



CASA MEA NEWS

Fall 2007 Greetings from Casa Mea:

From Our Family to Yours ... Exciting News!

Our Family is Growing!



In May, 2007, three beautiful children, siblings from the same family, joined our Casa Mea family here in Prejmer, Romania. We are delighted to introduce them to you.

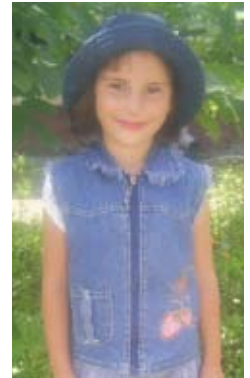


Amalia, the eldest, celebrated her 8th birthday with us on August 3rd. We honored her with a traditional Romanian birthday party, possibly the first she has ever celebrated this way. Friends were invited and a delicious Romanian dinner was served, complete with cake and birthday songs in Romanian and English. She enjoyed opening her gifts and sharing them with all the children. Amalia loves to read

books, put together puzzles, and draw or color at her leisure. Her passion is playing music and dancing like a Princess Ballerina. She also loves to play school and direct the activities of the other children, while playing house and other make-believe games. She eagerly comforts the littler ones with her tender embrace.

Maria, age 6, compassionately gives of herself to others. She especially enjoys doting on Julia by combing her hair, playing with dolls together, and teaching her tumbling and other gymnastic feats. Maria brings a ray of sunshine to our family with

her cheerleading enthusiasm, as she engages all the children in songs and games. Maria loves to paint and draw. She also truly enjoys being helpful, with a favorite activity of working in the garden: she loves to pull the weeds to feed to our neighbor's pigs! Her language skills are excellent; after only a few months here, Maria has learned English — with a Texas accent, no less!



Octavian (*Tavi for short*) is 3 — only nine days older than Julia, but already as big as a 4-year old. He is a very handsome and active little boy. He loves to play in the dirt with his trucks and cars, and is always building new roads and mud bridges with his creative imagination. Octavian has a voracious appetite for life and for food! He is an explorer, adventurer, and daring individual. He also is very loving and affectionate; ready to give or receive a hug at any moment.

Julia, age 3, enjoys the attention of her new family members, although she was overwhelmed when they first arrived. She has thrived in this new environment, as the other children teach her to jump, dance, balance on a beam, and play new games. Her language skills in both Romanian and English have soared since our Casa Mea family has grown.

Her favorite activities are washing dishes, playing with her dolls, and cleaning her doll house. Julia loves to “read” her books, chat, and meet new visitors. She loves to be cuddled and embraced, sharing her sweet disposition with everyone she meets.





Amalia celebrated her 8th birthday just a few months after coming to live at Casa Mea.

Becoming A Family

Our Casa Mea family has grown and we are delighted to share our stories with each of you. Blending our “family” of four is no small feat (challenge) and it is an opportunity to share with one another the love, the joy, the sorrow, and the challenges of daily life. *Watching the children engage with one another and with teachers, staff, and visitors is the greatest gift —* their tiny hands affectionately embrace everyone they meet. They are well-adjusted, talented, beautiful children. We are very grateful to have them here at Casa Mea, and are honored to be able to give them the gift of a stable home.

Our Supporters

This past spring, visitors from three separate U.S. Rotary Clubs spent a few days with us at Casa Mea.



Representatives from the **Rotary Club of Warner Center Sunrise**, the **Newbury Park Rotary Club**, and the **Rotary Club of Cambria Sunrise Centennial**, all from California, undertook a long, tiring flight to get here. We admire and respect their commitment and dedication.

Casa Mea is very grateful for the significant financial contributions made by the Cambria Sunrise Centennial Club and the Newbury Park Club, which enabled us to purchase some additional playground equipment, along with additional appliances and furnishings for our growing household. We are also very grateful for the continuing support of the **Los Olivos Rotary Club**, also of California.

Thank You, Monthly Donors!

