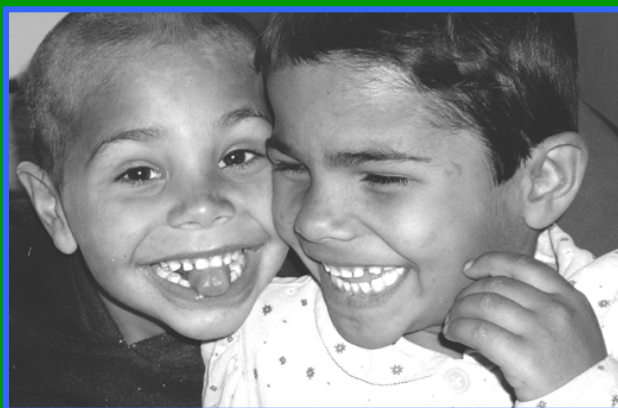




Paula & Catalin



The following story is made from excerpts from a simple string of e-mails to give you a window into one area of our work – supporting our partners who have given up their comfortable homes in the West to care for HIV positive children.

In the 90's, Romanian children contracted more cases of AIDS than in all European countries combined. The Romanian government was not properly screening blood and shared needles. Also, at that time, many Romanian doctors thought that transfusions provided a “pick me up” for children who were anaemic, feeling weak, tired or had a cold.

In January Robin (Founder and Chief Executive of F.R.O.D.O.) received an e-mail from Sam, one of our partners who Robin then visited in February. Sam and her husband care for 8 HIV+ abandoned children living in a “home” they established along with a community care program for 90+ families, most of whom have HIV positive children.

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From: Robin – January 09 2007

With our help, is there anything you can do to help with Maria's 3 remaining children? Please let me know. This is horrific that their mother is dying, and they are living out of a rubbish tip in the winter in Romania. My god, and this is the new EU.
Robin

From: Sam – February 28 2007

I have had a long time with Maria this morning, she is still in the hospital in Targu Mures. She refuses to make any plans for her children now at this time, but says that when she has passed she wants us to look after them. I have told her that she must make a legal document, she is a bit stronger but very thin. If I can I shall try and get her to a Public Notary when I can so that she can sign a document.

I have never met her paralysed partner, he has never been there when I visited. Of course being the children's father he will need to have a say in this and I shall have to try to speak with him as well. The best thing would be if I could speak with them together. Not a good week, also have three teenagers in the final stage of AIDS...
Sam

From: Sam – January 09 2007

Did I tell you about Maria my 30 something HIV positive lady who lives on a rubbish tip in Sighisoara with her children? When I took her parcels in December she was at home on the tip, today I found her in the hospital in Targu Mures in the final stages of AIDS. A drip goes into her neck and she is in nappies, she lays in a room on her own. I cannot stay with her, cannot spare staff and do not currently have any volunteers. She begged me to take her 3 children who also live on the rubbish dump to see her. Maria's youngest children are 4 & 5 years old, it is a miracle they have tested negative.
Speak soon, Sam.

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From: Sam – March 08 2007

Today I took Maria back home to her shack on the rubbish dump, it was very moving. She is very weak and when we arrived she told me she did not think that she would ever be going home again. The two younger children came running out to see her. Today is Woman/Mother's Day in Romania, Maria was thrilled to be going home on such a special day. I left her family a phone card to contact me if she needs anything and I am going again on Monday. She has agreed that she wants the 2 younger children to come to us after her death. I have offered that she can come to our home with her children but she wants to be in her home on the rubbish dump. Sam.

From: Robin – March 12 2007

Please let me know about Maria's kids, as we want to help with food, clothes for them. Also, if you want, you can just give me the total of what you've spent, and then send me the rest later. As you wish – when you have time. You're doing great work, Robin.

From: Sam – March 15 2007

I have worked closely with Maria and her family over the last three days. Discovered that she has not told her partner of 20 years that she is HIV positive.

So he does not know that his twelve year old son passed with the virus four years ago or that his other nine year old son also carries the virus, that boy is currently living in the placement centre you mentioned. Her other 3 children (incl. the 2 staying with us) are HIV negative. The poor man also does not know that he probably is also infected with HIV.

Took Maria back to the hospital yesterday, she is very weak. Sam.



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ONE CHILD AT A TIME

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From: Robin – March 15 2007

We will initially provide for one carer for 6 months. Hopefully, the one carer can do the job for these two. Keep looking for a sponsor, but this will ensure you have initial funds.

Best,
Robin

From: Sam – August 23 2007

Yesterday around 11.30am Maria slipped into a coma, she passed during the night, I was with her on Tuesday, that evening Paula and Catalin spoke with her on the phone. The two children are very calm about the situation at the moment...

Sam.

It's a harrowing tale of conditions in Romania and a very sad ending for the mother of Paula and Catalin. F.R.O.D.O. is currently financially supporting the care of Paula & Catalin as part of our "One Child at a Time" project. Of course in this case there are 2 siblings.

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