

February / March 2011 News update



Prevention of Drug Abuse

We support a drug free society. Drug abuse is a public health issue that destroys individuals, families and the society we live in. We support the European Action on Drugs and have designed a whole range of information brochures to raise awareness to the serious dangers to health associated with illegal drug use.



We are now educating both young people and parents alike of the dangers of drug abuse so that future generations can with the full knowledge address the issue with a clear and open mind and via the correct information take positive steps to stay clear of all types of narcotics and thus lead a drug free clean and healthy life.

Via RCHF both children and parents alike are now learning about how to lead a drug free life. For parents it is important to realize the dangers that their children can easily encounter if they are encouraged by other often school mates to try drugs for the first time. Parents need to know whom their children are with in their free time and what they are doing, plus have contact with other parents. For any parent the thought their child may be a drug consumer is a nightmare but can be faced with dignity so that the problem can be solved before it gets too serious.

We are now with Romanian authorities via the Police, Mayors offices and with the support also of local councils arranging workshops for young people and parents alike. We are also addressing the ongoing problem of Etnobotanical weed shop products in Romania that is still today causing serious health problems to young people who become extremely ill after consuming these hallucinating products. **Only a full outright ban** of all of these products, including Internet sites and back street trading will ever protect the Romanian public from the serious dangers to health posed by these dangerous hallucinating products.

UK Volunteer Henry arrives to help in construction



RCHF is delighted to have the voluntary services of former Face Faw student Henry Ogden who is helping with the reconstruction of new dwellings for the refugee families in Botosani County town of Dorohoi. Henry who is 24 years old is a really positive and likeable young man who has kindly given 2 months of his time to travel to Romania at his own expense to help and is liked by all those he has met to date. RCHF has arranged free accommodation and meals for Henry via the local authorities and Christian Orthodox Church, plus Henry visits the poorest of families weekly along with RCHF volunteer staff who have been helping in Dorohoi since the flooding last year in July.



Above Brian Douglas arrives at the Dorohoi site.

The severe cold weather stopped all reconstruction within the winter months, but in the last weeks with the arrival of warmer winter weather work has now started again. On-site inspections and meetings with the Vice Mayor and counselors we are able to help prepare some families for an eventual move shortly to their new homes.

As can be seen the dwellings are now starting to take shape and are looking good.

We are thankful for the volunteer support of kindhearted Henry and wish him well.

Working visit to Serbian partners in Novisad



In February despite driving snow and sub zero temperatures Brian Douglas traveled to the town of Novisad in Serbia to meet **STOP TB** partners NARUD and was invited to visit the Vojvodine Medical Institute Hospital in Novisad. On his visit arranged by Prof Dr Miroslava Trifovic (who Brian first met 2 years ago whilst in Belgrade on a previous visit to Serbia) Brian was shown around the Tuberculosis and Pulmonary sections of the Vojvodina huge Institute Hospital. This was a far cry from the Hospitals in Romania as was modern, well staffed and more like a hotel than a hospital with modern small wards for patients, a large reception area, modern lifts to all floors and staff who were all both professional and friendly to patients and visitors alike. The well-equipped laboratory is able to grow cultures from patients quickly with modern equipment and also to store in a temperature controlled sample bank all cultures for to help bring quick diagnosis to the sick thus treatment times can be reduced all of which benefits the patient, their families and Serbian health service alike.

A full report on this visit to our Serbian partners can be found in the Section about our work in Serbia within the RCHF website

Tuberculosis remains a problem in Romania today

Sadly throughout the years from 1989 onwards Romania has been plagued with high incidences of Tuberculosis. Poverty and poor living conditions are a major cause of TB and Romanians suffer from both still today over 20 years since the end of communism. The Romanian authorities at all levels in all these years have never provided a anti poverty plan of action to help lift the poorest out of poverty or to provide affordable decent living conditions. Romanian therefore still has the highest number of TB cases in all of Europe, highest number of cancer cases and if we speak of living standards the highest number of dwellings with no inside bathroom or toilet facilities.

As STOP TB partners with many years of experience in this domain RCHF will join with the Pnuemology University Hospital of Iasi again on the 24th of March which is designated World TB day to highlight these and other major problems that need to be addressed if TB is to be reduced to western levels in the future. The RCHF Hygiene and Tuberculosis prevention campaign to educate the public on these subjects continues as we believe that via education and prevention with knowledge young people in the future will have a far better chance to avoid TB and other serious illnesses and diseases within Romania.