We would also like to acknowledge our appreciation for several individual donors who have made monthly donations to Casa Mea. *Without all of our supporters, Casa Mea would not be home today to four beautiful children* who were otherwise facing abandonment, orphanage life, or separation from their siblings. **Thank you!**

From Our Founder, Jan Calos



As a child growing up in the U.S., I took so many things for granted. One of these things was that I would always have enough to eat ... and three meals, every single day.

When Amalia, Maria and Tavi first arrived, they would constantly ask me “What are we going to eat?” We would just finish lunch, and they would ask what we were going to have to eat next.

*At first, I was somewhat exasperated by this repetitive question ... until one day when I got it! They asked “What are we going to eat?” over and over again because where they came from, they did not know what or when they would eat next. Once I understood what was behind this simple repetitive question, it broke my heart. It seems the least we more fortunate people can do is to **make sure that every child everywhere has enough to eat.***

Save a Tree, Spread the Word

Please Reduce (let us know if we should send Casa Mea News to your email address instead of printing/ mailing to your postal address, or if we should remove you from the mailing list) ... **Recommend** (let us know about someone new to put on our mailing list) ... **Reuse** (pass Casa Mea News along to someone you know who might find it of interest) ... **or Recycle**. Thank you! To switch to email distribution or otherwise add to or change our mailing list, please email jan@casamea.org.

Progress = Hope

From a Supporter, Mary Tatone, on her Recent Visit

In **August 2007**, I visited my sister, Jan Calos, in Prejmer, Romania. I was amazed and pleasantly surprised to see the progress of the country of Romania and of Jan's project, **Casa Mea**.



I saw with my own eyes the incredible transformation of brick and mortar into a loving family home for children. For me, this progress equals hope — hope for the children of Romania who are struggling with their most basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing, not to mention a loving, nurturing environment in which to grow and expand their individual potential.

On **March 7, 2003**, Jan moved to Brasov, Romania with a hope, a dream, and a vision to create a loving family home for Romania's abandoned children.

Diligently, Jan set out to achieve this vision. Tenaciously she worked to fulfill all the requirements to make this dream a reality. She purchased land and a home in Prejmer (just northeast of Brasov and about 100 miles from the capital, Bucharest), to house her Casa Mea family of infants and children.

In **March of 2004**, I visited Jan at the Prejmer property. This consisted of a huge barn, more than an acre of



land, a garden and an orchard (with pears, apples, plums, grapes, and cherries),

plus a house in need of major renovations to comply with government regulations for housing children.

I vividly recall this first visit to Prejmer and the future home of Casa Mea. Jan excitedly showed me every nook and cranny of the property. At one point, she led me into the cow pen area (attached to the house — like all farms in Romania) and enthusiastically stated, "This will be the bunkhouse for future volunteers." I stood in shock, unable to envision the conversion of a cow pen into livable space for humans. Next, she took me to the

pig pens and proudly stated, "This will be the laundry facilities." Again I stood speechless, wondering how on earth a pig pen would ever be a space to wash and dry clothes. Then, we scrambled up into the attic and hay loft, where Jan proudly announced, "This is going to be the area for the staff and rooms for the children when they grow older."

Now, I was totally speechless. (Those who know me know that I am rarely if ever without words!) I simply walked along in amazement and shock as we continued to tour the rest of the house and Jan shared her vision with me. She could "see" the children sleeping, eating, and playing in every room in the house and on the property. *I could only see pig pens, cow barns, and a hay loft filled with hay.*

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Now, just three years later, the cow pen is a bunkhouse for volunteers, the pig pen is a laundry facility, and the hay loft is prepared to become a residence hall for older children and for staff.

Progress!

Casa Mea, as envisioned by Jan, is a loving family home for abandoned Romanian

children. The laughter of the little ones currently residing at Casa Mea can be heard from every room of the house. The children sing, dance, and play with carefree abandon, feeling safe and secure that their next meal will be there, hot and nutritious; that their beds will be warm and cozy at night; and that the love of Jan and all the care providers will flow generously to each of them.

