

EVERYONE'S CHILD ROMANIA



AGM—what does it stand for?

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| Aggro, Grief and Misery? | No |
| All Gone Mad? | No |
| Aiding God's Mission? | Yes, definitely |
| Annual General Meeting? | Yes at 7.00 p.m. on Tuesday 4th May at Libanus Christian Centre |

In ECR our quickly-approaching AGM is a crucial time of the year. This is the one and only time in the year when ECR members are able to appoint leaders for the year ahead. It is the time when we entrust the leadership of ECR to a group of dedicated, willing volunteers.

We need Trustees. Trustees have a legal role to play in ensuring that our practice complies with Charity Commission regulations. But they also have a role of overseeing ECR's work, and taking important decisions relating to our policy.

We need Management Committee members. Keeping the accounts, informing ECR members of the latest news, keeping in touch with Paul: all these tasks need to be done regularly and diligently.

We need a Chairman who will be a figurehead to represent ECR and its work in the UK.

Everyone's Child Romania seeks to relieve sickness among children and young people in Romania suffering from HIV or Aids and to provide counselling, medical and financial support and respite care facilities for such children and those of their families who may be in need.

We need to recruit members to our team. If you receive this newsletter you almost certainly qualify as a member, either as a subscriber to ECR by standing order or as someone who has subscribed to our newsletter.

Do you have something to give? Please let us know by telephone either Bob Young on 01495 223897, or Sandra Bray on 01495 226163

Thank you Helen!



Big thanks to Helen Coates, who ran a half-marathon on 7th March, and raised £250 for ECR.

Many thanks to the Cefn Hengoed Ladies' choir, and the quintet Cambrensis. They put on a very enjoyable concert for ECR in in March.

We are very grateful for their interest in ECR, and for the money they raised. Evenings like this help raise awareness of the work of ECR which helps to keep the work going

Thanks also to the Methodist Church in Blackwood for allowing us to use their premises.

So What's New?

Anything that's alive is changing.....

.....so it should be no surprise to us that ECR has changed, and is changing. As the young people grow and develop, their needs change, and the situation in Romania has changed since Paul Davies started his work there. Now, Paul has been asked to become involved with some young children, but their needs will be different from the children he first took on.

In his last visit home, Paul spoke about the changes that have come about, and the constants that have been the bedrock of his work, and will continue to be.

Apart from Paul, the personnel involved have changed over the years, both in Romania and UK. He said that he sees this as something positive as different people bring different gifts and insights, keeping our outlook fresh.

Improvements in medicine and social care have changed the nature of the work. Many of us involved will remember that we were told that all the children with whom Paul was working would die by the time they were sixteen years old. Paul said that the good news is that ECR now spends much less of its income on funerals and the funeral ceremonies that are part of Romanian culture.

Maybe the biggest change is the kind of help needed: not toys but work. Because they were not expected to live to adulthood, they were not given preparation for what they want most—an independent lifestyle. Over and above all, they need what we all need—a feeling that they are worth something.

Paul outlined the four main constants that keep him convinced he should be in Romania.

The first was the suffering he sees all the time in his work. The ARV drugs have made a huge difference but pain and illness is still very much a part of many of the lives of these youngsters.

Linked to this, Paul says, is the conviction that God has called him to be involved and to bring His love to this situation. He quoted Francis of Assisi's declaration "We should preach the gospel at all times, and sometimes we should even use words."

The support of ECR members was another constant that Paul mentioned, but above all, the blessing of God. Without this, he said, support for ECR would lessen, Paul's own conviction would lessen and the result would be that the suffering for these children and young people would increase.

Without the blessing of God, Paul is convinced that ECR simply would not work.

What has changed?

New HIV cases to care for

- * Some new cases have been brought to Paul's attention, Andreea, the youngest diagnosed HIV positive last year when she was just three years old. Her mother and father live in a 2-room annexe to the grandparents' small holding. She and her mother (23 years old and also HIV-positive) badly need a break from the stress of scraping a living together, says Paul.
- * The family of Gabriel have already lost a small child through HIV infection. Following the death in 1999, when he was one year old, the whole family were tested. The mother and two sons were found to be positive, with just the father and an older brother having escaped the infection. They live with her grandparents in a typical family home in the countryside, made of mud-bricks with a toilet outside and a well being their only source of water.
- * Seven year old Olimpia has been brought up in an orphanage. Her mother had died when she was just three months old because of complications of being HIV positive. The father had left long before. When she was four years old, Olimpia was fostered by a couple living near Constanta, but the husband died a year later leaving the wife to bring her up alone. Not only is Olimpia HIV positive, but she has chronic Hepatitis C, a heart murmur, malformation of the upper jaw and polyps in the nasal passages making breathing very difficult at times and chronic chest infections.

What stays the same?

The type of care we are seeking to provide for 50 adopted children and young people:

- * FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROJECT: providing animals and crops so that families can be independent regarding food supply.
- * AFTER SCHOOL PROJECT: helping them to look to find training, work or further education—the first step of their adult lives
- * CRISIS MANAGEMENT: emergency situations that would otherwise be impossible for them to deal with:
 - the TB drugs that were essential for Marian's survival,
 - to help Lili continue her struggle with HIV and Dementia.
 - to combat the discrimination stigma that is happening to Georgiana in her own village...
 - to encourage Adriana in her fight against the slimming disease which is the drastic result of her HIV status.

Come and enjoy a “Night at the Movies”

This was to have taken place in January, but was postponed because of the snow, so now is your chance to see “The Proposal” - a very enjoyable film for all the family, with free popcorn.

Place—Plas Mawr Community Centre, Blackwood

Date—23rd April

Time—7.00

Please come and support us. We do not charge for entry, but donations are very welcome.

Annual Sponsored Walk

Everybody seems to enjoy the sponsored walk. It's only four miles , and goes through the lovely scenery in the Ynysddu Country Park.

This year it takes place on Saturday 8th May. As usual we will meet at 11.00 a.m. at the second car park in the Full Moon Industrial Estate, near the roundabout at the north end of the Crosskeys by-pass. The official ending is the Ynysddu Rugby Club, but if you wish you are free to walk back to the starting point. There will be a scavenger hunt for children.

Last year's sausage and chips lunch was very popular and will be available again this year, at a moderate cost.

A sponsor form is included in this newsletter, but if you need any more forms, you can ring Diane Lloyd on 01443 831392 or download them from the ECR Web site: www.everyoneschild.org.

Please join in and help raise money for some of the most disadvantaged young people in Europe.

Don't forget our shop

The ECR charity shop is in Fleur-de-Lys, next to the Post Office. They are always ready to accept bric-a-brac, books, clothes etc. Don't worry that the clothes are too tatty—one of the most profitable lines is in recycling. Unwanted metal objects are also very welcome and are sold for recycling. Nothing is wasted!

The shop is open Monday to Friday from 10.00 till 3.00, and Saturdays from 10.00 till 1.00. Come along and have a look. And it may have the very bargain you have been looking for.

