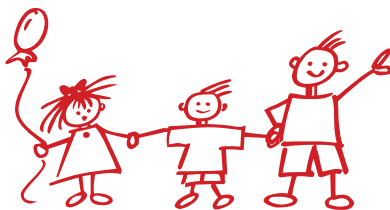


CASA MEA NEWS

Fall 2009



New arrivals!

**Casa Mea
continues
to grow and
provide more
abandoned
children with
a forever
home**



Mihaela

In May, Mihaela (Me hi ala) arrived. She is 5 years old and a real sweetie. She spent the first two years of her life on the streets with her mom and the last two years in an orphanage.

Even though she had such a rough start in life, she is a very generous little girl and helps all the other children. She has taught the other children how to fold their own clothes. Every day she makes her bed without being asked or reminded and is very independent. She always eats everything she is served without complaint.

We are so glad to have Mihaela with us at Casa Mea!



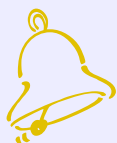
Ana Maria & Robert

Ana Maria and her brother Robert joined us in June. Ana Maria is 6 years old and Robert is 2. Both of them are absolutely precious. Robert isn't talking yet but he makes his needs known very clearly. He loves his food and has the belly to prove it! If he wants more food, which he always does, he crosses his arms and pouts hoping he will get another serving!



Ana Maria is a true big sister to Robert. Whenever Robert cries, she cries too. At first the two of them were inseparable but both are now feeling secure and Ana Maria is learning that she does not have to be Robert's mother anymore. Ana Maria fits in very well at Casa Mea with all the other children and is already learning English. Ana Maria has a wonderful little personality and is a joy to be around, as is Robert!

We had a great summer!



GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL

Although neither Ana Maria nor Mihaela have been to school before, both are very bright and looking forward to their first year in kindergarten.

The other children aren't so excited about returning to school because they love the freedom of summer vacation, with ice cream treats, watermelon, lazy mornings, but most of all no homework!

We are all busy getting 8 children ready for school with new school clothes, shoes, jackets, and backpacks. Remember the fun of shopping for new school clothes and school supplies when you were a child?



THANK YOU TO OUR SUMMER VOLUNTEERS & VISITORS

Thank
you
Thank
you
Thank
you



Thank you to all of our summer volunteers and visitors who enriched our summer tremendously.

From our English friends, the children learned to jump rope and grow cress. From others, they learned to make jewelry and had many trips to the park. Other visitors painted the children's faces and played "circus" with them, with big balloons and all.

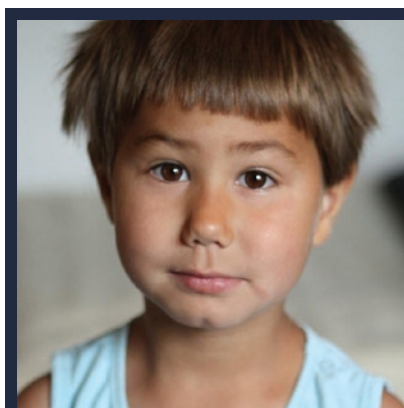
Emily and Bertie were volunteers who helped with the children when two of our staff members were on vacation. And thanks to many of our visitors who brought art supplies for the children, fruit, hair ornaments, and books.



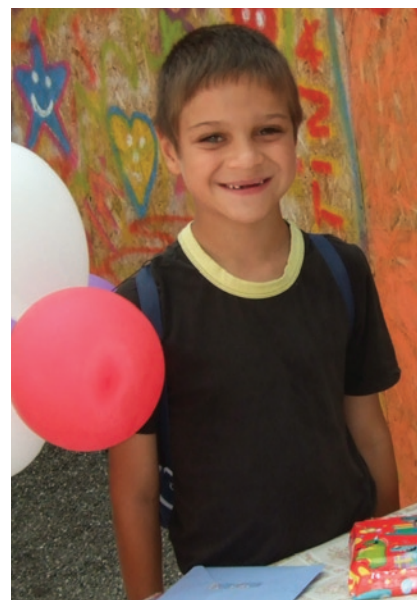


AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

August is a big birthday month at Casa Mea. We celebrated Amalia's, Mihaela's and Vlad's birthdays. The kids love a party and the girls love to get dressed up. Who doesn't love a party with cake and presents?



