



PHOTOS BY RAY McNALLY



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DID YOU KNOW...?

- Since Lift the Children was founded in 1998, we have built strong partnerships with 10 Romanian organizations located throughout the country. Together with these partners, we have assisted more than 2,000 children through direct program services. We have provided \$1.2 million in financial support to our partners and programs in addition to sharing knowledge of best practices with them in order to build their organizational capacity. We have delivered training on a range of subjects to more than 300 doctors, social workers, hospital personnel, nurses, nongovernmental organization staff, health educators, police officers and other professionals who interact with vulnerable children and families, indirectly affecting the lives of many more.
- If you are 70 1/2 or older, you can make tax free donations to charity of up to \$100,000 from your Individual Retirement Account through December 31, 2007, under the Pension Protection Act of 2006. You won't receive a tax deduction for your gift, but you also don't have to include the contribution in your gross income for the year. If you'd like to donate to Lift the Children under this special opportunity, please check with your tax advisor.
- Ray McNally, chairman of the CAP Center board of directors, has put together a professional slide show (with music) of his visit to our Romanian programs. It includes the beautiful photos above. If you'd like to tell your friends, church or community group about Lift the Chil-

dren, please contact us at (916) 244-1929 for a free DVD of this 4-minute show. We'll also be happy to schedule a Lift the Children speaker for your event.

- Thanks in part to the highly successful Sacramento training of our Romanian partners in 2005, Lift the Children has qualified with a high score as a Hosting Organization for the World Learning Community Connections Program. The Community Connections Program coordinates educational exchange programs in the U.S. for professionals from former Soviet nations. We can now bid on a three-week training and exchange program in 2008 for professionals working in child abuse prevention. If you're interested in signing up as a host family for this program, please let us know.

Lift the Children promotes the basic human right of children to be loved and to live in safety and dignity.

PROGRAM UPDATE: NEW DIRECTIONS

As older youth in Romanian programs begin to "age out," we expect *some* program budgets to decline over the next three years. Meanwhile, Lift the Children is exploring other regions of global need, with an eye toward diverting available funding to new program development.

CAP Center CEO Sheila Anderson and Lift the Children Deputy Director Katie Smith recently returned from Guatemala, where they met with UNICEF, government officials, and small nonprofit agencies to learn about the problems and needs of children and families. Thirty-five years of violent civil war, grinding poverty, and a corrupt, unregulated system of international adoption have jeopardized the lives of tens of thousands of indigenous children and families. With its "wild west" style of adoption coming to an end in December of this year, Guatemala has found a partial solution in foster care, and is beginning the process of bringing children out of institutions and into families.

As in Romania, the Guatemalan government presently lacks the capacity to fund and oversee child protection and family strengthening programs, relying instead on a very limited number of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to develop new policies and innovative programs. As Lift the Children learns more about the situation

in Guatemala, we hope to contribute our expertise and financial assistance toward the development of support systems that will keep families together and children safe.



Across Romania, children with special needs have always been the first to be abused or abandoned. Until late 2004, many children were hidden away in horrific institutions or kept locked inside homes because parents were too ashamed to show them in public. But with a USAID grant and help from Lift the Children to rescue 38 children from conditions of neglect and abuse in one institution, Lift partner Fundatia Inocenti began the incredibly challenging work of bringing these children into families and back to life.

The logistics of the project were vast. Merely transporting each child by car from the institution to group and foster homes was a huge challenge requiring three people—one to drive and two to hold the child—one child at a time.

This past May we visited a new outreach "kindergarten" program designed for special needs children aged 3-18 who have never attended school. It was amazing to watch simple play activities as children made connections between cause and effect

or sound and touch under the guidance of one psychologist, volunteers, and mothers. In another village, where residents typically labor in their fields with horse-drawn wooden plows, foster moms met in a donated house to guide their special needs children as they manipulated new objects.

Although conditions in these programs would be considered primitive by Western standards, the benefit of social interaction and stimulation far outweighs the lack of sophisticated equipment. Each new positive experience helps restore brain connections that were lost under conditions of severe neglect and abuse.

Three years after initiating the rescue of children with special needs, Fundatia Inocenti has more than doubled the number of assisted children, including those in their natural families and children living in group and foster homes. Last May, Fundatia Inocenti organized the first Special Olympics in Romania. The event captured the attention and support of the entire community, with more than 200 children and families participating.

We applaud the patience, ingenuity, and dedication of Fundatia Inocenti staff for bringing children out from behind closed doors and into the larger world.

