard for her - 7 children and herself and husband in two rooms, it is lovely to see her happy and smiling again.*

#### **Baby Maria – still struggling.....**

Baby Maria is still not putting on weight as she should. She will be 14 months old on 21 May but is still very small and very blue. She has grown longer in height but not in weight and although she tries to stand her legs are so thin. We are planning to take her and Brindusa (her mother) over to Iasi Hospital at the end of May to see if the doctors feel she can be operated on yet. Unfortunately Brindusa is getting more and more depressed (understandably) so we try and visit or get her to come here as often as possible.

**Eugenia..... is another young woman we have helped for a long time. She was brought up in the Orphanage and suffers from epilepsy. She has two small children and her husband left her about 2 and a half years ago just before the youngest was born. She had been suffering from increasingly severe headaches and more frequent fits since Christmas time and scans showed that she had a growth in her head which needed draining. She had to go to a Hospital about 12 hours drive away from here for treatment and leave her children with a neighbour. She gave our names as her "adoptive parents" and the doctor contacted us to say she had gone into a "permanent coma" during the treatment and she was "in God's hands". She then contacted us later that day to say she was very ill and also that she had uterine cancer which she was unaware of. We put out an appeal for prayer and two weeks later she is home, obviously still weak but when we visited yesterday was up and about and smiling. She has to go back to the Hospital next week for a check so we are praying that she will be fully recovered. Her children will have to go into State care if she is unable to bring them up as there is no trace of the father and no one else to look after them.**

**Latest News – Eugenia has now had her check and unfortunately the treatment has not worked and she has been told that the cancer has advanced and that she only has 3-6 months – please pray for her and her children as they face this difficult time and for Lesley and Peter as they minister to her.**

*Thank you so much for your support - it is not only appreciated by us but especially by the people of Dorohoi.*

*Peter, Lesley and the Trustees*

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For more information, or to book an illustrated talk for a group, school, club or church, please contact us using any of the contact details.

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