



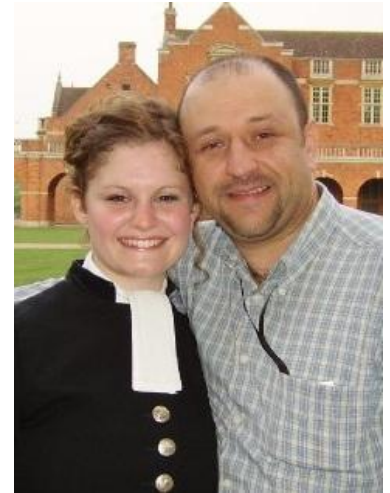
*HELPING THE FORGOTTEN YOUTH OF ROMANIA TO HELP THEMSELVES*

***Dear friend and supporter of Fundatia New Life,***

***Another year has gone now and the time has come to update you with news about the lives of the seven young boys living at The Amara House.***

***This summer, we had a very special visit at the house: Hannah O'Reilly, from UK. She is the daughter of Tina O'Reilly, one of our trustees. I've first met Hannah in 2003, when she came to The Special School in Slobozia with a group of students from Christ's Hospital School in England for an educational project. She has become one of the closest friends to the boys and she visited The Amara House regularly, until 2008 when, the busy life has forced her to stop coming. Until this summer!***

***I would like to give her the opportunity to share with you her impression following the visit:-***



*During my visit at C.H. in 2008, when Hannah was still a student*



***Hannah gets a big smile from Emil when they first meet after 6 years***

My name is Hannah – I have been volunteering in Romania since I was 13. I used to work very closely with all of the boys at The Special School, through the Christ Hospital's educational project, running dance, drama and music classes, so I have known the boys before they lived at The Amara House when their lives were very different.

I hadn't visited the boys for over 6 years so you can imagine how thrilled and excited I was to see them! As per usual on the first day of our arrival we were greeted by so many happy, smiley faces! My first impression was that they had all got so much bigger – of course they had – and as always they were very content.

Every time I come back to the house, it always strikes me to think where the boys could have ended up and the lives they could have lead or quite simply not have. Whenever I spend time with any of the boys I love to see how they and their personalities have developed. It really is a beautiful thing to witness.

Marius in particular made me smile this time – before I had managed to say anything to him once we had arrived he had already started to clap and sing enthusiastically encouraging



me to join in with him. He is always very tuneful when I visit and once I start he will never let me stop! I couldn't wipe the smile off my face to see him having so much fun and laughing, as well as being so vocal and expressing himself in a comfortable environment! Every day I couldn't escape having a sing along with Marius, I didn't have much of a choice! But he never forgets that's what we always do and I loved seeing how happy it made him.

Seeing the improvement in Vali over the years has always amazed me! Vali was one of the children we found virtually impossible to work with in the CH project at C.P.5. He would sit in a corner and refuse to take part in any activity. If anyone tried to come anywhere near him he would bite, spit, or scream so loud that he would have to leave our class. To see Vali and so many other children like this was just heartbreaking as you can imagine, because we could never reach them. Even after a few months at the house Vali was becoming more like the boy we now know. Every time I visit I see how he is becoming so much more confident. He always invites me to sit next to him and tries so hard to speak and communicate, and I've never heard him giggle and laugh so loudly when Marius and I were singing! It's so apparent with all of the boys that they are now a family, thanks to everyone at Amara, and they live in an environment where they can be themselves. Obviously nothing is easy, but it's very comforting to see after witnessing so much hardship they had previously faced at the orphanage.

I felt quite overwhelmed this visit to be back with my old friends after so many years - and I've realized how much I miss them! I'll be back again very soon 😊

Bye for now,

Hannah

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***Thank you, Hannah, for sharing this with us. We are all looking forward to your next visit!***

***Dear supporters, as you know we are making constant efforts to keep you updated with news on the life at the house and our work in Romania. Whether it is by website, by facebook or in the traditional way of a letter, we like you to feel part of the Amara family.***

***This time I would like to take this opportunity and give you a short notice in advance of an event we are planning for the spring (late April or May). The plan is for me to come over to the UK and have a few meetings with FNL supporters. So, if you are interested in holding an event where we can get a few supporters together, I will be very happy to join you and answer any questions you might have about our work in Romania.***

***As Christmas is coming very soon, my very best wishes go to you all with sincere thanks for all your support over the years.***

***Merry Christmas and a very happy New Year!***

***Marius Istrate  
Project director***