

## VOLUNTEERING



What does it mean to you? What experiences have you had? What are the benefits of volunteering – for yourself and for those you serve? This issue of Veritas News will feature the stories of groups of volunteers who have engaged with Veritas staff and clients in a variety of ways. There isn't a count of the total number of volunteers who have worked in Sighisoara over the past two decades, but there have been hundreds. If you're one of them – thank you so much! If you'd like to volunteer with Veritas, see the information box on page 4.

## Retired Teachers Offer Three Months of Service

Ron and Jacque Maurer came to Sighisoara for the first time in May, 2015. They wanted to observe Veritas programs to see if it would be possible for Trevecca University (Nashville, TN) students to study in a cross-cultural setting as part of the Romanian Studies Program. Ron was teaching social work at Trevecca at the time, and has since retired. So instead of sending students, Ron and Jacque felt God's call to come to Sighisoara themselves for a three-month term – from March to May, 2016.





Ron and Jacque's experiences in education and living and working in other countries made them a perfect fit for the needs of Veritas at this time. They served in Japan as missionaries with the Church of God, Anderson, Ind. for almost 10 years and also worked on short-term missions assignments in Trinidad and Tobago and in Kisumu, Kenya.

Jacque brought her 40 years of teaching experience to the kids' clubs at Veritas. She provided teacher training, taught lessons, and interacted with the children. With new leaders in the Kids' Club program whose social work experience was with individual children, rather than educational activities for children in groups, Jacque's insights and expertise were very welcome.

Ron's experiences as a social worker, teacher and a pastor were put to good use in Sighisoara. He assisted with the Veritas Disabilities' Club and taught a class called Pastoral Care and Counseling, which met for five weeks for four hours each week. Veritas staff were able to participate in this class as part of their continuing education. About half of the 26 students were enrolled in coursework through EuNC (European Nazarene College) and took the course to fulfill requirements toward being licensed by the Nazarene Church. Several other local students work for another social work agency in Sighisoara. Being able to combine theological training with practical counseling techniques benefitted all groups of students.

During their time in Sighisoara Ron and Jacque enjoyed "being a small part of a great community outreach serving an underserved population in Romania". Of course they also enjoyed visiting some of the ancient castles and fortified churches in Romania, making friends and building relationships with people from Veritas and the local churches, and participating in Monday night dinners with missionaries and volunteers from different countries.

Ron and Jacque say, "We would definitely encourage other retirees to come and experience Sighisoara, Romania! Bring your work and life experiences and see what God can do with them. The blessings are many!"

## Elderly and It Takes Courage Clubs Volunteer for Veritas

The Elderly Club that meets at the Family Center spent a morning helping to sort clothes for a clothing “shop” which took place over a three-week period in April and early May. After the sorting work was completed the group had a discussion about the differences in volunteering between America and Romania. The culture of volunteering in Romania is just beginning after years under Communism ... when people were required by the State authorities to volunteer from time to time. For example, university students might be sent to bring in the potato harvest, work for which they were not paid. It’s a new idea for the elderly in Romania to consider volunteering their time but they enjoyed working together on this activity.

Young people are beginning to learn the importance of volunteering as well. Teen members of “It Takes Courage” took their turn to volunteer, setting up clothes that had been sorted by the Elderly Club for distribution and helping to sort shoes in the warehouse. Sheri Hartzler, volunteer from Virginia, coordinated the work of both of these groups.



## Teen Volunteers with Kids' Club Go on Retreat

Another group of teen volunteers who regularly work with the children attending Kids' Club held a retreat at the end of April to celebrate their work. Steluța Gocica, former Kids' Club program director, led the retreat and said, "Most likely we won't be able to change the world, but we can start with our world ... with us ... and for me that's enough." To the teens, she said, "Thank you for your energy, enthusiasm, and dedication." Eleven teens were at the retreat, along with current Kids' Club social workers, Alina Drăgan and Kinga Orban.

Teens first began volunteering in the Kids' Club program approximately five years ago. Their work each week includes helping with homework, serving lunch and playing games with the children. Alina and Kinga say that having the teen volunteers is a big help to them especially in providing one on one help with homework and they also are good examples for the children.





## Holland Teens Travel to Sighisoara to Serve

A group of seven teens and their leaders Peter Tas and Corine Noordermeer from the Church of the Nazarene in Hoehsche, Holland arrived in Sighisoara on April 26, to spend 10 days of their school holiday serving others. Even though Veritas was closed for Easter holidays during three of the days they were here, the group worked anyway. They stayed on the Veritas property, cooking most of their meals in the Teen Club kitchen. They sorted toys, shoes and clothes that had been contributed by churches in Holland and enjoyed finding books and other items that they recognized from their own country. Other work included moving rocks and roof tiles, and cutting and sanding the lumber for a terrace being built behind the Family Center building. Part of the group also worked at the Sighisoara Nazarene Church installing a floor and doing some painting and maintenance work there. One of the teens commented that what he liked about working at Veritas was the variety of jobs they got to do. Their only regret was that they weren't able to complete the terrace before they had to leave.

Four of the teens were here for the second time, having come with the team in 2015. When asked why they wanted to return they said they had a lot of good memories from the previous trip and enjoyed being able to help people. The group hopes to return again next year (and Veritas will be happy to welcome them back again!)



If you'd like to volunteer at Veritas, please visit the volunteer information page on our website at <http://veritas.ro/get-involved/volunteer/> Or send an email to [Veritas@veritas.ro](mailto:Veritas@veritas.ro) and ask for an application form.