Romania has highly competent specialist doctors who are amongst the best in the World at addressing the problems of Tuberculosis, but are hampered by a lack of decent working conditions, lack of modern equipment and in many cases even basic equipment, plus are chronically under salaried. The result is that many young TB doctors are now taking their experience out of the Country and are gaining positions in western Hospitals where they can advance their careers and have a decent salary to help raise their own families on. This is now such a problem within Romania that many major Pulmonary disease Hospitals and their TB departments are well understaffed despite the huge numbers of TB infected patients year after year and the Health Service has not resolved any viable solutions to redress this alarming situation.

The situation regarding TB in the Republic of Moldova is likewise critical and again a major cause is outright poverty and sub standard living conditions. Rising prices throughout the Republic of Moldova in the last year are further adding to poverty thus the TB spiral continues and again state health service support is sub standard despite the alarming numbers of people infected with Tuberculosis.



A large part of TB treatment involves a balanced diet of fresh vegetable and fruit but most in both Romania and The Republic of Moldova have not the means to have such items on a regular basis because of their low salaries, plus the ones without work at the lowest level and most prone to serious illness have no possibly of a balanced diet. Homemade alcohol also creates a problem for TB sufferers who fail to accept the dangers until it's all too often too late. Most gardens have wine groves and fruit trees thus home made alcohol costs nothing to produced.

RCHF Public health Education in Iasi and Botosani Counties

Hygiene is a lesson vital for every child's healthy future



At the invitation of the Dorohoi Council and pre-school number 9 RCHF opened its health education program in Dorohoi amongst the youngest of children all whom proved exited and eager to learn about basic Hygiene.

With a bowl of clean water, soap and clean towel the hall of over 150 children all learned how to wash their hands following best practices in Hygiene and many a child joined in to show that they could do this. Its an important lesson as all children should know how to wash their hands properly and when to do so daily before eating any food and after going to the toilet. Within the lesson children learned about how microbes easily infect the human body and how they lie in hidden places like under finger nails. RCHF hygiene brochures and gifts for all of the children were also given freely and distributed amongst the many children by Councilors and Pre school staff alike. RCHF health education projects will now start in many other Dorohoi and local area both pre-schools, schools and other educational units so that all of the children in Dorohoi can learn about the health education subjects that are vital; to helping them stay healthier the same as the Iasi County children do via RCHF.

Help for the sick comes via RCHF



RCHF is helping a young boy who has suffered serious illness and is still requiring medical attention that his family simply cannot afford on their reduced income.

Recently we took this brave young man and his Mother to Suceava City for further medical tests on his eyes and treated both to a nice meal also, plus they had joy, as was a Traditional folk music event, which they also enjoyed seeing whilst in Suceava on the day.

Continued support for Dorohoi Refugees

In our ongoing voluntary work in collaboration with the Dorohoi Mayors officers and local Council we continue to support the most needy of the population that suffered in the horrific flooding last July who are still living in a precarious position.

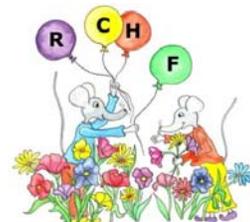
Aid includes food supplies, clothing and bedding, plus other essential items as well as counseling and support for the families who have pensioners alone who feel the most deprived of all.

We are also now looking to help a family at Racovit village, which is on the border with the Ukraine just 18 km from Dorohoi who are living in a desperate situation with 2 young girls in the family. On the first visit we provided food supplies purchased within Dorohoi and transported to the single parent family in our RCHF car and on this visit assessed the needs of the family who are living in extreme conditions.

We are also arranging via an options eye tests and glasses for a brave young lad who has suffered from serious illness in Dorohoi and who like his Mother and two sisters are also ones who survived the flooding of last year but have suffered the effects as have the majority of residents in the old town area that was over 2.5 meters under water last July.



In the photograph one can see the isolated dwelling of the family we are now helping at Racovit on the Ukraine border.



Children gain for free Miriam's animated Timmy Mouse books and love them!



Thank to Miriam Charmant pre school children in Botosani County including in Dorohoi received via a donation copies of the Timmy the Mouse book authored and animated by Miriam Charmant for free. Brian Douglas gave out these valuable animated books at pre- school events in March and every child who received a book was overjoyed with the lovely animations, plus staffs were really impressed with the quality of these hard backed children books. Many thanks Miriam and all at Charmant Art as you made these young children very happy!



We would like to thank all of our sponsors and supporters for their ongoing support that allows us to help so many in real need of extra support.

Our next news mail will appear at the end of May