

CASA MEA NEWS

Spring 2005



WHERE EVERY CHILD IS LOVED & WANTED

NEWS FROM BRASOV

On January 12th, Julia celebrated her first birthday. In the traditional Romanian style she had a big bash where a good time was had by all. At one year of age, Julia is beginning to feed herself, untie her shoes, and say "mama" and "dada." However, in Romanian "dada" means "yes yes." Julia is most definitely not saying "yes yes" when she says "dada." Julia is your typical female with a mind of her own and she is not hesitant to let you know exactly what she thinks! Even though she is not crawling or walking, she still manages to get into the kitchen cupboards. In short, she is a little doll whom everyone loves dearly.

Because Brasov was cold and covered in snow most of the winter, work on the house in Prejmer practically came to a halt. But it did not stop Julia from getting around! Sledding was one of her favorite activities. Nor did the cold and snow stop Murray. Brian Murray is an English gentleman who retired to Brasov and who volunteers at Casa Mea. On the coldest and snowiest days, Murray could be found working in the barn in Prejmer. Murray's friend, Wendy Justice, arrived on Valentine's Day just in time to help with Julia! Wendy is volunteering with Casa Mea for three months. Wendy is the mother of five so her expertise with children is greatly appreciated.



NEWS FROM USA

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU! Thank you to all of you who helped make our fall fund raisers in Dallas, Seattle, Minneapolis and St. Paul successful: thank you to those who contributed financially and those who donated their time, effort, and items for the silent auctions.

VOLUNTEERS' VIEWS



By Wendy Justice

When I first met Jan Calos in the summer of 2004, I was in Brasov, Romania volunteering at a hospice. On hearing about Jan's work with Casa Mea, the purchase of a house in Prejmer, and her success in getting her first abandoned baby, Julia, out of the orphanage, I wanted to meet her and find out more.

On meeting Jan, I was struck by her determination and courage taking on such a big project—an old house being renovated to give twelve babies/children from an orphanage environment love, security, a sense of belonging—a HOME. I got to know Julia and could see how much Jan loved her and wanted the best for this little one. As a mum myself, I felt drawn to offer my help to Jan because of the compassion I felt in my heart and to aid her in her tireless work in my own small way.

At the moment I take care of Julia while Jan attends meetings regarding future developments at Casa Mea and visits other babies at the orphanage. She hopes another baby will be 'out' and in her care in the not too distant future.

I have great admiration for Jan and what Casa Mea is trying to achieve.

By Murray

I came to work at Casa Mea this January because the challenge of the variety of work to be done fascinated me. With so many interesting projects to be tackled it was most frustrating to be suddenly hit by the raw chill of winter. This made it impossible to work at the house for more than a couple of hours before frozen fingers, ears, and nose forced a 'down tools' situation and it was dangerous to use power tools which required holding in hands that had lost their feeling.



Fortunately for me, by the time I joined in the work at the house a lot of basic preparation work had been completed and the building had started to take shape. Knowing that there are teams of volunteers with skills and muscle due to arrive in the spring, it is a priority to prepare facilities to accommodate them. Due to the necessity of conserving funds, all timber used to make things is being reclaimed from rough hewn wood which was used for building shuttering. The temptation to burn it on occasions to extract the warmth is almost overwhelming.

The project is, from an engineering point of view, at that lovely interesting stage where everything is about ready to take off. Using little imagination, I can hear the babies yelling, see children charging about and laughing, smell the kitchen, hear the cook moaning (why do cooks enjoy a good moan?) and us having a good laugh getting five year olds to tread grapes to make the wine.

I am thankful for the opportunity to participate in this worthwhile project.

YOU CAN HELP

Our goal is to open the house this fall. Please help us to meet our goal! You can help us meet our goal by doing any of the following:

We need funding to replace the roof and water pipes and install a new septic system and central heating unit.

We need volunteer work teams to come to Romania for a week or two this summer to help with the renovations.

We need volunteers to host fund raising parties for Casa Mea.

We need volunteers to search and apply for grants.

We need volunteers to search and apply for corporate and civic sources of funding.

We need volunteers to rewrite and print Casa Mea's brochure.

Any help you can give us is always greatly appreciated!

CONTACT US

Casa Mea USA
6705 Shadow Crest Drive
Plano, TX 75093
USA
972 306 6705
or
651 455 0384

Casa Mea Romania
B-dul 15 Noiembrie
Nr. 75, Sc. A, Ap.10
Brasov 500101
Romania
jan@casamea.org
40 788 403 966

THANK YOU

CASA MEA NEWS

Summer 2005



WHERE EVERY CHILD IS LOVED & WANTED

NEWS FROM BRASOV

GROWING, GROWING, GROWING!!!

