

# NOROC NEWS

## DECEMBER 2007

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Editor: Carol Schempp (You are encouraged to reproduce and distribute this newsletter.)

### From Mary's Desk... by Mary Ferris, Mission Co-worker

Dear NOROC friends,

It has been a wonderful six months of itineration, but I am now ready to get back to the children, youth, and staff in our shared ministry in Romania.

This is the first Christmas season in seven years I have not been in Tulcea. Santa is helped in Tulcea County by NOROC's red van and our van (sleigh) driver, Domnul Marin, but our van is not just for Christmas. We travel year round, sometimes to very remote and inconvenient places. (More about one such place, the village of Greci, later.)

Another of Santa's chief helpers is Adriana Senciuc. Adriana does a little of everything. She is one of my assistants, but most importantly she is Tulcea's best kindergarten teacher. The

relationships built by NOROC workers with people all over Tulcea county are very important. The following story is one that will demonstrate this vividly. Many of you have been following the characters over the years.

There was a Maternal Center operated by All God's Children in Babadag. This center was for unwed mothers and their babies where they could stay for up to one year while the mothers learned parenting skills. When the department opened their own maternal center for unwed mothers, the mothers were moved from this private, Christian center to the government run center. In the transition there were many glitches...like the Department failing to provide food or supplies for the mothers and babies in the new center

Oops! NOROC stepped into the transition gap and provided for the mothers and babies. One mother was 14 year old Maria and her daughter Mihaela. Adriana took them under her angel wings and became baby Mihaela's Godmother. That was six years ago. The mother eventually ran away from the center and back to her village of Greci to live with the baby's father. After this baby, Maria had two other daughters with her common law husband. With our van Adriana and our social worker, Mrs. Jivan, visited this struggling young family many times. We took clothes and school supplies for the children. Most importantly we kept the lines of communication open. Adriana was concerned that the girls were not enrolled in kindergarten.

### Tales from Tulcea: NOROC Youth Reach Out



Above, the young adult Bible Study/youth group prepares watches that will be given as Christmas presents to all the kids at Speranta. The watches were donated by the First Presbyterian Church in New Braunfels, TX and delivered by Madge Bayston this past summer.

On St. Nicholas Day these young people sang carols, served sweets and juice, and visited with the moms and children at the Maternal Center. The Maternal Center is a place for single mothers to stay with their babies instead of abandoning them. (Below)



They also took presents and sang carols to the kids at the Emergency Center, Ciresarii. (Above) This is where children are placed when there is a crisis situation. The NOROC youth groups all join in service to those less fortunate than themselves.



### Prayers of Thanksgiving and Concern:

- For the example of love and care that the NOROC staff shows to the community around them.
- For those reaching out in love and peace.

### From Mary's Desk...

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The road to this village is long and "nu e bun" – not good. It is impossible to drive down the road for days after a rain. The final half mile is deeply rutted, rocky and unpaved. This is the road the children have to walk to go to school. We bought them sturdy shoes to make the journey and the children were eager to "go to school", but the parents were not so motivated, so they never went. Trips to Greci are never greeted with enthusiasm from any of us, but we all agreed this was an at risk family in need of our supervision.

Even after I left last summer to return to America, Adrianna (in red) and company made several trips to Greci.

I received an e-mail from Adriana this week. Maria and her husband decided to go to Europe to work and left their three daughters with the alcoholic, mentally ill grandparents. Predictably, the grandfather beat Mihaela so badly she was in a coma and hospitalized for days. I don't usually say too many good things about the Tulcea hospital, but the pediatric ward is an exception. The doctors are exceptional and standards are higher. NOROC supplies Grannies for the babies and toys. The Danish remodeled the children's wing several years ago. We take medicine from NOROC and diapers from the Danish. Since the children from Speranta (Children's Home) go to this ward in the hospital we have a long and mutually rewarding relationship with the staff there.

Soon after Mihaela came to the hospital, she was greeted by Adriana and received NOROC's help. Miraculously the youngest baby has gone to a foster family, but the two older girls have been placed in Speranta. Adriana petitioned the Department (of Child Protection) to have the two girls placed in her kindergarten class. She received permission for them to stay with her all day, until 5 PM. The school has adopted these two girls. Parents and teachers have brought them clothes and school supplies. Adrianna says the two girls call her Nana (Godmother) and won't leave her side. Their lives won't be easy, but with Adriana and NOROC there is hope. This story shows that besides "presents" our red van brings hope and relationships to the darkest, most remote places. It makes all the time, money, and effort worthwhile when we can literally save the emotional and spiritual life even one child.

Merry Christmas! Mary

### Tales from Tulcea: Reaching Out

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Above and left, NOROC staff and teachers help the children and youth learn about giving to others by creating cards to give. At right, the youngest play with toys donated by the Danish and delivered by NOROC staff.



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