

NOROC NEWS JUNE 2005

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From Mary's Desk by Mary Ferris

Dear Friends,

This month is the beginning of one of the hardest times of the year for NOROC. It is the time when they "terminate" the children. This is their word, not mine. When the children reach the age of 18 or when they complete their education they are dismissed from "the system." Some of the children pass through just fine, but for most this is a very emotional and traumatic time. One of our biggest programs is with these young adults. We provide emergency housing for young men and women. We help them find permanent places to live and better jobs. One of the most traumatic things is helping them get all of their paper work in order. They need medical exams, their birth certificates, school diplomas, etc. Naturally some

of them have lost these papers, so completing their file so they can get their paychecks and their social benefits is expensive and time consuming. We now have a social worker helping and several young assistants to help them work through this process.

We continue to monitor the young adults through our small youth fellowship groups. This provides social interaction and peer support for them. This year we have about 15 young men and women from all over Tulcea County who we are helping to make this transition from the orphanage system to independent living.

When the new building, Casa Noastra (Our House), is completed we will have a permanent meeting place for all of our groups. This will also pro-

vide us with a worship space where we can have regular worship services. A team from Texas will come in June to help put the finishing touches on this building.

At the other end of the age spectrum are the little ones we help with our Grannies and our Big Hearted Friends. These children are being "shuffled" around a lot so it is sometimes difficult to keep track of them all. One special group is the little ones at Speranza, the largest children's home in the district. They now have 12 children in kindergarten and younger. At this home the children range from 3 years to 22 years old. The youngest children used to be at Cocorii, the baby orphanage, but a new law prohibits young children from living there anymore. Cocorii will

Tales from Tulcea County: On the road to independence...

Cristina and her one year old twin daughters, Iona and Andreea, are one step closer to living on their own thanks to NOROC and Amherst Family Practice in Winchester, Virginia. Cristina and her daughters were recently "terminated" from the Child Protection System. We were able to purchase cribs, clothes, and other supplies needed for Cristina and her family to move into NOROC's apartment for young women who need emergency housing. The generous donations from Amherst

have also paid for Cristina to take computer classes at night so she can get a better paying job to support her family. In the meantime, Cristina also works 10 hours during the day at a bakery. Even though Cristina was disowned by her parents and abandoned by the father of the girls, she refused to abandon her babies to the orphanage system. "I will never abandon my children," she stated. "They are my life!" As you can see, Iona and Andreea are happy and healthy. Cristina is on the left.



Prayers of Thanksgiving and Concern:

- For the young men and women in Tulcea who will need help entering the world outside of the orphanage system
- For Cristina and her daughters as they move toward independence
- For the success of the Presbytery mission work trip in Tulcea from June 23-July 5
- For the ministry of love and care to all of God's children in Tulcea County made possible by the financial and spiritual support of many people

From Mary's Desk

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eventually be closed. So now Speranza has these very young children and they get lost in the shuffle. They do not have special staff for children so young. With the help of Jessica McAllister, the young assistant I had this winter, we organized the young children into their own small group. I have never had a group with ones this little, but the format is the same. Bible story, recreation, service and a snack. At first it was very hard for these little ones to sit still. Now they know the drill and we have very few behavior problems. Yesterday, I returned after two weeks of being in Israel on a study tour and the children were very happy to see me. They asked me, "Do you have a story for us?" They were so precious! I felt very grateful to God and all of you who make this ministry possible! For these wee ones, hearing the story of God's love at such a young age is very important because we do

not know how long they will remain at Speranza. Every time I visit Speranza, children have been moved and new children have arrived. However, because of NOROC, these children will go with a foundation of Bible stories to nurture in their hearts.

God Bless you all,

Mary



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International Children's Day: sharing God's love

In Europe, June 1 is a day to celebrate children. NOROC joined with our Danish and French friends who also minister to the orphans in Tulcea County to visit the Kindergarten of Estera (far right in front of Marilena Solca, the head of NOROC's Big Hearted Teachers) in a poor, remote village in the Danube Delta. Estera spent the early part of her life at Cocorii due to physical disabilities. While she was at Cocorii Petru and Marilena Solca accepted her as their goddaughter so she could be baptized. They brought toys for Estera. Our international friends donated toys and school supplies to this Kindergarten where Estera attends school. All of the children were overjoyed to receive a small token that expressed love and care. Pictured is the Kindergarten class and their teacher, as well as Estera and Marilena.



Casa Noastra takes shape...



A roof, openings for windows, and a coat of stucco give a new look to Casa Noastra. Work is progressing on schedule! The "gradina", or garden, on the property has come alive with many rose bushes in bloom, a peach tree, an apricot tree, and a vegetable garden containing tomatoes, onions, strawberries, green peppers, garlic, and eggplant. The vegetables were donated and the work was done by NOROC's youth groups. Since the property was purchased during the winter season we had to wait until Spring to see what kinds of trees and plants would come to life. What a glorious explosion of beautiful flora it has been. As the mission work group from Palo Duro Presbytery prepares to arrive in Tulcea on June 24 please pray for continued progress on the building and a safe and productive trip for the participants.

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