

Veritas and the Coronavirus

On March 12, the Romanian government issued a stay-at-home order for the whole country and shut down all schools and non-essential businesses, which included our work as an NGO. Staff took vacation days initially and then were able to get government benefits of 75% of their salaries through May 30. New ordinances from the government have just been released indicating that schools will not re-open until fall. We don't know what this means for re-opening programs at Veritas.

However, we are in touch with our clients. Program directors Dorina, Helga, Felicia, and Melania have been calling their clients at least once a week to check in with them and Petra often receives calls. Casey has been having regular interactions and video calls with It Takes Courage teens. For the elderly the calls have been very encouraging. The Baragon Elderly club members have been calling each other to check in and they are finding help from their neighbors and friends when they need medication or food picked up. Helga reports that clients in the Special Needs program really miss coming to Veritas. It's very hard for some of them not to be able to take walks and they don't understand why they can't. While the rules do allow for walks, their parents are afraid to allow them to go out.

On April 28, 37 Veritas families (from our programs for children and teens) received a food package. Made possible from donations, each family received 25 kg of food and a bag of detergent. Food items included oil, pasta, flour, sugar, cornmeal, rice, margarine, pate, canned meat, peas, beans, and tomato juice. Thirteen food packages were delivered directly to homes. The other 24 families came in at staggered times to receive their food from Petra and Dorina.

One family said, "Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!" Another said the last income she had received was a month ago and there has been no money for food since. Families also expressed concerns about their children missing school for so long. Some of the teachers do not have the technology to offer on-line classes.

Earlier in April, families received 15 kg of potatoes that had been purchased with Nazarene Child Sponsorship funding. Upon hearing about the great needs that some families currently have, a few staff members have chosen to personally purchase food for clients.

As we anticipate another four months when programs are not operating as normal at Veritas, the need for food will continue. When clients come to the programs they receive a hot meal, and now that is not possible. We will continue to purchase and distribute food as we are able in the coming months.



Above: Dorina gives a mother a food package for her family

Below: Some of the food purchased from donations



Thank you and Goodbye

This summer Veritas staff will say goodbye to Roberta Bustin, volunteer missionary with the Church of the Nazarene, who has devoted 23 years of her life to the people of Sighisoara. Roberta will return to her home and family in Arkansas.



An Arkansas breakfast with co-workers



Roberta and Petra



Roberta shared her love of science with Veritas children

Roberta's work extended far beyond Veritas, but she was an important part of the Veritas family over the years. Here are some of the ways she participated in Veritas work:

- As a charter Board Member served Veritas with wise counsel from 2001 to 2020, helping us stay true to our mission.
- Was an unofficial chaplain, role model and friend to staff and volunteers
- Regularly participated in Friday devotions with the staff. Her clear Bible teaching was always encouraging and appreciated.
- Taught environmental science to university students and science lessons to teens and kids
- Led devotions and interacted with members of the elderly clubs
- Used her personal vehicle to help drive special needs and elderly clients on excursions, kids to camp, staff to retreats
- Helped wherever needed at Veritas events
- Regularly supported Veritas from personal ministry funds
- Hosted staff for Arkansas-style breakfasts
- Helped to host visiting teams, providing transportation, and helping longer term volunteers get settled
- Hosted weekly evening meals for RSP students and led devotional times with them
- Led field trips and hikes and shared her love for nature

Continued on next page

Roberta – Continued from previous page

Petra says, “Roberta is a bouquet of qualities – I can’t just write one thing about her. She exhibits patience, humanity, kindness, empathy, toughness, kindness, good will and serenity. Her strong faith and love of God and people demonstrated to all how to be a disciple of Jesus.”

Dorothy Tarrant writes, “I had been in Sighisoara for two years and was praying that God would send a partner in ministry, a kindred spirit, someone who would stay long-term. God sent Roberta. She kept very busy teaching, preaching, and caring for people, but always enjoyed the opportunity to take a break for a walk in the woods or a trip to discover a new part of Romania. Much of what Roberta did for Veritas was behind the scenes, but everyone on the Veritas team through the years has a deeper understanding of what it means to follow Jesus because we have known Roberta.”

