



# Heart of a Child Newsletter

January-February 2009

**Dear friends,**

We are glad to write you again and say thanks to those who have joined us in our attempt of helping the children in need! We wish you good health and success all through this year. May you have the strength to bring hope and support to those in need! No matter the way you may choose „to action”, together or anonymously, be the man that you can be!

**Heart of a Child team**



**Made by Camelia C.  
the Day Care Center Galatzi**

## The Results of the 2008 „Santa Clause’s Bag” Caravan

In December 2008 the Heart of a Child Foundation organized the fifth edition of „Santa Clause Bag” Caravan, an annual event meant to raise funds and products for the children and teenagers supported through our projects. For one week our staff together with high school students and teachers, who voluntarily engaged in our projects, were present on the streets of Galatzi to sell Christmas cards and decorative objects to passers-by. This way, everyone made a small donation to the children and young people we help through our projects and services. In 2008 we succeeded in raising an important amount of money – 19 120 RON – as well as donations consisting of clothing, toys, school supplies and food. This common effort, of both the organization and everyone involved helped us reach the aim of the caravan.

Our partners were 17 teachers, 174 volunteers from secondary schools, high schools and universities from Galatzi. A number of 8 people assisted by us, local companies, the media (the written press and TV stations), churches, banks and other people also joined the activities of our foundation. Though originally we proposed to offer presents to 200 children, we finally managed to make Santa Clause visit 350 of them!

No matter where the children came from, the poor districts of our town, villages of our county (Pechea, Cudalbi) where Heart of a Child is offering social services for years, Cavadinesti, Vadeni (Galati County), I.C.Bratianu( Tulcea County) where we have been to for the first time, in addition to gifts, Heart of a Child Foundation has brought these children hope and serene thoughts. In 2009, many services meant to help children and teenagers in difficulty (Pechea Day Care Center as well as our family-type houses and art-therapy workshop) will be continued due to the generosity of people from Galatzi. Even if it is a traditional activity of our organization and people already knew about it, this year’s edition has had a special importance for us and for our children and young people. What is it about?! In our art-therapy workshop both the teenagers with mental disabilities and the ones infected with HIV have found throughout the past year a place where they could

express themselves through art activities. What is even more important is that they felt free to experiment, to create and to discover new talents and abilities inside themselves. So, they painted glasses, vases, flower-pots and candle sticks with stained glass paint. They also created beads, bracelets and Christmas cards. We have to say that the art workshop has become a place where the teenagers could be themselves, but in a way they did not know till then. The staff and the enthusiastic volunteers who supported them discovered together with the children and teenagers that they can do more than they have ever imagined. Some of the authors of the fascinating works of art accompanied us throughout our campaign taking part effectively in selling these objects.

We happily remember such an event: one of these children was asked by a young couple (Alexandra and Mircea) who were eager to buy one of the painted glasses, whether he had a glass decorated by himself. Very happy and visibly excited, he chose the one he patiently and passionately decorated a few days ago. They took a picture together with the young artist and even more, the little artist gave an autograph. Happiness was present on both sides: the buyers contributed to helping some children and teenagers, while our artist realized once again that he could do valuable things that are appreciated by others and these could even become an income source. Due to the fact that media advertised these artists’ talent, seriousness and commitment, a local company ordered a great number of vases that they offered as Christmas gifts to their partners and collaborators. This made us realize once again that our efforts are worth making in order to fulfill our mission. Giving a chance to a teenager to develop his/her potential, encouraging a child to try new activities that he/she thought were impossible, all these are priceless.



## **About humanity, during this period of economic crisis**

Every day when we realise that a real support need exists, Heart of a Child takes initiative, searches for resources and develops projects and services for children, youth and their at-risk families. The same happened also in Pechea where, since 2000, our foundation started to help the families and to offer them material support in order to be able to send their children to school. Afterwards, in 2005, we understood that a different kind of support was needed, a support that was adapted to the needs of children. In this way we have created the educational Day Care Centre service in Pechea. As a result of our collaboration with the Local Town Hall, we have got two rooms in the Cultural Center, that we renovated so that they are pleasant and functional for the 17 children who are coming here everyday. The funds for the salaries of the two educational instructors, the work materials (pencils, notebooks, books, games), for offering them a daily nutritional supplement, summer camps and shorter trips, were offered from the beginning by our old collaborators AVSI Italy, with the support of the Peoples Development Foundation Bucharest. As we already know and as it was only natural, this funding has ended. Romania is already a member of the EU and the external opinion is that we have to exercise and find solutions and local resources for solving our problems. Therefore, in November, we were confronting a real fact: 17 children in need, other requests for support that were waiting for our favorable response and no money to pay our staff, materials, transport and all others things necessary for our children. What was to be done? The financial crisis had already started and we thought from the beginning that the chances that the business environment would give a positive answer to our request for help were reduced. In spite of all these, we knocked one morning at the door of the Executive Director of the Romanian Commercial Bank Galati, Mrs. Angelica Stratulat. We left her office in daze. We met someone who was more than the director of a bank,

