

January 2007

Dear friends,

Another year filled with God's grace and goodness has passed. We are thankful for your support, your prayers and mails. Looking back at 2006, I realize that this letter will cover only a small part of what is going on in the ministry of Torchbearers Romania. Our Team has grown to 12 wonderful members. The differences make us struggle at times, but the diversity is also enriching and we grow together in God's grace and forgiveness. The ministry has grown to four different engagements: The camp ministry, an evangelistic kid's club ministry (ME: Micii Exploratori), a social work with children in a run down communist apartment building (Block 14), and the national youth work with the Lutheran church. From the reports you will see that it involved a lot of work, dealing with problems and struggles, but also joy and surprises.

This year we started 6 new ME kid's clubs. We had to deal with lack of support from churches, discouraged leaders and suspicious parents. But the clubs are growing slowly, and we are happy that these kids have the opportunity to hear the gospel.

The camp season was fully booked. We hit a record number in July with 170 people on the campsite. Encouraging are the growing number of about 50 perseverant, mature voluntary leaders. We are grateful for what our Lord is doing through these camps.

In the Lutheran youth ministry, new doors opened. Cristina Suciu, who joined our staff last year, was well received by church leaders and youth. Highlights were the youth conference in Mai with 200 participants and several kids that dedicated their lives to Christ in the summer camps.

Looking back, I ask myself:

What is actually the most important thing in all the work we do?

Most important is that things that we cannot do happen! That Jesus will do in and through us what exceeds our human possibilities. This is actually the Christian life, and He is doing it, not me. Too bad we often lose sight of this in all of our own activities.

A letter that I received a few days ago reminded me once again of this. I asked permission to share part of it:

I know that everyone wondered how I got to attend ME leadership training. But the longer I reflect the more I am convinced that this was exactly what I needed. I experienced God in a new way, and since then not one day passed that I didn't feel his presence.

I am not exaggerating, if I would not have been there I wouldn't be the person I am today. Maybe you don't remember (actually I don't!) but you prayed for me saying: "Lord help Magda to become like Elisha" This desire grew in me. I want to search God with all of my heart and all my being, and to be daily aware of His grace, love and blessings.

After the training I talked to my pastor and confessed my sinful past. He gave me a lot of wise counsel. I did what he told me, even though it didn't come easy. Now I tell you with joy, I feel really free from my past.

I write you this to thank you, that you accepted me as I was, and that you helped me feel appreciated by you and by God. You have helped me by this a lot and I ask God to bless you. M.A.



Part of our staff giving thanks by serving the volunteers at our yearly conference

Social and missionary work in Block 14

In February we opened our special kindergarten in "Block 14" and are thankful that about 11 kids attend it regularly. Here you can meet families of 7, living in a room of 15sqm, soot blackened walls from the wood stove, sharing a common bathroom with ten other families. We invest in each child individually and enjoy each step they take. A great joy to us was, when, after 7 weeks of weird grumbling, Ionut, a four year old boy, started to say "please", when asking for more tea. There are days when the conditions in the block are hard to bear. In the room we use, we still do not have electricity, no toilet, no sink, no running water, no proper heating system, but a lot of mold. (The causes are the lack of permits and infrastructure in the block, the sewage runs into the basement).

Our prayer is that we will be able to renovate our room this year and that God will change the families in block 14 with all their problems and poverty. He started already with the children.."

Ania und Petra



Building project

We wrote last year about the opening of the building project and about our struggles. Looking back at 2006, we only say: Praise the Lord! He answers prayer! We advanced well and we received the necessary finances to complete the two goals set: Firstly, to finish and use the **sanitary building** for the camp season (We fixed the last faucet at 10:00pm, right before the campers flooded the building). And secondly to lay the foundation and to pour the concrete bottom plate of the **main building**, before the winter sets in (We discovered that the fall is much dryer and digging works much better in fall).

We also began to work at the **infrastructure**. We drilled a well for drinking water and started with the sewage treatment facility. The German group that builds the hydro power plant has advanced and wants to do their first test run in 2007. We are very encouraged by all the support we received and for the volunteers in the construction team. In 2006 we had two volunteers: Sales from Switzerland, and David from Germany. Both are very dedicated and David told me lately: "I couldn't imagine another place where I would want to be now than working here".



FAMILY EVENTS:

Living in a country with a large gypsy minority has left its marks on us. Last summer, we moved into a trailer in Rasnov for two months during the camp season, and everybody enjoyed it. Elke cooked for 3 camps, the children played a lot in and near the river and had fun, meeting lots of people. They did a lot of sand shuffling in our new beach volleyball field. The personality of each of our children comes out more clearly the older they get. The way they express their faith helps us to trust God in everything. Jonathan (12) enjoyed watching soccer WC with his Dad. He's interested in everything technical, and he starts teaching daddy. Anna (10) likes crafts and horses and reads every book about horses she can get. A family project this fall was to color her room in different rose nuances. Andreas (7) likes numbers and mathematics, his favorite is counting money and when he is big he wants to be a banker.

Asked, what they liked most last summer, the answers were the following. Jonathan: At the construction site I drove the tractor and the excavator all by myself. Anna: At the kids camp I liked the Zip line very much. Andreas: in our family vacation in Greece, I climbed Mount Olympus, 2900m. I liked to watch the mountain goats climb up so quickly and I touched a cloud.

For **2007** we set the goal to finish the first floor of the main building, so that we can move the workshop to Rasnov, and that a part of the construction team can live there. We also want to finish the infrastructure (electricity, water and sewage). It is exciting to see all the help we receive: 8 groups from Germany are announced to help with the construction (we still have to figure out how to do construction work with 40 volunteers ☺), and 4 new volunteers for an entire year. In fall, Sami, a young Romanian architect will come on staff to coordinate the construction project. It will be a challenging year for our construction team, but it is great to be part of what God is doing.

We are glad to share with you what God is doing in our lives. It is great to be under His guidance. We enjoyed reading news from you, and even though time creates a distance we enjoy following the path of your lives.

Eberhard and Elke with Jonathan, Anna, and Andreas.

P.S.: We updated our site in English: www.pdf.ro

For support use the following contacts:

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you can write a check payable to Torchbearers and mail it to Torchbearers, PO Box 3340, Estes Park CO 80517. Please specify on the check or a note: "Torchbearers Romania, Project Center".

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