

CASA MEA NEWS



Fall 2008 Greetings from Casa Mea

We keep growing...



Casa Mea continues to grow! Our newest arrival is **Vlad**, who was 7 years old on August 21st. He was abandoned at birth. His birth certificate is blank where the names of his mother and father should be. **Vlad** was raised by his elderly paternal grandfather who recently died, leaving Vlad all alone in this world. Vlad arrived at **Casa Mea** with only the clothes on his back. He had no other clothes nor toys he could call his own. Thanks to all of our generous donors, **Vlad** soon had toys (cars and balls are his favorites) and a dresser full of clothes, including a new baseball cap! **Octavian** is especially excited to have another boy to play with, but the girls have taken **Vlad** under their wing and are smothering him with their attention!

Going...

Going are our wonderful leisurely days of summer! Soon all the children will return to school. Like children everywhere, they are glad to be returning to school but they are also sad to see their lazy days come to an end.

Vlad's first day at Casa Mea



Play - dough picnic and slumber party!

This summer they had a multitude of fun experiences thanks to [Bridget](#) and [Susan](#), our volunteers.

The children experienced a slumber party in the bunk house, being princesses for a day, a play-dough picnic, an excursion to [Brasov](#) for a Happy Meal at McDonalds, an indoor picnic, and a chance to wear a real bicycle helmet.



The girls were Princesses for a day



Octavian is ready to ride with this real bicycle helmet



Amalia is ready to blow the candles!



Last, but not least, [Amalia](#) celebrated her 9th birthday with us this year on August 3rd.



Maria, Octavian, Cristina, Julia and Amalia are dressed for the "City"



Susan and Bridget, our volunteers, also took the children to an excursion to Brasov. And the fun continued with an indoor picnic.



The children enjoyed an In door picnic

Gone is the storage shed...

Gone is our old storage shed and outhouse. Judy and David, volunteers from the UK, knocked down the building and outhouse before it totally collapsed and hurt one of the children or staff at Casa Mea.

(Talk about a dirty job for dedicated volunteers!) Hopefully by next summer the space will be our new covered patio, complete with a barbecue grill!

Any volunteers interested in signing up for that project?



Judy and David, volunteers from the UK.

Gone...

Gone is **Tracy**, our new friend. **Tracy** is a wonderful woman from **Colorado** who started **One Doll**. She visited us this summer and was a hit with all of us. **One Doll** is a charity which makes and distributes dolls around the world to children in need. These soft, handmade, cuddly dolls bring joy to every child, including the children at **Casa Mea**. **Tracy** gave one of her dolls to each of the children at **Casa Mea**. As you can see, the dolls were and still are a favorite with our girls. Although **Tracy** is gone, she will be fondly remembered by us through her beautiful dolls.



Cristina's new doll, Anya

Julia's new doll,
Goldilocks



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If you have specific questions regarding how you can help, please call us at 972.306. 6705 or email us at jan@casamea.org.

Please note that all contributions to Casa Mea are tax-deductible and are recognized with documentation appropriate for your tax records.

Thank You!

Thanks to all of you who with your support and donations have enabled **Casa Mea** to continue to accept children such as Vlad into our family and to all of you who have enriched our lives this summer. We all have choices, even in the darkest of hours. **We** can choose to turn toward hate or we can choose to turn toward love and forgiveness.

Again thanks to those of you who chose love.



CASA MEA NEWS

Spring 2008 Greetings from Casa Mea

Spring and hope arrive in Prejmer



All of us at **Casa Mea** are anxiously awaiting spring. The children have enjoyed the winter, sledding and building snowmen. However, like everyone else, they are now ready for the warmer weather, longer days, and school vacation. Their Easter bunny is out of hibernation and they are looking forward to dyeing Easter eggs. In Romania, we dye the eggs a deep, bright red!

Julia is dusting off her tricycle, Amalia and Maria are practicing jumping rope in the morning before school, and Octavian is busy splashing in every mud puddle.



Julia is getting ready for new adventures!



Maria and Amalia are taking the jumping exercise very seriously!

Thank you to this year's volunteers

A big heartfelt thank you to: **Ryan Hoad** who has been instrumental in programming the US Casa Mea office computer.

Bridget Wickert who is the information technology specialist for the Casa Mea Romanian office and the children's favorite play therapist.



Ryan Hoad



Bridget Wickert and Maria

Susan Maccoy who is the children's other mother and errand runner par excellence.

Jason Whitehead who is a consistent male figure for the children and a great all around handyman.

(Even the staff now think of "honey do jobs" for Jason!)



Jason and the children

And a belated thank you to all of you who donated clothes, scarves, mittens, hats and boots for the children this winter!

Thank you to our supporters

Another big heartfelt thank you to all of you who have contributed financially to Casa Mea. With your funds, this winter we converted the old hayloft into an apartment for long term volunteers. It now has a large great room, a bath, a kitchen, and a large storage area.



