

Dear Supporters,

this is the last newsletter of the year and we feel such gratitude to all of you for your faithfulness in caring and giving! No-one can help everyone, but everyone can help someone and together we make the world a better place.

There are approximately 70 employees at FCE. They are heroes who, day after day, year after year, show love in a practical way, giving people in difficult situations the chance of having a better quality of life.

Patience – a gift

Marika Meszeros has been employed by FCE for 20 years and is loved by everyone, both colleagues and the children and young people she cares for. In Autumn 1996, she applied to work at the newly opened Case Albă, a home for small children aged 0-3 years. The children lived there until they received their own family and Marika, who had many children she loved there, really felt it when a child left. She carries them in her heart and remembers them with joy. Some of them are in FCE's family and foster homes and are teenagers today. Marika enjoys seeing how they've grown and sometimes she gets to see those who have been adopted abroad and have come back to visit.

Spring 2009, when FCE opened the half-way-home, Brândușa, Marika was asked if she wanted to work there. She decided she did and describes that in the beginning it was hard and that she tried to find ways to get closer to the young people. She saw their



Maria, who lives at Brândușa, and Marika who works there, have known each other for 20 years.

need of being listened to and that someone was there for them.

After a couple of years, Marika was needed at Casa Silvia, FCE's home for children with special needs. She worked there for four years and then came back to Brândușa. Now there are fewer young people living there and it is calmer. "First of all, they need love", Marika says and continues, "I believe God has given me patience as a gift to be able to help these young people. We do things together and I



don't have to be hard on them, they respect me. You need love and passion to work with people and to me it is a great joy to see these young people develop!" She says that at Brândușa they feel safe, they help each other and they enjoy being together.

A step closer to the Roma people

"In the spring of 2016, ERIKS Development Partner (Erikshjälpen) were entrusted with a project grant from a Swedish charity lottery called 'PostkodLotteriet'. This grant is aimed at strengthening vulnerable Roma children's rights using tools such as livelihood, entrepreneurship and community development. The project started in September 2016 and is a part of ERIKS long-term development work with partners in Romania.

The project has three objectives:

- reduced financial vulnerability among the targeted Roma children through improved livelihood for their parents.
- increased awareness and action on children's rights in the targeted Roma communities as well as improved integration.
- compile accumulated knowledge, best practices and experience in Roma livelihood and entrepreneurship.

FCE has been present in Marghita for a long time and through the After School project and other types of support, has founded a relationship with the neighbouring Roma communities based on trust and respect.

As a part of this project, FCE will now be present in one community in particular in a more profound way. Together with the community, FCE will establish and run a hygiene centre and community centre as well as a building

that could hopefully house a "hub" (small company) in the near future. Through these platforms, FCE hopes to be a part of the families' every-day lives in working together to find sustainable solutions and possibilities for the community, the families and the children.



Ari Robotin, a new employee in the project, is helping Roma families to make apple compote for the winter

The ethnic Roma population has a very dark history in Romania with hundreds of years of slavery and discrimination. The Roma people were sold and bought like merchandise, and still to this day they are often perceived as dishonest, ignorant and incapable of change. This history has contributed to negative structures both in the Romanian society, such as stereotyping and discrimination, but also in many Roma communities where the lack of trust, vision, self-confidence, structure, long-term perspective and sense of responsibility are patterns that hold communities back from sustainable change. Many Roma people in these communities are forced into "survival-mode" which makes it hard to see and grasp sustainable solutions for themselves and their children.

Therefore it is important to invest in these people and work consciously in breaking these mentalities and structures. We believe that the workplace is an amazing platform and opportunity for this. The core of this project is to create sustainable businesses where people can develop and are given tools to change their own situation.

In Marghita we will begin by starting a business like this; a Second Hand shop. Further down the road, we hope to start another business in the community. A resource team

will be established to support the businesses. This will be operating both on location in Romania, headed up by project manager Andreas Samuelsson, and also in Sweden. In Sweden we are aiming to link entrepreneurs and business owners that are interested in practically helping the business in Romania, with orders, advice and contacts for example. I will lead the project together with Andreas and I will be based in Sweden.”

Ulrika Toorell



These children from one of FCE's familyhomes represents everyone that wants to thank you for your support during last year!

**We wish you a wonderful
Advent and Christmas time
and a Blessed New Year!**

FCE

"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

Jesus, Matt 25:40

Contact Organisations

Blythswood Care

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Mercy Ministries

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Christmas time is a busy time, but a blessed time of the year. We are so grateful to all of you who are donating gifts that FCE can distribute at Christmas to many children and families around Marghita. We send you some happy smiles back!

Gifts

Banca Comerciala Romana
Sucursala Marghita
Cod: SWIFT: RNCBROBU

Account number: GBP - RO58RNCB0035022151630003
(IBAN) USD - RO85RNCB0035022151630002
EUR - RO31RNCB0035022151630004

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