

# NOROC NEWS APRIL 2005



Publication of NOROC (New Opportunities for Romanian Orphaned Children), Inc., Abilene, Texas

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## From Mary's Desk by Mary Ferris

As all of you celebrated Easter in Romania we were just beginning Lent, which in the Orthodox Church is a period of real preparation. Everyone fasts according to their own wishes which means going without meat or animal products. Jessica and I chose to fast the first week and I will fast the last week also in solidarity with our Orthodox friends. We attended the Catholic Easter services during your Holy Week, as the Catholics were the only religious group celebrating Easter on March 26th. This was important for Jessica since she returned April 7th to her home in America missing Easter in her home church. The Romanian Baptists will celebrate with the Orthodox on May 1st, so you will hear more Paste Fericit greetings from me in the next newsletter. Casa Noastra (Our Home), the unofficial name of our new property

now has a new outdoor toilet. Lunel, who stayed with us last month, has found a place to live and has returned to his old workplace, minus his thumb. He is very grateful for NOROC's help and made us some stools and a coffee table in appreciation. We now have a new resident, Costel. He is a deserving young man whose job paid him nothing for four months this winter. After using up his savings he took another job but, as is true of many employers here, they let him work "free" to see if he was going to work out. He was terminated after one month with no money and no place to live. Nina, one of NOROC'S social workers, helped him get public assistance for food. Soon afterward he had an emergency appendectomy, so he will be at our house until he recuperates and gets another job. We

will try to help him get something permanent.

This afternoon I will meet the parents of the young woman who has twins. Ashamed of their daughter they kicked her out and have never seen the babies. It is a custom in the Orthodox Church to repair relationships before you are allowed to take Communion at Easter. We will see if they are ready to meet their granddaughters, whose first birthday is May 1.

I wrote last month about Aurelia Munteanu, age 13, who almost died from an alcoholic comma. Happily, she is now at a private center in a nearby village. She has returned to school and seems to be adjusting. We would still appreciate contributions for her continued support at the private center.

## Tales from Tulcea County: A Note from Jessica McCallister (in blue coat)

This week, I arrived home from a three-month stay in Tulcea. I worked alongside Mary and joined her in ministry. We were continuously interacting with people who either came by the apartment, lived in the children's homes, or belonged to our small groups. My tasks ranged from computer work to leading games, and from rocking babies to sharing Scripture. There were an amazing number people involved in Mary's daily life who were helped and touched by NOROC. In a short amount of time, God surrounded me with loving relation-

ships there.

Leaving the infants and children was difficult, because I do not trust them to the care of the orphanages or to the culture where they live. But I am comforted to know that NOROC has staff who are involved in the lives of these children, and who are providing some attention and stability for them. My hope for these children is that they would know the love and peace of God. Through NOROC, through your prayers and gifts, and through our risen Lord, they can.



## Prayers of Thanksgiving and Concern:

- For the new graduates
- For Aurelia and her entire family
- For Aurel as he returns to his family in Camena and adjusts to life in a village
- For the work team coming in June
- For wisdom in dealing with the perpetual stealing that takes place in Romania
- For Fred and Carolyn White and their new grandchildren: triplets who arrived last month to their daughter Melissa and her husband Ludvig.



## From Mary's Desk

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What about our Grannies at the baby orphanage? The new law mandated closing the baby orphanage and moving all of the children into foster homes. However, no one has told the mothers who continue to abandon their babies! The center is filling up as quickly as it is being emptied. Jessica went to say good-bye last Tuesday. Just as the commission was authorizing seven toddlers to go to foster care, nine new children under the age of one mysteriously "appeared". When Jessica asked where these children had come from she was told "they were in the hospital (for three months)" or "they were here all along". So, for now, there are as many babies as ever for our grannies to care for. I'll keep you all informed.

We are preparing for a work camp

in June to prepare our property for full occupancy, so this spring will go by quickly.

Graduation is a happy time for youth in America, but not so for the children here in the orphanages. It is a time of anxiety as they wonder where they will go. NOROC's special ministry to these young adults, helps them make the transition as easily as possible. One young man said, "NOROC is the "real" Department of Child Protection here in Tulcea County." I agree.

With God's Grace,  
Mary



**"NOROC is the "real" Department of Child Protection here in Tulcea County."**

### Mission Opportunity:

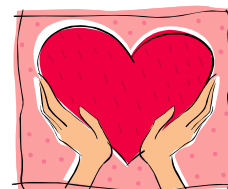
In December NOROC purchased a new house which now serves as a shelter for boys, along with an unfinished building. This summer we hope to add a second floor and prepare this building for use as a meeting/worship space and additional space for emergency shelter. This building will enable some new ministries and witness in the ever changing situation of caring for the most vulnerable in Romanian society. It will be used for small group discussions and support groups which are a vital part of the ministry Mary Ferris has developed in Tulcea. We will need approximately \$25,000 to do this. We have \$10,000 and have applied for a grant for an additional \$5,000. We are making an appeal to raise the remaining \$10,000. If you would like to contribute to this project, please send your contribution to NOROC, 200 Hedges, Abilene, TX 79605 marked for construction project.

## Love So Amazing: A Story of Beginnings

It was a dream...and it became a reality! First Central Presbyterian Church in Abilene, TX is celebrating a dream come true on Sunday, April 17. About five years ago Fred White was thinking aloud with pastor Cliff Stewart. Fred said, 'Wouldn't it be wonderful if First Central could support a full time missionary in Tulcea?' Cliff nearly fainted (well, not really, but almost!) 'How could we afford to do something like this when we are already maxed out on the budget?' replied Cliff. Many months later First Central decided

that the missionary idea was the perfect compliment for a campaign to retire the debt on the new Activities Wing. The campaign was called Love So Amazing. The denomination endorsed the idea of a missionary in Romania...and we were off and running. 'Fortunately,' says Cliff, 'we did not raise enough for our 80% share of a full time missionary!' Fortunately? 'Yes, fortunately, because we then had to ask Palo Duro Presbytery for help...and they said yes. The project has been so much more significant

More significant with the combined effort of Palo Duro, First Central, and now, many others. On April 17 when the mortgage is burned at First Central in Abilene, we also celebrate the beginnings of a vibrant new mission. How about if we all celebrate?



If you wish to make a tax deductible donation to NOROC, please mail it to: NOROC, INC, 200 Hedges, Abilene, TX 79605