but a true human being. She had listened to us, she understood our problems and, one thing that was very important, she was seeing the needs of our children and she wanted to be involved and offer help. We know that she pleaded for the cause of our children, to her superiors. And one evening she rang us: „We have decided to support you so that for 5 months from now on you can still offer your services to the children in Pechea”. This experience made possible for us to meet other special persons such as: the directors Tudor Puiu, Cosmin Enache, Adrian Stanciu. We know that, in full financial crisis, these persons had not been in crisis...of care for the children in need, they had not been in crisis of human solidarity. I do not remember if during the following meetings I have heard words like „corporate social responsibility”, „social involvement”, „local responsible community”, but we know that these things were put into practice. Thank you a lot! And we assure you that we will tell our children, the families that we support and to all those interested that when there is a need, there is a way! And we will write you about the achievements of our children that you made possible! We can only say thank you for everything!



## **Seminar for presenting the results of the project „Distance Sponsorship”**

On the 3rd of February, at 10 o'clock, in the conference room from the Soft Park Galati took place the seminar for presenting the results of the project „Distance Sponsorship”. The project was implemented in Galati county by our organisation, and it was present in seven counties throughout Romania. Our partners were People's Development Foundation Bucharest and AVSI Foundation from Italy. „Distance Sponsorship” program's aim was to prevent school and family abandonment for poor and helpless families. Due to the free choice of people from Italy, ready to become supporters/donors for children in need through a constant material contribution, but also with a special emotional relationship with the supported child, **the project „Distance Sponsorship” resulted in**



## Galati in:

- 260 supported children and youth in difficulty (direct beneficiaries);
- more than 400 indirect beneficiaries (brothers and families of the children who were direct beneficiaries);
- over 250.000 Euros invested in the education and development of children in need from Galati county;
- establishing in 2005 and the functioning of a Day Care Center in Pechea, for 17 children, with 100% funding through the project;
- the initiation of a Day Care Center in Galati, starting with 3 children, right now being 19;
- contribution and support for 2 family type houses and 2 apartaments for youth with severe disabilities;
- contribution to the functioning of the kindergarten and Day Care Center „Andiana” for children with special needs from Cudalbi.

Practically, it offered all these children a real chance to a better life, education and especially to grow up with their families. „Distance Sponsorship” has also been a powerfull and positive experience for all the involved actors: supported children and youth, their families, staff, organisations and, not at last, for the sponsors themselves.

The meeting from the Soft Park has also been an opportunity to evoke the project's accomplishments, of the changes it produced in children's lives and the supported families, and also an occasion to identify solutions, together with guests, authorities, companies, persons from community, for ensuring the continuity of this project to sustain the children in difficulty. It was also an opportunity to thank all those who chose to be involved for the cause of children in need!



## ***We will soon start the Campaign „2% for our children”***

This is the fourth year when the Romanian tax payer, that is any person who is paying a state tax for the income generated by salary or independent activities, has an easy and efficient way to help his/her community. We are talking about directing 2% from this tax to a non-profit organisation. Last spring, **more than 1050 people trusted us and gave us their 2%**, so that the total amount that we collected was **495 millions old lei**.



**These funds are being used for the financially sustaining the Day Care Center Galati, that is offering support for 19 children from poor families, and for continuing the activity in the art-therapy workshop for 15 children and youth with special needs. The 8 youth with severe mental disabilities who live in two of our apartments are enjoying proper care, due to this important support that came from the people in the community.**

So, we are inviting you to be close to us also in this year, supporting us to help children and youth in need. We remind you that **it is a simple way, that implies no cost from you**. This percent of 2% is deducted from **the tax that you have already paid in 2008** to the state, and now you are only deciding its destination.

