



Tudor Maracineanu leading Bible Study at Crihana Veche Community Centre



Terminally ill Ecaterina Boghean finds great strength in her fledging faith thanks to the Bible Study

CHANGING LIVES FOR ETERNITY

WELCOME TO 2008! I trust you are enjoying the joys of an Australian summer in this wonderful country of ours!

Drought and struggle are certainly not unheard of in this brown land of ours. Those on the land pray for rain, and yet often have dreams dashed as promised rain fails to fall. Many of us in this last year have asked ourselves what it means to be a community, to care for all, to support all and be generous to all, whether on our doorstep or in far away lands. Australians are generous people and we thank you for your generosity toward our ministry and ultimately for the children, families, disabled and elderly in our care. Our ministry cannot function without your support – thank you for standing with us as we bring help and hope to the poor of Eastern Europe.

It is in this spirit I ask you to consider the following – proof that with love,

care and sharing the Gospel, lives are transformed for eternity!

It has been said, man can live three weeks without food; three days without water; three minutes without oxygen; however, man cannot live for a moment without hope.

With this in mind, if a person has Hope, and most importantly the saving knowledge and Hope we can have in Jesus as Saviour and Lord, this has a tremendous influence on their attitude and decisions during times of particular hardship, and ultimately their whole life.

In Crihana Veche village, Moldova, and similarly throughout the entire country, many factors cause people to lose hope, faith and the will to go on. The recent drought, which caused a failure in agriculture, has caused economic chaos, and rendered many individuals incapable of supporting

themselves. This is particularly apparent in the villages, where poverty is a painful, frightening and isolating experience.

Within these tragic circumstances, the Crihana Veche Community Centre has opened its doors to the community as a beacon of hope and encouragement. Many adults come to the Community Centre (COM), in hope of material support; however, it has become known that hope far beyond that of the physical, is also on offer in this place.

By supporting people materially, they know we care. With this foundation of respect, the staff and volunteers have earned the right to initiate discussions about the origins of human life, hope, direction and goals with God as our guide. The discussions are lively, with the Bible centre stage. Ultimately, the participants are thirsty for answers, comfort and direction in their struggles for survival.





Ion Zgircibaba typing a Bible verse into the computer at the Community Centre

There is no doubt that actions speak louder than words. Therefore, the compassion and care for the physical needs of these individuals is a living testimony to Jesus Christ.

The Community Centre's staff and volunteers make themselves available to walk beside people on their difficult life journey, which in turn enables people to meet with and learn of Christ. "We seek to provide spiritual and physical food and offer emotional encouragement to the Community Centre's beneficiaries through all the activities that are carried out", said Tudor Maracineanu, the Counsellor at the Centre.

They eat the nourishing food then attend the Bible Studies- learning, singing, praying, playing games and then enjoy the numerous sport competitions available at the Centre.

All the activities in the sports hall, canteen and computer room are carried out with the goal to lead the beneficiaries to God. After eating the warm meals in the canteen, the beneficiaries attend group discussions. The children go to the sports room where they have Bible study and sport competitions; the adults take their seats at the table named "the Spiritual Corner" in the canteen; and the older children go to the computer room. The Gospel is shared with all Community Centre beneficiaries.

It is touching to see these ill, vulnerable and socially rejected people

sitting around the table and listening carefully to the Counsellor.

Ecaterina Boghean, despite being terminally ill and living in atrocious conditions, is peaceful and hopeful. Her husband died this spring,

leaving her to raise her children alone. "I know the disease I suffer from is incurable. The doctors do not say anything to me about the stage of my illness; kind words will not change the reality that I am dying.

Sometimes I experience moments of despair, but when I return home after visiting the Community Centre, my heart is full of hope and peace.

Even though it is difficult for me to walk to the Centre sometimes, I put all my effort into getting there, because there, I find the peace my soul needs during this time of difficulty. We pray for, and encourage, each other. After studying God's Word, I am reminded that in knowing Christ we are reborn," confessed Ecaterina.

The children eagerly wait for the time to go to the Community Centre. They eat the nourishing food then attend the Bible Studies- learning, singing, praying, playing games and then enjoy the numerous sport competitions available at the Centre. Ion Zgircibaba is one of the many active beneficiaries of the Community Centre. Ion, together with his younger sister, Viorica spend almost all of their afternoons at the Centre, "I like the atmosphere here. It means a lot knowing that somebody is interested in our lives. I never imagined I would meet somebody who would accept and appreciate us despite our social status and the clothes we wear. I know now that Jesus does not judge us according to

what we wear, or whether we are rich or poor. He loves all of us. At home, it is cold because we do not want to waste our meager resources to heat our home before the intense cold of winter sets in. Coming daily to the Centre keeps us warm physically, but we appreciate and enjoy the emotional and spiritual warmth we experience there just as much!" confessed Ion with joy.

It is wonderful to see so many people thirst for knowledge about God, as well as experience His love. We certainly rejoice each time a beneficiary makes the decision to follow Christ as their Lord and Saviour, but we know the Heavens rejoice even more!

The wonderful thing is that this encouraging life-changing ministry is not isolated to Moldova alone, the Community Centres of Mission Without Borders and partnering churches are changing lives in all six field countries!

Thank you for your partnership so far. Prayer is vital as we minister to the poor and marginalised – pray with us that lives would be changed for eternity! If you are able, we would also greatly appreciate your financial support this year. Your gifts at this time will ensure our current beneficiaries' needs are met – physically, emotionally and spiritually.

The lines of people, who daily wait at our community centre doors to benefit from our ministries, are heart-breaking to witness. Give where you can so we can welcome many more through our doors!

'GIFTS IN KIND'

We look forward to your support this year. If you have items to donate – **all new please** – please contact our office from mid-January (after we re-open from our Christmas break) for details on collection points.

Thank you for your partnership!

God Bless

Michelle Dorey
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