

NOROC NEWS

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

From Mary's Desk by Mary Ferris

Dear friends,

This is the first time in a long time I am really conscious of being glad to draw the bottom line on one year and begin a new one. Usually it seems arbitrary for me to make New Year's resolutions. However, this year I am glad to say good bye to 2005. It was a tough year for the world.

Before we barrel into a new year we must thank all of you who banded together to help us during 2005. Many of you responded in so many different ways. The Christmas gifts you sent were appreciated immensely. The donations of funds helped us close the gap on the red ink so we are beginning 2006 in good shape. Most of all, we thank each and every one of you for all your spiritual support. The many prayers have helped us move forward

even through tough, difficult, and challenging situations.

With God's help the last two weeks of December, which are the busiest of our entire year, ended happily. However, there was no rest for the weary. On Christmas Eve Petru Solca and our driver, Marin, went to Constanta via the public bus to pick up our new red van. It made its first road trip several days later to Bucharest to pick up Carol Schempp, the editor of this newsletter and a true "Romaniac." Her visit was the highlight of Christmas season for me.

Our first ever Christmas pageant was a huge success. We did it for three nights and it was very impressive as well as spiritually moving. The setting was the garden of Casa Noastra, our house that provides transitional hous-

ing for young men. The stools made by the work group last summer became the manger for the Christ child, and the deck around the barbecue pit was the loft for a host of angels. One young boy in the audience whispered to Petru and Marilena during the outdoor pageant with awe in his voice, "That's baby Jesus over there!"



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Tales from Tulcea County: Mihaela's Journey

Mihaela was one of the first two young women we helped go to boarding school to complete a high school education. She was just leaving the girl's home when I arrived in 2001 with tears and resistance. She wanted to continue in high school, and so did her friend Ana Maria. We were told this was impossible because they were not smart enough and they were suited only for the sewing factory. There is a saying that fools rush in where angels fear to tread. Well, I was the fool and NOROC agreed to pay for both girls to go to boarding school and continue



Mihaela (in front in the red) at the New Year's Eve party with friends.

their high school education. That was four and a half years ago and both girls have now finished school, prompting a long line of other girls who want to finish school too.

Mihaela did work at the sewing factory as she went to school and saved every penny. She still works at the sewing factory, but with her high school diploma she will be eligible for promotions and responsibilities she otherwise would not be able to achieve. After graduating in 2003 she had an ambition to buy her own small, one room

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Prayers of Thanksgiving and Concern:

- For the many ways people are helping NOROC continue its ministry.
- For the miracles we see everyday.
- For our university students who are facing exams.
- For the Munteanu children and all children who struggle with mental illness and abusive family situations.
- For the many people who are sick during this time of year.

From Mary's Desk

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Also, on the morning of New Years Eve, Petru Solca went out to find a gas bottle for Christina, the single mother of twins who is living in our girl's apartment. When she tried to cook breakfast for her girls the bottle was empty and she called Petru for help. He left his family to help this young mother in need. This is just one of the many things our Romanian president and his wife, Marilena do for these young adults, everyday. This is called GRACE.



We ended 2005 with several celebrations. On the 30th of December we went to Mahmudia and listened to the children sing the New Year's song "Sorcova." It was cold in that center

and the children were wearing their hats and mittens indoors, the hats and mittens that NOROC and the Danish had given them.

We had a New Year's Eve party at Casa Noastra. At 3:00 AM in the morning the party was still going strong, but Carol Schempp and I were ready to call it a night. After some grumbling from the young adults who wanted an "all nighter", they adjourned to Mihaela's apartment where they continued to party until 7:00 A.M. Thank you Mihaela! (See Tales from Tulcea County for more about Mihaela.) Mihaela showed up at our New Years Eve party sporting new clothes. I said, "Wow! Mihalea you look great!" With a huge smile she said, "I paid off my loan and now I am working on fixing up my apartment. I decided to treat myself to some new clothes." She brought 11 people back to her tiny apartment New Year's morning. It was her first party in her paid for apartment. This was truly a cause for celebration. Now we have New Year, and so far it has been a good one.

Because of our early success with sending children to school, there is a

renewed interest in our tutoring programs, organized and managed by Marilena Solca. The kids are really seeing the pay off in education from their older colleagues. The ones with better educations have better jobs and some are in the university. They are more credit worthy and they get promoted faster. The other youth are seeing that education and hard work are a winning combination. Even the Department (for the protection of children) has begun to obey the law and let the kids stay in school.

Another miracle started off the New Year. Yesterday I went to Speranta, the current children's home, to see them for the first time since before Christmas. The nurse was bursting to tell me that a treatment Dr. Fred White had literally concocted and sent from America was working like a miracle on a young man with multiple hormonal problems. He is well on his way to recovery and is the happiest child I have seen in a long time. This was a treatment that no one thought would work but was harmless so there was nothing to lose...and it worked! God is great!

Peace to all, Mary

Mihaela's Journey, cont'd

apartment with a bathroom. She saved half the amount needed for an apartment. It was in need of many repairs and the owner raised the price at the last minute. It was not a great place but with the money she had saved and two loans at the bank she managed to move in. She did not buy any new clothes and spent nothing extra on herself for two years, but now the place is completely paid for. It is worth four times what she paid for it only 2 years ago. She would not have gotten the place without her education and her hard work. At first people were very jealous of Mihaela. "You are NOROC's favorite," they said. Yes, I told them, she is one of our favorites. So... you save half the money for a down payment, go without extras for four years, and then we will speak to the bank for you about getting a loan. The foundation used our good name, not our money, to help her get the two loans she needed. Marilena Solca stood in many lines and talked to a lot of different bankers before they agreed to loan Mihaela the money, but in the end it was Mihaela's own good reputation of hard work and determination that won her the loans.

New NOROC Van

The new van was delivered to NOROC on Christmas Eve. It was purchased with a donation from the First Presbyterian Church of Canadian, Texas.



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