

Veritas View

Sighisoara, Romania

Fall 2016

Offering Hot Meals

When we think about celebrations in the coming months, Thanksgiving in the U.S. and Christmas everywhere, we often think of the foods that accompany these events. At Veritas, staff think about food daily as they plan for, purchase, prepare and serve meals to about 150 people each day for a total of over 2,500 meals per month. Participants in the kids' club (50), the elderly program (15), the special needs club (7-14), and the preschool (10-15), along with staff, volunteers and visitors are served lunch Monday through Friday. In addition, the preschoolers are served breakfast and elderly club staff members, Mia and Arnold, deliver food to six persons each week.



Clockwise from top left:
Etta and Zelma
Special Needs Club
After-school lunch program

New this fall, Veritas is serving food to 35 children from a German after-school program. The children used the Veritas courtyard for their play area last year, which facilitated building relationships with the teachers. When Petra offered them after-school lunches the staff were happy to accept. These children come from middle class homes in Sighisoara and are able to pay 6.5 lei (\$1.60) per meal, providing income to Veritas which helps to cover costs for their own food, and additionally helps with some of the costs for meals for others. The first week the children came, they were rebellious, disobedient, and quite loud. Zelma, one of the cooks, took the initiative to lead the group in praying before their meal, which brought peace and calm to the situation. Now they begin each lunch with prayer.

You can invest in the work of the Veritas food programs by donating funds. Veritas needs \$1,250 each month for food purchases, and an additional \$1500 for utilities and salaries. Until recently the Sighisoara Guild Association had been providing \$275 per month for food for the elderly, but for now they can no longer provide this support.

Matthew 25:35 "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in."

Floare de Colt Domestic Violence Program

One in three women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence. Whether at home, on the streets or during war, violence against women is a global pandemic that takes place in public and private spaces. Nov. 25 is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Since April 2003, Veritas, which is a member of the National Coalition to Combat Violence against Women has been providing legal aid and psychotherapy aimed at combating violence in the family.

Initially, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded Veritas training programs which taught teachers, doctors, lawyers, police, clergy, psychologists and social workers how to recognize and respond to incidents of domestic violence. Partnerships and a referral network were established with the town hall, the court and prosecutor's office, the police, the town hospital, and the schools. Public awareness campaigns were organized using a variety of media to inform the public about the phenomenon of violence and available services. Programs on local and national levels, through mass media, have changed the perception of domestic violence. It is now recognized that violence does happen and that it happens here in Sighisoara. During the Communist era it was not spoken about, but that has changed.

A 2005 survey in Sighisoara conducted by Veritas staff found that 75% of people were victims of, or were impacted by, violence in their families. This was not always physical violence, but also verbal, economic abuse and neglect which effect not just women, but also children, the elderly, and men. Due to informational campaigns and the development of programs for victims and their abusers (i.e. counseling, therapy, and shelters) and activities for prevention, people have become conscious of the violence that exists and are now more open to speaking about their situations of abuse.

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Monica Stefanescu and Dorina Lazar have been working in the Floare de Colt program for 13 years



Domestic Violence Program

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Monica is a psychologist and psychotherapist with over 20 years of experience. Through her work, she wants to change people's perception on abuse, to work on their personal development, and to help them understand that each person is valued and has a right to a better life. She appreciates that Veritas is a Christian foundation and moral values can be expressed with the clients. She is especially glad when people who didn't have a relationship with God turn to Him after counseling with her. Even though this job is difficult and often painful, Monica is joyful to see the fruit of the work. When adults or children can change their lives and start to believe in themselves they can become models for people around them.

Dorina is a legal counselor who offers assistance and counsel to victims of domestic violence. She coordinates the Floare de Colt program, mediating between her clients and state institutions including the town hall, police, courts, etc.