Old hayloft



New apartment for long term volunteers

For the time being, this concludes the renovations to the main house. As the children grow and need more space, we will eventually complete the renovations to the attic.

Julia & Octavian celebrate their 4th birthdays

In January, **Julia** and **Octavian** celebrated their 4th birthdays with friends and family. Julia was so excited to receive her first doctor's kit from volunteers **Susan** and **Bridget**. She and the other girls played "doctor" all afternoon.



Octavian, on the other hand, was more interested in his bag of candy than any of his gifts. He sat by himself in the corner and promptly ate the whole bag all by himself!

Octavian enjoyed his bag of candy! While the girls played "Doctor" all afternoon.



Susan Maccoby and Julia.

Save a Tree, Spread the Word!

Please Reduce (let us know if we should change you to email distribution or remove you from our mailing list), **Recommend** (let us know about someone new to put on the 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 suggest other additions/changes to our mailing list, please email jan@casamea.org.



The year ahead for Casa Mea

With your continued support, the future renovation projects for this year include shoring up the barn to make an in-door sports arena, painting the outside of the house, replacing the entrance gate, and tearing down a dilapidated out building before it comes crashing down on one of us!

With your funds, we will also be able to provide for the four children who now call **Casa Mea home**. Since Romania joined the EU in January of 2007, prices are rising and there is every indication that this will continue until wages and prices are comparable to other EU countries. For Romania, this is a blessing and a curse. Many people who were barely surviving before are now struggling to stay alive. Unfortunately, some don't.

Recently, the parents of 6 children died from drinking an unknown substance from the local dumpster.

As prices rise for basic necessities such as gas, electricity, water, and food, **Casa Mea** more than ever needs your support for its children. Would you like to be a **Casa Mea** Child Sponsor? You can do this by contributing on a monthly basis to one of our children. Your funds will be used for this particular child. In exchange, we will keep you informed of this child's progress and life here in Prejmer.

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Summer 2008 Greetings from Casa Mea

Join us in celebration of...



Our newest arrival

Cristina is the newest addition to our **Casa Mea** Family! Although she is only four years old, **Cristina** has suffered from severe neglect for most of her young life. Finally when her mother abandoned her last winter in a restaurant, she was temporarily placed in a shelter until she found her way to **Casa Mea** permanently.

When **Cristina** arrived at **Casa Mea**, she was just learning to talk and walk. She came with only a grocery bag which contained all of her worldly possessions. Her only toys were a plastic doll with a broken leg and a small coloring book with every picture already colored. Despite all of **Cristina's** neglect and misfortunes, she is a very sweet and pleasant little girl. We are all happy to have her with us.



Cristina on her first day at Casa Mea

Our new swing set



Thanks to a very generous donation from the **Rotary Club of Cambria Centennial Sunrise of Cambria, California**, the children of **Casa Mea** now have a new swing set to play on. So far they have spent countless hours on the swings and climbing on the monkey bars and "rock" wall.

Our new trampoline

Thanks to a generous donation from the [Newbury Park Rotary Club in California](#), the children now have a trampoline to burn off all their excess energy! [Amalia](#) can already do many tricks on the trampoline while [Octavian](#) enjoys just bouncing for joy!



[Octavian on the trampoline](#)

Maria's birthday



[Maria's 7th Birthday](#)

In April, [Maria](#) celebrated her 7th birthday with us. Because of all of you who donated gifts, [Maria's](#) birthday party was a huge success. She had a new dress, new lip gloss, new nail polish, and a new purse to name just a few of her gifts. What more could a woman want? She was truly over the top! And as you can see, truly beautiful!



The IRS

Who would ever expect that we would be celebrating an Internal Revenue Service ruling. But we are! Thanks to [Melanie Clark, our U.S. accountant and CPA](#), **Casa Mea** has passed it's five year public charity advance ruling status as defined under IRS section 170 (b) (1) (A) (vi). Up until this recent ruling, we had a temporary public charity ruling for a 5 year period. Now our public charity ruling is permanent. This means that all of your current and future contributions will continue to be tax deductible as long as **Casa Mea** is in existence.

Those who give

We all have something to give. Not all of us are the Bill Gates or Warren Buffets of the world with endless fortunes to give. Nevertheless, we all have something unique to give.

Not all of us can leave our friends, family, and homes to live in a developing country. Nevertheless, we all have something unique to give.

The **British Women living in Cambria**, California give their knitting. They have given hand knit hats, mittens, scarves, and sweaters to the children of **Casa Mea** and to many other children throughout the world. They give a very unique gift of themselves!



British Women of Cambria, California



Mary Jo (the pretty blonde)

Mary Jo opened her lovely home to hold several cocktail parties for the benefit of **Casa Mea** last summer. She is a terrific hostess and cook. She gave a very unique gift of herself!

Rose, a 13 year old girl, made beautiful bracelets and sold them for the benefit of **Casa Mea**. She gave a truly unique gift of herself, a teenager helping children.



