

News...

Heal a child – Help a country

FOUNDATION FOR THE RELIEF OF DISABLED ORPHANS



Thanks to You

Martina

Martina is a little 4 year old girl we met on our recent Treatment & Training mission to Tirgu Mures in Romania. She came in a wheelchair because she cannot walk. Her legs were tucked up under her – not the most comfortable position as she leaned badly, not doing her spine any good. Plus, she needed to be lifted all the time to move from her chair.

Sadly there is no treatment that could allow Martina to walk but surgeons Rachel Buckingham and Andy Wainwright from the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre in Oxford operated on her so that now she can sit with her legs in front and her feet flat. The benefits to Martina of this operation are that she can now sit straight in her chair (saving complications to her spine) and she will be able to stand (with support) and transfer her weight to move from her wheelchair, giving her a little more independence.

It may not seem much of a transformation but as children grow they become heavier. So it's also a benefit to Martina's devoted mother that she won't have to lift her daughter and possibly damage her own back as they both grow older.



“Even if a child has severe learning difficulties and may not be aware of any benefit, making life easier for their carers is an important reason for treating them and can, literally, transform their lives.”

Deborah Eastwood, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon, Great Ormond Street Hospital and National Orthopaedic Hospital, Stanmore.

John

Earlier this year we went to Albania for our first Treatment & Training mission. Of all the European countries, Albania endured the darkest experience of communist rule, lasting until 1992, so it was the last of the Eastern European countries to shake off the system. As one of our NGO partners told us, **“The level of poverty in Albania is high and as a result the health conditions are not on the same level as those in Europe. Our hospitals lack proper medical equipment and instruments. Because of this our doctors cannot perform a vast number of specific operations leaving Albanian patients without a chance of normal life and in the**



Dear Friend,

The work of F.R.O.D.O., helping abandoned, orphaned and vulnerable children with disabilities in Romania and Albania, could not happen without the support of many wonderful people. This newsletter is dedicated to sharing with you what has been achieved – thanks to you.

I hope you enjoy reading about the children and the work.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Vanessa Cummings'.

**Vanessa Cummings,
Chief Executive**

most unfortunate cases leading them to death.”

What chance then, for abandoned and orphaned children with disabilities, like John. He is a 14 year old who was diagnosed as having polio on his right leg. He was unable to walk without crutches and could not weight bear on his flexed right knee. Following his operation, John will now be able to stand straight and walk without crutches, using his right hand to stabilise his knee. It means he won't stand out as a disabled person – something that makes a difference in Albania.

Abandoned Babies

The core of our work is providing medical treatment and care for children with disabilities. Preventing the need for serious medical treatment and demonstrating good care is also a key element of our work. Romanian Relief, working in Oradea, is a long-standing partner of F.R.O.D.O.'s and we are very pleased to be able to support their programme of Abandonment Prevention in Oradea Children's Hospital. A snapshot of the work comes from their Reports:

"We continue to look after the abandoned babies, we currently have 10 babies in the section. Last month we helped a family take their baby home that had been abandoned for two months at the hospital."

"Susana is 28 years old with six children. She was living in very bad conditions and we provided them with a floor in their home and rugs to cover it. Our support team have spent a lot of time with this family teaching them to wash and care for the children. We are continuing to supply them with formula, food and washable nappies. We also helped her oldest daughter with her documents so she can now attend school."



Such practical help can truly transform the quality of life of families and ensure they keep their children.

We are pleased to say that we will be starting another Abandonment Prevention project in Sector 5 of Bucharest later this year, in partnership with World Vision, to help more mothers in difficult situations to keep their babies.

Starting in Albania

Our Treatment & Training mission to Albania in March this year proved a real eye-opener. With over 150 children seen in the clinics, it was certainly our busiest. Grateful thanks go to surgeons Mark Paterson and Manoj Ramachandran and physiotherapist Di Coggins who undertook the examinations.

During the week seven children were successfully operated on. Two operations were postponed because of family problems and issues with anaesthetic. There were many cases of operable Cerebral Palsy and already there is a 'waiting list' of 18 children for operations on a next mission.

In addition, a training session on neuro-disability rehabilitation was held for physiotherapists from around Albania including volunteer physiotherapists from NGOs in Albania.

Albania has a great need. Having started in Albania we want to continue to make a difference to more children's lives. We have 18 children waiting for us to come back. And we know we can easily get another 150 in for examination on the next trip. Plus, we have made contacts who are interested in our hydrocephalus programme. Albania suffers, like Romania, from difficulties in getting the condition identified and early treatment in place.

Our Shining Support

Our House of Lords Dinner in March was a wonderful evening. Made so by so many people, including Lord Lamont who once again kindly hosted the event in such glorious surroundings.

Particularly, however, we were pleased to thank some very special people through the presentation of our 'Shine Awards'. Each Award was inspired by a child F.R.O.D.O. has been involved with and we'd like to say another thank you, by recognising our Shine Award winners' contribution in this newsletter.

Medical Partner – Deborah Eastwood, consultant orthopaedic surgeon at Great Ormond Street Hospital and the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital in Stanmore. Deborah is a huge star to the F.R.O.D.O. team – she has been to Romania four times with us, twice leading Treatment & Training missions helping over 100 children.

Volunteer Award – Rainela Xhemollari is a young lady who has volunteered for F.R.O.D.O. for nearly two years – coming into the office regularly to do whatever is needed. Because she is Albanian, she took the lead in contacting NGOs, hospitals and even the Minister of Health to make our Treatment & Training mission in Albania happen.