One young woman we will call Rosalia (name changed) has been to see Dorina over a period of years. She has three children, ages 8, 6 and 2 and lives with a drunk and abusive partner. The youngest child was three weeks old when Rosalia's partner sent her and the children out of the house in the winter in the middle of the night. For the third time, Rosalia took them to a shelter for abused women.

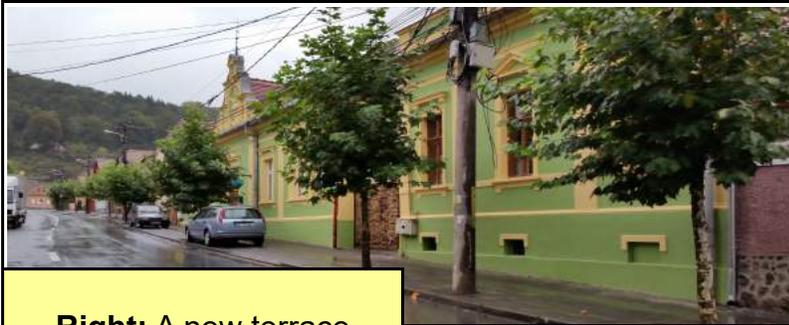
In the last shelter Rosalia was given a house with her children, but she was unhappy that she had to pay for the shelter and had difficulty accepting the training provided for her and her children. She could have stayed there for two years but she stayed just six months. Like many women in abusive situations, Rosalia went back to her partner where violence has continued. One of the children came to Dorina asking if they could be sent away where they would be safe. Rosalia has worked to find alternatives to her living situation and because of her time in shelters and in counseling, she is beginning to learn that she is more capable than she thought. But there isn't a good ending to this story yet. Rosalia continues to call Dorina during crisis times. Pray for Rosalia and her children and for Dorina as she continues to help when called upon.

Did you know:

Sighisoara does not have a long-term shelter although Veritas offers two rooms for emergency situations. Very few longer-term shelters for abused women and children are available in Romania.

Sign up to receive a monthly email with stories about clients who are impacted by Veritas programs. Send your request to veritas@veritas.ro and ask for the monthly news email. We do not give out your email address and you can unsubscribe at any time.

Your contributions to Veritas help programs such as Floare de Colt continue to reach out to families in distress. Changes happen slowly, but Veritas staff are privileged to walk alongside those who are hurting, sharing the love of Christ.



Left: Veritas Family Center has a fresh look! The green paint with yellow trim are colors approved for historic buildings in Sighisoara. The money for this painting came from a fund created and funded by construction volunteers who twice assisted with the building project.

Right: A new terrace behind the Family Center provides a much needed covered outdoor space. Special thanks for funding provided by a group of teens from the Church of the Nazarene in Hoehsche, Holland and from Sue Bright, a former teacher and Veritas volunteer from Saffron Walden, England.



Urgent Need

In October 2015, 64 people died and 174 were injured in a fire in a night club in Bucharest. Since this time, new codes have been put in place in Romania which are being strictly enforced for schools, companies and NGOs everywhere in the country. Veritas is no exception. Inspections are happening more frequently, and the new codes are being enforced. For Veritas Family Center this means we need to upgrade all electricity, heating and plumbing plans in order to meet code. A surveyor must be hired to measure and devise a plan for these upgrades at a cost of \$3,500 or so. The deadline for making these upgrades is December 2016. This is an urgent need because, without the upgrades, Veritas activities will be in jeopardy. Please consider a donation to assist with these costs.

Double Your Donation!

An anonymous donor will match contributions up to \$10,000 if given before the end of this year. Please consider a year-end donation to enable us to benefit from this generous offer.

In the U.S. write checks to Missio International and mail to Veritas Advisory Board, 6450 Weatherfield Court, Suite 3, Maumee, Ohio 43537. Be sure to put Veritas in the memo line on your check.

U.S. donors can give tax deductible donations online at

<http://veritas.ro/get-involved/u-s-donations/>

Thank you for your support.