Julia continues to grow by leaps and bounds. She is now crawling and into everything. Julia loves to play outdoors and has developed a real taste for garden dirt and pebbles! When it comes to real food, stand back...she stabs it with her fork, waves it in the air triumphantly, and then, if we are lucky, it makes its way to her mouth! She is very possessive of her food and will not allow anyone to touch her food, plate, or fork. All hands off please!



The house in Prejmer is also growing and beginning to take shape. This portion of the house was formerly the stalls for the cows and pigs with a hay loft above the stalls. It will be a laundry room and a bunk house for volunteers with a small apartment above for off duty staff.



Now we are currently concentrating on completing the main section of the house so that it will be livable this winter. We still have much to do to accomplish this and need your help. There are a number of ways in which you can help. One way is by making a donation. Another is to come to Romania to donate your time and sweat! The garden is growing, growing, growing so if you do come there will be plenty of fresh garden vegetables to savor, in addition to all the fruit from our apple, pear and plum trees! Hope to see you in Romania soon!

NEWS FROM USA

GROWING, GROWING, GROWING!!!

Casa Mea's Board of Directors has grown from four to six! We are pleased to announce our new Directors:

Elizabeth St. Angelo: In the 1970's, Elizabeth co-founded Homeward Bound, Inc., a residential home for severely handicapped children. She served as president of the parents group and was on the Board of Directors for a number of years. She brings a wealth of knowledge to Casa Mea in starting and running a home for children. Elizabeth joins Casa Mea as Vice President.

Toni Malanaphy-Sorg: Toni is President, CEO, and co-founder of Alliant Consulting, Inc. She is a dynamic business management consultant with over 30 years of experience. Her expertise is the design and implementation of major reorganizations involving multiple disciplines and functions. Her extensive business background is invaluable to Casa Mea.

John Huebsch: Since 1992, John has been the Executive Director of Common Hope, a not-for-profit organization established by his family in 1986 to serve the poor in Guatemala. Common Hope serves 8000 people in the areas of education, health care, housing, and family development and has an annual budget of over 4 million dollars. Casa Mea is pleased to have someone with John's years of experience on its Board.

Our current Directors are:

Sheila Tatone: For 10 years, Sheila owned a very successful business. Not only does Sheila have business experience, she has extensive volunteer experience including Girls Scouts, City Council, and the local Chamber of Commerce. She was also a founding member of her city's festival, Star City Days, and was the Chair for several years. Sheila brings her organizational skills and knowledge of volunteerism to Casa Mea. She serves as President of the Board of Directors.

Melanie Clark: Melanie, a CPA & CMA, is the Chief Financial Officer of seven restaurant companies and is responsible for overseeing all financial aspects of all these companies, including accounts payable, payroll, general ledger, financial statements, and tax reporting for sales of over \$30 million annually. Melanie contributes more than 20 years of her financial expertise to Casa Mea by serving as its treasurer.

Jan Calos: Jan is the Founder & Executive Director of Casa Mea. As a registered nurse with a pediatric nurse practitioner certificate and a master's in maternal and child health she brings to Casa Mea her knowledge of children's growth and development and the vision that every child should be loved and wanted. As a trial attorney, she can be a real advocate for these abandoned children. She serves as Casa Mea's secretary.

Unfortunately, Margi Henning resigned as President of the Board to concentrate all her efforts on managing her horse ranch in Texas. Although we will miss Margi as President, she has promised to stay active to a lesser degree in Casa Mea. Casa Mea would like to thank Margi for all of her hard work on its behalf and for her continuing support.

Mark your calendars for October 1, 2005. To find out why, read on!

VOLUNTEER'S VIEW by Kevin Calos

Casa Mea
Presents
BeatleMania Now – A Beatle Tribute Band

On Saturday, October 1, 2005 at 7:30 pm at the Auditorium Theatre located at 885 East Main Street in Rochester, New York the BeatleMania Now group will perform. The show is presented by Casa Mea and all net proceeds will be donated to Casa Mea.

Hi, I'm Kevin Calos and have been a supporter of Casa Mea since its inception. I've spent a bit of time trying to figure out how I can help support Casa Mea financially. Well, here is my story.