Roberta’s comforting presence and her loving care for all of the staff and clients will be missed. We know she will continue to pray for us from Arkansas. We wish her God’s blessing as she settles into this new phase of her life.



On Dorothy's back porch

German student comes to Sighisoara



Rilona Puppe came to Veritas from Bochum, Germany. She is a social work student in the “Fachhochschule in Munster” working on a bachelor’s degree. Rilona came to Romania for the first time 10 years ago where God gave her a heart for Romania. Because of this, when she had the chance to do her social work practicum, she applied to Veritas.

From February until the middle of March, Rilona worked with the It Takes Courage programs, in the Tigmandru kids’ club, in the youth group at the Sighisoara Nazarene church and with third graders at the German school in Sighisoara. She really enjoyed the It Takes Courage program, as she desires to work with young people in the future.

Rilona has remained in Sighisoara during the shutdown, living with a host family, and helping out whenever she can with projects for Veritas and for the community. We are grateful for her help, her flexibility, and her willingness to learn Romanian. We wish her the best as she returns to Germany.

Family Center Second Floor

While our priority during the virus is our clients, work has continued on the second floor of the Veritas Family Center. The drywall has been finished, and most of the roof has been replaced, after the discovery of a roof leak and rotted support timbers. Our next projects include: painting, doors, bathroom, and floors. We had hoped to be done this spring but are grateful that the work crew is able to continue working during the stay-at-home mandate.



House on the Rock changes

A major decision was made by the Veritas Board in the fall to rent out the House on the Rock. Mark Tudose, who owns and operates two craft shops in the citadel (one in the basement of the House on the Rock) proposed that he turn the upper three stories of the building into The Spoon Museum. Mark learned the art of carving wooden spoons from his grandfather and has begun collecting carved wooden spoons from around the world. He has many creative ideas on how to present these, and make this museum a “don’t miss” location for tourists in Sighisoara. The plan will be delayed because of the pandemic, but we anticipate that a year from now it will be open to the public. This decision impacted the educational programs of Veritas, which since the purchase of House on the Rock, have been held in that building. Currently that includes the teen programs: It Takes Courage, Ceai and Chat and English camps. Those programs will take place in the Veritas Family Center in the fall. The International Cafe will continue to operate on the first floor.



Casey Bloom (holding cake) with teens from It Takes Courage 2.0. Casey, a Nazarene volunteer, is now taking leadership in these programs, since Adela Hermann is on maternity leave.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Please pray for Petra and the leadership team as they make decisions for clients and other staff as they continue to deal with the repercussions of the pandemic. The future is uncertain for Veritas. We have three months of funding remaining from the EU grant, which has been in place for the past three years. While Petra has applied for some additional grants, we don't know at this time where our funding will come from. We would ask you to prayerfully consider how you can contribute to Veritas so that our programs can continue and so that we can provide food to our families during the summer months.

Donation information:

Your donations are invaluable to us at this time! Please send them to NCM (Nazarene Compassionate Ministries). All donations are tax deductible.

Online donations can be made at: <https://give.nazarene.org/donate/f/134477>

Or send checks (with “Veritas Romania” in the memo line) to: Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, PO Box 843116, Kansas City, MO 64184

In the UK, send donations to the Titus Trust, c/o Dr. Paul Tarrant, 129 Mains Drive, Erskine, Renfrewshire, PA8 7JJ or directly to the Titus Trust (IBAN GB85 BOFS80-13-53 06 0009 36) Bank of Scotland, Bridgewater Shopping Centre, Erskine, Renfrewshire, PA8 7AA.

For those in the EU, bank transfers can be made directly to Veritas. SWIFT: BRDEROBU; BIC BRDEROBUXXX IBAN: RO30BRDE270SV08224422700

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