

Veritas View

Sighisoara, Romania

Fall 2017

Special outings and events for the Veritas clubs and staff have been memory-making times for everyone. Along with events described below, Veritas staff planned and carried out five-day camps for Kids' Club and the special needs club. Staff also hosted the annual Open House in September. Doing things together beyond the usual daytime program activities builds community among Veritas clients and staff.

At the beginning of September, 16 members of the Împreună Club, who attend the program for people with special needs, enjoyed five days of camp in the village of Crișeni. The theme of the camp was "Many peoples, one Creator." Pictured here is the group in front of (and under) a hat at the world's largest straw hat factory (in the *Guinness Book of Records*). Special funding for this camp came from a yard sale organized by Dorothy Tarrant and from a charity concert by the Nid de Poule band.



Additional yard sale funds were also available to pay for an outing for members of elderly and special needs clubs. The bus trip for approximately 50 people (including staff and volunteers) took place in mid-October. The group visited the Șinca Veche and Sâmbăta de Sus monasteries, which provided beautiful settings for prayer, meditation and spiritual renewal. The group also enjoyed the beauty of nature as they traveled.



On Nov. 2, three of the programs at Veritas came together to celebrate autumn with a Harvest Day event. Members of three elderly clubs brought food, Kids' Club provided special music, and the special needs group decorated the room. After music and readings, each table (a mix of children and adults) made pumpkin centerpieces. Members of all the programs filled the meeting room for this joyful event.



Staff Retreat



The fall retreat for staff and volunteers took place October 18-20 in the beautiful setting of Păltiniș. Guest speaker for the weekend was Josh Herndon, who (with his wife Shannon) are Nazarene mission workers who have recently moved to Brasov. The topic of the retreat was God's call on our lives. Monica Stefanescu led Biblio drama about God's call to different characters in the Bible. Roberta Bustin set up interactive prayer stations, encouraging personal prayer times. We are grateful to Lois Rosenberry whose concern for the well-being of the Veritas staff inspires her to provide the funding for this retreat each year.

Roma – Amor – Love

Finding practical ways to show children in Veritas programs that they are loved is an important part of Veritas' work. In September, 110 rain boots were distributed to Veritas' preschool and Kids' Club children. Vision and coordination for the project came from Casey Bloom (on-site coordinator for the Romanian Studies Program).

The boots came from Roma Boots, a socially conscious 'buy one, give one' boot company in Texas. With every sale, a pair of boots is given to a child in need. ROMA was founded in 2010 by Samuel Bistran, who wanted to combine his love of fashion and philanthropy to help children in his home country of Romania. It has now expanded to 24 more countries around the world.

Roma is the politically correct term for the gypsies in Romania. As the children tried on and received new rain boots they were reminded that Roma means love. (Roma spelled backwards is amor, which means love.)



RSP Students



Two students from America are in Sighisoara for the Romanian Studies Program (RSP) this semester. They arrived in mid-September and will leave mid-December. Carly Catalanello from Cedarville University, Ohio is working with the special needs program at Veritas. Janelle Roby, Mt. Vernon Nazarene University, Ohio is working with the It Takes Courage programs. Both girls are leading story and craft time with the youngest children at a Kids' Club which meets twice weekly in the village of Tigmandru. They are pictured here with Casey Bloom (on right), on-site coordinator for RSP.

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European Union Project

For over 20 years, Veritas has been taking the pulse of the social needs in the Sighisoara community. Identified needs include medical services (in conjunction with social services), job training, housing, education and anti-discrimination training. Veritas worked with the Sighisoara City Hall, the Miron Neagu elementary school, and Centru de Resurse Comunitare Pentru Romi (Resource Center for Roma Communities, based in Cluj) to submit a grant for European funds to address these needs. The grant was approved and in October the work to carry out the programs outlined in the grant was begun.

Partnering to find solutions for problems in the community is uncommon. For the City Hall, Veritas and Miron Neagu to work at various components on a common grant is a first for Sighisoara. The grant funding is for 10 months a year for three years. Veritas will provide the social medical services and some of the educational components of the project.

The three years over which this grant is spread, means the majority of the Veritas staff, particularly director Petra Popa (who will manage the grant), will be spending many hours working with the partners to make sure that paperwork is completed and all details of carrying out the grant are completed satisfactorily.

Three staff members have been hired through grant funding:

- Mihaela Bucur – coordinator for the anti-discrimination campaign, and teacher for a special training for 30 teenagers in these competencies: sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, math, science and technology, digital competencies, communicating in mother tongue and in a foreign language, civic and social competencies, cultural awareness and expression and lifelong learning.
- Maria Maior - pediatric nurse from the Sighisoara hospital who will accompany Veritas staff during home visits and provide medical advice and care for Veritas clients and their families
- Adriana Bontea – speech therapist who will work closely with Veritas staff to identify and work with clients with speech or learning disabilities

Funds will also be used for the social canteen (meal program for children and teens) which provides breakfast and lunch daily for those attending the Veritas children and teen programs.

This grant marks another step in the continued cooperation between Veritas and its neighbors in Sighisoara, to benefit the Roma people and the entire community.

Funding from the EU grant provides the opportunity to expand programs for Veritas. However, we continue to rely on loyal donors to support the ongoing ministry programs of Veritas and, at the end of the grant project, enable us to continue the new initiatives. Your contributions will make this possible. And now is a great time to give, because an anonymous donor has offered to match dollar for dollar up to \$10,000 for donations made by the end of 2017.

From the U.S. donations can be made online at <http://veritas.ro/get-involved/u-s-donations/>. Or write checks to Missio International and mail to Veritas Advisory Board, 6450 Weatherfield Court, Suite 3, Maumee, Ohio 43537. Put Veritas in the memo line.

In the UK, donations can be increased through Gift Aid by sending them to the Titus Trust. Mail c/o Dr. Paul Tarrant, 129 Mains Drive, Erskine, Renfrewshire, PA8 7JJ or directly to the Titus Trust (IBAN GB85 BOFS 8013 5306 0009 36) Bank of Scotland, Bridgewater Shopping Centre, Erskine, Renfrewshire, PA8 7AA.

Update

In the spring newsletter, we wrote about the need for paving the Veritas courtyard so that clients, particularly those with disabilities, can more easily navigate between buildings. This project is 90% completed, thanks to the hard work of Mihai Nagy and volunteers who laid more than 400 square meters of brick pavers to create a smooth surface. Thanks for your donations that made this project possible.