I attended a fundraiser in my small hometown located in western New York State. The event was to support a local volunteer fire department. The group performing was BeatleMania Now. The theater was packed; people were rocking and rolling, singing and clapping. The place was pandemonium and I loved it! Apparently plenty of others felt the same way. This was the third straight year of a sell out for the same event by the same BeatleMania Now in this small town at the same old movie theater.

I walked out and thought to myself what a great event for Casa Mea. I've got to find a theater in another town and do this. A year later I attended a show at the Auditorium Theatre in Rochester, New York some 60 miles from my hometown. The moment I walked in I knew this was the place for the Casa Mea presentation of BeatleMania Now. The theatre houses several Broadway plays like The Lion King, Peter Pan and Evita and a variety of other shows like Bill Cosby and Lord of the Dance just to name a few.

I contacted the BeatleMania Now group and got a couple of dates from them. I then contacted the Auditorium Theatre and got a date from them. I was on my way. The Theatre will take care of the advertising with newspapers, community publications and several local radio stations. I will have tickets available for the radio stations to give away to listeners. Ticketmaster will have tickets on sale via telephone and the Internet. Tickets will also be available at the Theatre's box office, which is open every day.

The Theatre seats 2,464 in three distinct areas. Ticket pricing is aligned with the seating. Orchestra seats are \$27.50, Mezzanine seats are \$24.50 and Balcony seats are \$22.50.

Upon entering the Auditorium everyone will receive a Casa Mea brochure. The show is 2 hours with a 20-minute intermission. During the intermission just before the show starts again, we will make an announcement about Casa Mea and all the good work it is accomplishing. There will also be a slide presentation with Casa Mea scenes during the announcement. In the lobby, a table will be set up and we will be accepting donations.

There is still much to be done to get ready for the big night. Join us if you can. If you can't make it, buy a ticket and donate it back to Casa Mea. Thanks.

YOU CAN HELP

CONTRIBUTIONS ARE NOT GROWING, GROWING, GROWING!!!

In fact, contributions are at an all time low. We are so desperately in need of your help. Wouldn't you like to make a difference in the lives of some of Romania's abandoned infants? If so, you can

MAKE A DONATION

SPONSOR JULIA

SPONSOR A PROJECT

VOLUNTEER IN ROMANIA THIS SUMMER

HOST A FUND RAISER

Will you please help? Any help you can give us is always greatly appreciated!

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WHERE EVERY CHILD IS LOVED & WANTED

Fall 2005



JULIA'S STORY

Today Julia is a healthy happy toddler. She wakes up every morning smiling and smiles constantly throughout the day. All who meet her are instantly taken in by her smile and her charm. If you pick her up, she is likely to lay her head on your shoulder and snuggle in for a good cuddle. She is perfectly content to play by herself and more often than not you will find her singing away at the top of her lungs. Julia loves to eat and will do a little jig as soon as she sees the food coming. Would you believe she prefers spicy foods to sweet foods? To her, cookies are just toys to play with. But potato chips are another matter! She practically inhales them.

Julia was not always healthy and happy. For the first five months that she was in the infant orphanage, she did not smile. She did not sing or play or cuddle. All she did day after day was lie on her back in her crib. At five months, she could not lie on her tummy. She could not roll over. She could not hold her bottle or eat from a spoon. She did not even make sounds. Unfortunately, Julia's stay in the orphanage was like that of Catalin's and many other babies confined there.



CATALIN'S STORY

Catalin arrived at the infant orphanage almost a year ago at the age of 2 weeks. Like Julia, Catalin was underweight and very sick. He spent day after day on his back in his crib. He cried almost constantly. This is Catalin at 6 months of age. It may appear that Catalin has a fat little tummy but those are just several rags underneath his sleeper. The rags were his diaper for the day! Obviously, Catalin was in dire need of a home where he would have lots of love and attention.

Casa Mea wanted to give Catalin such a home where he would thrive as Julia has. But Catalin did not get such a home. Today he is not a happy healthy toddler. His story does not have a happy ending as Julia's does. Although Casa Mea made its first of many requests to get Catalin out of the orphanage when he was a month old, these requests were ignored. Instead, the authorities here simply asked

when the house in Prejmer would be ready. The obvious but unstated answer is that Casa Mea will get no more children until the house is completely renovated.

