

Helping Hand MAKE IT A MILLION!

Waifs Of Hill St

The ramshackle collection of houses and huts that make up the gypsy community of Hill Street in Tirgu Mures was a stark introduction to another aspect of Romanian society. This shanty town was home to desperately poor people who survived by scavenging on refuse dumps. Initially we helped out with a twice-weekly soup run, but went on to build a Daycare Centre for pre-school children, who were normally left in the camp during the day in the care of older siblings or to fend for themselves. The children would be given a nursery education and a good meal, but the centre would also contain a laundry and washing facilities. They would learn to listen, be polite, share and all the other lessons they'd need in order to cope with mainstream school.







Sick Children

When we encountered the formidable force of Sister Aloysius from Lawside convent in Dundee, she showed us around the Budimex Children's Hospital in Bucharest where she was helping to care for the children. We refurbished operating theatres, installed air conditioning, replaced windows, refurbished the cancer wards, replaced old plumbing, refurbished intensive care, installed an oxygen system and put in new doors, as the old ones weren't wide enough to get a hospital bed through, so children had to be lifted from the operating table or put on stretchers to be taken back to the ward.

Forgotten Kids

"When I walked in, there was total silence. I've never walked into a room of 50 silent children, but if children are ignored for long enough, they will eventually stop crying."

These were the words of Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, head of Scottish International Relief, which later became Mary's Meals, when he told us about visiting a hospital ward full of abandoned children who were HIV-positive. He was determined these children would be moved to a place where they would know love and care. We gave a donation to help to set up Iona House and the first 10 children were moved in. With care and good food they began to flourish. A second house opened, called Bannatyne House as Duncan Bannatyne was a major benefactor. This time we helped furnish the home.