**All you have to do is to fill in the 230 Request (if you had only income from your salary in 2008) or 200 Request (for income generated by independent activities) regarding the destination of the amount representing 2% from the annual**

**tax, with your personal data and the data of the Foundation „Heart of a Child” (fiscal identification code 9076002 and bank account RO98RNCB0141032886400001) and to hand it in at the Financial Administration from your local town. Or, if it is easier, you can contact us by telephone or e-mail and we will manage to hand in the request for you at the Financial Administration.**

You can find the forms on our site, at the Financial Administration or at our office.

## Short news

### A new project at „Heart of a Child”!

We are pleased to announce you that on 24<sup>th</sup> of December 2008 our foundation started the project „Difference through competence”. The aim of this project is to increase the sustainability of “Heart of a Child” Foundation through strengthening the organizational capacity to attract funds, the communication with the community and the development of human resources. The project will last for 10 months and it is financed from Phare 2006 funds –Component 3 – Development of NGO sector and civic education, Increasing the role of the Civil Society in Romania’s integration process. We wish good luck to our colleagues from the project team who have already started to work hard!

### „Heart of a Child” takes part at the NGO’s and Chamber of Deputies Meeting

Wednesday, on 28 of January 2009, at the Parliament Palace took place the meeting between the leadership of the Chamber of Deputies and the representatives of the civil society. Anna Burtea, Executive Director, took part at the meeting as a representative of “Heart of a Child” Foundation. The over 270 participants, representatives of NGOs from Romania, “had turned this meeting into a real lesson about interest and involvement into society, knowledge of the problems and experience in different areas, responsibility and tenacity for putting it into practice”. „The principles of a communication mechanism between the Chamber of Deputies and the representatives of the associative sector” were also agreed, as it was affirmed in an open letter by Mrs. Roberta Anastase, President of the Chamber of Deputies. A series of priorities and issues that the NGO sector is confronting were also established, following that we will find a solution together. We honestly hope that this meeting will have concrete effects, a beneficial dialogue, that will find the most suitable and adapted answers to the nowadays context that the NGO sector is part of.



### Exchange of Experience in Bulgaria

What is the stage of contracting and financing social services by authorities in Bulgaria, Romania and Moldavia? This was the theme of the work visit and seminar organised in Sofia during 11-15 January 2009 by FNOFC in collaboration with Solidarite Laique in the framework of the program ProChild, benefiting of financial support from French Foreign Affairs Ministry. We had the pleasure that one representative of our foundation was invited to be part of the Romain Delegation. Visiting some of the social services from the neighbourhood country, the discussions with the authorities and the organisation from Bulgaria and Moldavia, all these represented a good occasion for comparing the existing systems. What were the conclusions? Even if the social services are less developed in Bulgaria right now comparing with Romania, the Bulgarian legislators have succeeded to create a legislative framework that will allow them in a few years to have a good development of the social services and their sustaining mainly from state funds. Will we be able till then to maintain the progress that we have right now in providing social services? Or will the social services provided by Romanian organisation will die from being underfinanced? It was also notable the absence of the Romanian authorities from the level of the involved ministries and this comparing with the important participation of their homologues from Bulgaria and Moldavia.

### Our children are participating at the „Little artist” contest!

On the basis of the partnership agreement signed with Secondary School No. 20 “Traian”, „Heart of a Child” will participate at the County Contest for artistic creation „Little artist” that aims to develop the creative potential of the students in order to realise cards and “martisoare”. During the contest there will also be **an exhibition on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February, starting at 11.30 at the Botanical Garden**. On this occasion we are waiting for you to be with us, to visit us and to buy “martisoare” and cards made by the children supported by our organisation’s programs.



### Thanks to the management of Cinema „Tiglina”!

Due to the fact that we wish to offer our children a varied program and new experiences, on Thursday, the 12<sup>th</sup> of February, 15 children supported through the organisation’s programs saw a cartoon film “Madagascar2”. Thanks to the management of cinema “Tiglina” that accepted to play the movie starting with 15.00 o’clock and offered us the possibility to buy low price tickets. The hapiness and delight of the children, visible at the end of the movie, convinced us that we should repeat this experience!

*Made by Anca-Aurora Chiosea with the support of the “Inima de Copil” team*



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