Please, will you help us to help those children by extending F.R.O.D.O. programmes into Albania?



Di Coggins plastering a patient



Campaign of the Year – Laura and Lee Hughes and the “MumsForGood” team for fundraising for the Abandonment Prevention projects in Romania and raising £50,000.

Corporate Partner – Sara Salamat and

Deutsche Bank, for their support for our Treatment & Training programme and also Institutional Transformation programme in Bucharest. Sara, personally, has been tireless in her support of F.R.O.D.O.

Major Donor – Mr Mario Romano, one man who has been a regular and generous supporter of F.R.O.D.O.’s work, which has been a real blessing to a small charity like us. We recognise him as a Major Donor but we also know him to be a person with a big heart.

Programme Partner

– the team of LVS Hassocks, represented by the Head and Deputy Head of LVS Hassocks, Sarah Sherwood and Jackie Doe. This team of dedicated education specialists have volunteered to deliver our Institutional Transformation project to give children in a placement centre in Bucharest improved standards of care and real hope for a better future.



Sara Salamat (seated) and colleagues from Deutsche Bank

F.R.O.D.O. Chief Executive, Vanessa Cummings (2nd left) with Sarah Sherwood, Gina Davies and Jackie Doe from LVS Hassocks

There was a final **Shine Award** – which was kept secret, even from our Founder, Robin Nydes. And that was to him. For his dedication to the children that F.R.O.D.O. was founded to help.



Left: Modesto Romano, representing his father Mario, with Robin Nydes, Founder of F.R.O.D.O.



Thank you Mr Taxman

Gift Aid is a mechanism by which F.R.O.D.O. (and all charities) can claim back 28p on every pound that is donated to us when the donor pays tax. It's hugely important to us and it costs the donor nothing.

Thanks to you giving us the money, and permission to claim it, we have raised nearly £25,000.

That is enough to pay for one full Treatment and Training mission. That can help up to 100 children and transform some lives.

If you want any further information on Gift Aid, please don't hesitate to contact celia@frodokids.org or phone the office.

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Give to Get

Lisa Bilton has been a long term supporter of F.R.O.D.O. through her Mothers4Children campaign. Lisa has now established Mothers4Children as a charity, supported by her friends Anya Hindmarch, Natalie Massenet, Yasmin Le Bon and Trinny Woodall and many others. See the website www.mothers4children.com

They are raising funds for F.R.O.D.O. and Kidsco, based in London, and have established a unique and fun way of giving as well as getting. 'THE BIG WIN ONLINE RAFFLE' is hosted on www.raffle.it. For as little as £1 you can enter to win a chance at some amazing luxury prizes... win a £2,000 shopping spree at

Raffle.it

Net a Porter, a personal trench coat



shopping experience at Burberry, £1,000 shopping spree at Selfridges with a day of beauty, blow outs, champagne lunch for TWO, some amazing trips, bags, shoe sprees at Jimmy Choo... the list goes on and carries on growing throughout the summer!

The event runs until mid-September with more prizes added every week. Please do play the game – and tell all your friends about it. The more people who do play, the more will be raised for F.R.O.D.O. and Kidsco.

Changing Attitudes in Romania

F.R.O.D.O.'s programmes are all devised to help vulnerable children with disabilities. To us, however, it's just as important to achieve long-term change in attitudes to children who are often hidden away in placement centres (orphanages) or in communities, purely because they have a disability and are seen as 'unnatural'.

It takes a strong woman to keep her baby, born with hydrocephalus, when her family doctor tells her "Give the baby away, it's a monster". Through our National Centre for Hydrocephalus project we have heard many sad stories like this from families and we are proud that this project, based in Tirgu Mures, is providing support to families as well as engaging medical professionals in the truth of the condition and the need for immediate treatment.

Our Treatment & Training missions seek to blow away preconceptions that children with learning disabilities are not worth giving treatment to.

Our Institutional Transformation programme shows untrained care staff that even disabled and institutionalised children have huge potential and can be supported to be part of a community, even achieving some level of independence.

We recognise that it takes a while to change attitudes and make a real

difference. Especially bearing in mind Romania's financial difficulties from years of dictatorship.

But it's heartening to hear a doctor say about our Treatment & Training mission to Alba **"Although the mission will not solve the whole problem of vulnerable children in Romania, it will certainly set an inspiring example to Romanian doctors, who should pay more attention to disadvantaged children, particularly to those orphaned and abandoned."**

And in recent months F.R.O.D.O. has been playing its part in meetings between NGOs, Romanian authorities and influencers to discuss ways that they and NGOs can work in partnership – something F.R.O.D.O. has done since we started. The very fact that these meetings are taking place now is another measure of how attitudes are slowly changing.

There's a lot still to do but thanks to you, F.R.O.D.O. is making a difference.

Get Involved

If you feel inspired to support F.R.O.D.O.'s work and the children we are constantly looking out for, we would love to hear from you.



This summer, a large team of runners, bikers, walkers and even swimmers, are gathering together to raise funds for our Treatment & Training programme. Under the banner of "Feet for F.R.O.D.O.", each member of the team is taking part in different events and asking friends and family to sponsor them. Following great success in last year's London Duathlon in Richmond Park, we are trying to build the largest team on the day – 13th September – and if you can join us we'd love to hear from you.

A unique opportunity to discover Romania is being offered by Alina and Phil Addison who are arranging a Halloween Three Castles Bike Ride, from their beautiful hotel in Transylvania, the land of Dracula. There are limited places so please contact celia@frodokids.org if you would like to – or are brave enough to! – join this challenge.

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