



## *The story of Fanel*

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### Dear friend of Fundatia,

Usually, I am very happy when the time comes for a newsletter! It is a big joy to update you with news on the boys and the house!

This time, for the first time in many years (*probably since John Nicholson – the man who started the Amara House project - has passed away*) I come to you with sad news!

This summer we've lost Fanel! God decided to take him to a better place!

There are so many things to say about Fanel! For me, he was a miracle. In the past, I have mentioned him in my newsletters or my talks in churches as the man who loves life. Indeed, he loved life; he loved the family spirit at the house; he loved to organise and to make activities with the children on our street.

Today, I will let other people who knew Fanel, tell you his story.

Dima Valentina, teacher at the special school for over 40 years and member of Fundatia New Life, says:

*"I have known Fanel since he was six years old. Even at that age he had many different medical problems so he had to spend a lot of time in the infirmary. Because of that, he became very good friend with the nurses and the doctors. When he grew up, the medical staff at the school trusted him so much that when a child from the school needed to get to the local hospital, they will send Fanel with him. Soon, he became friend with every doctor or nurse in the hospital and at the school the kids named him "Fanel - the doctor". He even managed to get a uniform and an old doctor's seal.*

*After graduation, the Child Protection tried to send him back to the county of his birth and reunite him with his family. But, instead of receiving love, he was bitten so hard by the step father, that his spleen was ruptured and had to be removed."*

In 2004, less than a year since the opening of The Amara House, I received a call from a doctor at the hospital in Slobozia, asking if there is any chance to get a new boy at the house, just for a few weeks as he was so ill that he would die very soon. That boy was Fanel!



It was the moment when Fundatia decided to offer to Fanel comfort and love for the last few weeks of his life! At least that's what we thought at that moment! But God had a different plan! God was planning to offer Fanel a new life, for many years to come.

As soon as he got to the house, with love and care from the staff, with proper medication and very strict diet, Fanel came back to life. The Amara house became his home that he loved so much.

Slowly, the staff discovered what kind of the activities he enjoyed. And the one he loved the most was sewing with the old machine. He absolutely loved sewing kitchen aprons and that was fine until the staff realized that he was

cutting the bed sheets to use the fabric to make aprons. But, what can you say when it is for a good cause?

Besides sewing, there was another thing that Fanel loved the most: to organise different activities with the local children or with the other boys at the house. And he was very good at it.



During all his time at the house, there was a thing about Fanel that amazed all of us: even though he had speaking problems, he was able to communicate in his own way and obtain what he needed or wanted. He has never been able to read but he was the best organizer, ever.

But the best quality of Fanel was generosity and empathy. Somehow, he knew the problems of each family on our street or the problems of each member of staff. And he was always willing to help. I remember some years ago, when the charity struggled and the money we had available did not cover the expenses, he noticed that I looked worried and he asked me what the problem was. After I have explained to him the situation he said not to worry. He will just make more aprons; he will sell them and with the money he will pay for what we need at the house!

Three months since he died, I have asked the staff if things have changed in the house.

**Simona, the cook lady said:** *"After three months, I still can't get use to the idea that he is gone! Every morning when I get to work, when I go by his bedroom door, I am still waiting for him to greet me: good morning, Simona!"*

**Radita, one of the carers, said:** *"when he was still well, in the mornings, after breakfast, we all get together in the big room and he will start organising the day- Radita, make some copies of these drawings, Gabi - today we are going to make a flower vase, Sandu - you help Radita with the cleaning of the house. Today, its all very quiet!"*

**Nina, another carer, added:** *"Since Fanel has gone, Gabi cannot find his daily equilibrium - he kisses his picture every day! Without Fanel to coordinate him, Sandu has lost any interest in activities. Fanel's disappearance has left an empty space"*

Indeed, he left an empty space in the house that we don't know when we will be ready to fill. I think that we all - staff & boys – need a little more time to get used to not having Fanel around anymore but soon we might need to consider a new boy at the house!

This Christmas will definitely be different without Fanel. But life will have to continue at the house and we must make sure we keep the house running and care for the other six boys, encouraging them in the way that Fanel used to and provide the warmth and celebration that they have all come to love at this time of year.

*A Merry Christmas to you all,  
With best wishes from all of us at the Amara House,*

**Marius Istrate,**  
Project manager