YOU CAN HELP

We are trying desperately to complete the house so that we can give 10 to 12 unwanted and unloved children like Julia and Catalin a home where they will never feel unwanted or unloved again. We want to give them a home where they will grow and thrive and develop into happy, well adjusted children. Although many of you have helped us in the past to achieve this goal, the house is still not completed and we still need your financial help. We need approximately \$75,000 to complete all the renovations. This amount includes a new roof, new thermopane windows, and a central heating system. We hope that you can find it within your heart to continue to help us. However, we do realize that at this time many people in the gulf coast area of the US are also in need of your help. Whatever you can do for either of these victims, we would be eternally grateful.

Now, if you choose to donate to Casa Mea, it is so simple and easy. To make a credit card donation, simply go to Casa Mea's web site at www.casamea.org and click on "donate now." Follow the easy instructions and Casa Mea will receive your donation immediately!

VOLUNTEER'S VIEW by Natalie Trewinnard, an 18 year old English woman.

I have been to Romania 3 times with my Church's charity, C.R.Y (Care and Relief for the Young). Through our first visit in the summer of 2003, I met Jan who showed us around the infant orphanage in Brasov, where I fell in love with the little children. My heart goes out to those little ones and I think about them often; they all need love and care. So when I heard of Jan's plans for Casa Mea I wanted to do all I could to help. There is a great need for this work.



Naturally, I went to Casa Mea wanting to make a big difference straight away, but I soon found out that its the little jobs that are often the most useful; the jobs that would probably be left to the last minute but needed to be done. I worked in the garden mostly in the summer of 2004 and broke up concrete for floor foundations. We came back at Easter 2005 with a whole group from our Church. This time we brought a work force of our own! I de-tiled a bathroom with a chisel and hammer at the expense of my wrist for a few days. We had an electrician with us who wired up part of the house. I also aided in carpentry for a wood box and a compost bin while the rest of the work team sanded old paint off the walls. The work at Casa Mea is as hard or as easy as you want to make it. I just wish I could have been there for longer and had more useful skills.

My experience in volunteering has had a positive impact on me. It has given me the opportunity to serve where there is no glamour but the heart of people to touch. I was looking ahead to the brilliant work that Casa Mea will achieve and I felt privileged to be involved in this new movement to help the unloved children because that is all they really need and I know they will receive it at Casa Mea.

CONTACT US

Casa Mea USA
6705 Shadow Crest Drive
Plano, TX 75093
USA
972 306 6705 or
651 455 0384
www.casamea.org

Casa Mea Romania
Str. Broastei
Nr. 354
Prejmer 507165
Romania
jan@casamea.org
40 788 403 966

THANK YOU!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS



*FROM ALL OF US AT CASA MEA
TO ALL OF YOU*

THE PERFECT GIFT: LOVE

At this time of year we are all busy shopping for that perfect gift for that someone special in our lives. What is the perfect gift you can give or receive?

Is it one more dress, or that digital camera, or perhaps the laptop you didn't get last year, or the ring you have had your eye on for so long? Is it one more thing? Do we need one more thing when we already have so much? Our three or four bedroom homes are overflowing with things, our garages have at least one car if not two, and our dining room tables are buckling under the weight of all the food. We have so much and this holiday season we will give and receive even more stuff. What is it you want to give and receive this holiday season? More things?

Or the perfect gift? What is the perfect gift?

To the children at the orphanage the "perfect gift" this holiday season is a piece of fruit or a sweet. It breaks my heart to think that that is all they want or can expect to receive. A piece of fruit or a sweet is something most of us would take for granted.

The children in the orphanage have no home, no family, no one to love them. They have learned not to hope for a home with a loving family. They know they are unwanted children.

The perfect gift we can give these children is a loving home. Julia, Casa Mea's first abandoned baby, now has a home and lots of love. Because of this love, she is now healthy and growing and developing as a normal toddler. Without this love, she would not have flourished. So many more children need a home where they are loved and cherished just as Julia is.

UNICEF reports that more than 9,000 children a year are abandoned in Romania's maternity wards or pediatric hospitals. According to the European Union, 37,000 children remain in institutions. Nearly 49,000 more live in non-permanent settings. An unknown number of children live on the streets.

If you want to give these children more than a piece of fruit or a sweet, if you want to give them a loving home, then please give a donation to Casa Mea in your name or for that special someone in your life. Your donation is your gift of love. Your donation will enable us to continue our building project so that more children will receive the perfect gift: love.

Thank you.

Jan Calos, Founder & Executive Director

Casa Mea USA
6705 Shadow Crest Drive
Plano, TX 75093
USA
972 306 6705



Casa Mea Romania
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Nr. 354
Prejmer 507165
Romania
www.casamea.org
jan@casamea.org
40 268 362 746