As I held each child, I saw hope and joy in their eyes. I felt their warm embraces and I knew in my heart that these children are the fortunate ones. *These children have **Hope** for a bright and wonderful future, thanks to Jan's vision, commitment, and tireless efforts to create a loving home for children.*

I witnessed progress in the physical changes in the house at Prejmer and I saw progress in the country of Romania. The people themselves are more hopeful



after their entrance into the European Union, and now that their nightmares of the communist regime led by Ceausescu are over. The people of Romania have a renewed vigor and enthusiasm for a brighter future.

Yes, the electricity still goes off repeatedly during each day. The water is always off on Tuesdays, and the horses still clip-clop down the street pulling wagons of hay. The cows are led down the street each morning to the communal field for fresh grass and they return home each night with their cow bells ringing joyously around their necks. Huge storks return each night to roost in their rooftop nests, built on the chimneys of some of the neighborhood homes. Traffic still stops for sheep crossing the highway. However, I felt a renewed sense of hope for the progress the Romanian people are experiencing.

Most importantly, I felt a deep sense of pride for my sister Jan, for her commitment to the abandoned children of Romania and for her "vision" to create a warm, loving, family home and environment to raise these beautiful children. I felt hopeful for the abandoned children of Romania.

Her vision inspired me ... every step of the way. My wish is that each of you could see for yourselves the magnitude of the work Jan has done to make a difference in the lives of Julia, Octavian, Maria and Amalia — and the children yet to arrive at Casa Mea.

Progress has occurred at Casa Mea because of Jan ... and because of all of Casa Mea's supporters. There is now **hope for every child** residing at Casa Mea. I witnessed this progress myself.

Progress = Hope

Progress only happens when a group of committed individuals attempt to make a difference in the lives of others by generously giving of their time, talents, and/or their financial resources. Wouldn't you like to be one of those committed individuals?



To sponsor a Casa Mea child, finance a fundraising brochure, or add to our general funds:

- **Send a Check:** payable to Casa Mea, to 6705 Shadow Crest Drive, Plano, TX 75093
- **Contribute Online:** visit www.casamea.org and click on the "Make a Donation" button
- **Arrange Monthly Automatic E-Payments through your bank to:** Casa Mea, attn. Mel Clark, Treasurer, 6705 Shadow Crest Drive, Plano, TX 75093 (phone is 972.306.6705).

**No amount is too small.
Thank You So Much!**

How You Can Help Support Casa Mea

All contributions of funds, goods, and services to Casa Mea are tax-deductible, and will be recognized with appropriate documentation for your tax records. Please email jan@casamea.org with any questions about your contributions to Casa Mea.



Sponsor a Casa Mea Child

We continue to seek sponsorships to cover basic costs of living and care for Casa Mea's children, at \$250 a month.

Donate Your Time

We need volunteers for painting the house in Prejmer, inside and out. Email jan@casamea.org if you or a group are interested in volunteering.

Donate Supplies

We need donations of clothing, raincoats, shoes, and boots for our rapidly growing family (and rapidly growing children).

Our wish list includes:

- Sweaters, slippers, and bathrobes for all – Julia (3), Octavian (big 4-yr. old size), Maria (6) and Amalia (8)
- Winter boots – Octavian, Maria, and Amalia
- Rain coats and rain boots – Octavian, Maria, Amalia
- Dresses – Julia, Maria, Amalia
- Dress shoes – Maria
- Tights – Maria, Amalia
- Long underwear – Octavian
- Mittens, mittens, mittens! for all the children



Donations can be shipped to Casa Mea at 6705 Shadow Crest Drive, Plano, TX 75093; 972.306.6705. (An inventory slip for our records and your tax-deduction confirmation would be very helpful.)

Finance a new Casa Mea Brochure ...

Now that our vision is coming to life and there are more children at Casa Mea, we are seeking funds (or a printer) for a new fundraising brochure.

... or help mail the Casa Mea News

We need labor volunteers to stuff, seal and stamp the Casa Mea News four times a year (6-8 labor hours). (Casa Mea wishes to thank the volunteers from *Crystal D Creations* in Saint Paul, Minnesota for labeling, stuffing, sealing and stamping this issue.) To help with future issues of Casa Mea News, please email beth@casamea.org.