Rose and a detail of her handmade bracelets



The 4 to 6 year old children of **Emmanuel Baptist Church** in Cornwall, **England** made cookies and sold them after their church service. They sent their entire profit to **Casa Mea**! They gave an unique gift, children helping children.

Bryan with the children of Emmanuel Baptist Church



Susan had a dinner party for **Casa Mea** only a few weeks after her hip replacement surgery. It was a lovely evening with good food and company. She gave an unique gift of herself despite her painful hip.



Susan's Dinner Party

And our friends **Matthew & Daniel in England** continue to give to **Casa Mea** from their hard earned allowance. Another unique gift, children helping children.

Yes, we all have something unique and special to give. We encourage you to give your unique and special gifts to **Casa Mea**. It doesn't matter what you give. All that really matters is that you give. **Casa Mea** hopes that you will reach out and give to those less fortunate than yourself. As the saying goes, "the more we give, the more we receive."

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Winter 2008 Holidays greetings from Casa Mea

Happy Holidays



Gift giving



Once again the holiday season is upon us. It is a joyous time for celebrating, gathering together with friends and family, and for giving gifts. The **children** of **Casa Mea** are already so excited for Santa to arrive and bring their Christmas gifts. But the children are also excited to give their hand made gifts which they have worked so hard on.

The legend of Saint Nicholas

One legend which explains the modern day origin of giving gifts dates back to the days of [Saint Nicholas](#). This legend tells of a father with three daughters. The father was very poor and could not afford to pay for a dowry for each of his daughters. As a result, he planned to sell them.

To save the daughters from being sold by their father, [Saint Nicholas](#) threw three bags of gold coins down their chimney. One bag landed in a pair of stockings hung by the fire to dry. Another bag landed in a pair of shoes left by the hearth and the last bag of gold landed under a log next to the fireplace.

This is just one story of how gift giving during the holiday season began and ever since gifts have been left in the shoes of the children on the feast of [Saint Nicholas](#), or in the stockings hung by the fire, or under the Christmas tree by Santa Claus.

Regardless of the true origins of gift giving during the holidays, we all know that it is the meaning of gift giving which is important. The meaning of any gift is in what it represents.

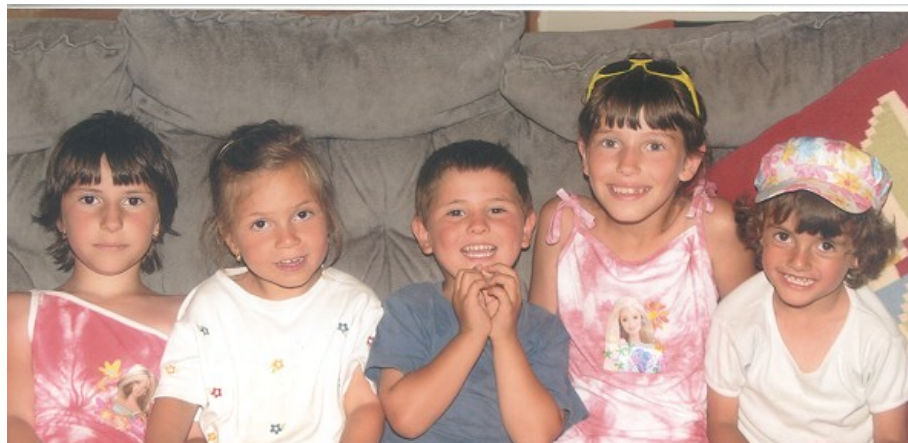


Gift giving represents an expression of the giver's love, friendship, and regard for the recipient. Therefore, the gift may be very simple because any gift given from the heart fosters love and friendship. Gift giving is a reflection of the true spirit of the holidays: [LOVE](#).



Our gift to you

Casa Mea's gifts to all of you are very simple. They are only two words. But these gifts come from our hearts and we hope these gifts let you know we love you and value our friendship with all of you. Our gifts to you are the following **THANK YOUs**.



THANK YOU to all of you who visited us at **Casa Mea** this year and graced us with your presence.

THANK YOU to all of you who volunteered for **Casa Mea** this year and graced us with your hard labor.

THANK YOU to all of you who supported **Casa Mea** financially and graced us with the ability to continue on.

THANK YOU to all of you who supported **Casa Mea** through your emotional support and graced us with your encouragement.

THANK YOU to all of you who donated food, clothing, and other supplies and graced us with your generosity.

OUR WISH FOR YOU

From our hearts, we wish you a very happy, healthy, and prosperous **NEW YEAR**.



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A special gift for Ivy

Ivy and her lovely friends organized a garage sale for the benefit of **Casa Mea**.

A big **Thank You** to Ivy and all the people who collaborated and made the garage sale a big success.

At the garage sale



Ivy, top left in the above photograph, donated her time and love to Casa Mea



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