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**Save
a tree,
spread
the
word!**

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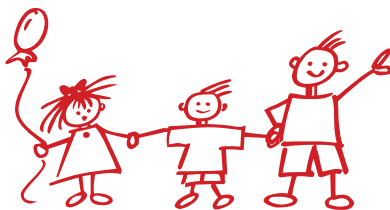
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Thank You!



CASA MEA NEWS

Spring 2009



LIFE AT CASA MEA

by Amalia

We do lots of fun things at Casa Mea. This year in January we celebrated Octavian's and Julia's fifth birthdays. We had lots of fun, wore our party clothes, and invited our friend Alexia and her family to celebrate with us.

We play restaurant at our kitchen table. It is fun because we have a real tablecloth, cloth napkins, and candle light. We play restaurant to practice our manners. During our semester break from school, we took the train to Brasov and went to a real restaurant. We had a delicious chicken dinner. But most importantly, our manners were perfect! We were all very pleased with ourselves as was Jan!

I am in the third grade now, and can read bedtime stories in Romanian to all the other children. Jan then reads us all bedtime stories in English.

In February, we had a Valentine's Day party. As always, Octavian ate all of his candy right away. But what was really exciting is that Auntie Mary in Seattle sent us each a card with a dollar in it! We want to buy more candy with our dollars!

We love to play outside in the snow. We have built several snowmen this year. This is a picture of us with one of our snowman with an old pot as his hat and one of our babysitters, Lidia.



We also love to play dress up and often have dress up parties. Our friend from the states, Susan, sends us dress up clothes. It is so much fun!



During semester break Maria and I went to the girls' orphanage with Jan. There are 62 girls who live there because they have no other place to go. It was sad, especially

because there was one small TV for all those girls!

Life at Casa Mea is fun but we also have our chores to do. If we don't do them, we do not get our allowance. So we try really hard to remember to do our chores!

We hope you can come visit us this summer and have fun at Casa Mea with us!

Amalia



Life for those less fortunate

Amalia is exactly right. Life for those 62 girls at the girls' orphanage in Brasov County is sad and bleak, but not necessarily because they must all share one small TV. It is sad because the capacity of the orphanage is 58, not 62, so it is overcrowded. It is sad because the girls lack any semblance of privacy. It is sad because there is rarely a silent time. It is sad because rarely does any one girl get individual attention. It is sad because all 62 girls know they are in an orphanage because no one else wants them. It is sad because all 62 girls know that they have no parental figure who uniquely loves and cares for them. No matter how much Brasov County and other Romanian counties with identical overcrowded orphanages try to make life bearable for these children, it is not bearable! These children lack adequate guidance, affection, attention, and love.

Although Amalia visited the girls' orphanage, she did not see the babies who are abandoned in the hospitals. These babies are abandoned indefinitely because either their parents cannot or will not care for them. Life for these babies, just like for the children in the orphanages, is also sad and bleak, perhaps more so, because they have never known the love and attention of an adult with whom they can bond. Despite the care and attention the hospital staff gives them, from the very beginning, they have had no special, loving adult in their world. This lack of a loving adult in

their world leads to multiple problems from attachment disorders to other developmental and other psychological deficits.

With your continued and generous support, Casa Mea can reduce the number of children abandoned in the orphanages and hospitals across Romania.



Help Casa Mea now! Here is how!

1. Shop On Line:

iGive.com turns your online shopping into support for Casa Mea. By shopping for brand-name items at over 700 well-known online stores, Casa Mea will receive a percentage of each of your purchases. In addition, you may receive free deals and coupons just by being an iGive.com member. If you join iGive.com and make a purchase within 45 days from one of 700 or so participating stores, iGive.com will donate \$5 FREE to Casa Mea, plus a percentage of each purchase!

How it works:



Go to the link below, become an iGive member and identify Casa Mea as your "cause." It's FREE, private, and easy.

<http://www.iGive.com/html/refer.cfm?memberid=496969&causeid=40081>



Shop the Mall at iGive.com. You will see familiar stores like Lands' End, Office Depot, JC Penney, Neiman Marcus, Expedia, Barnes & Noble, and eBay to mention just a few!



Watch the dollars roll into Casa Mea! Up to 26% (mostly from 2.5% to 10%) of EACH purchase gets donated! Already Casa Mea has received over \$1200.00 from our dedicated online shoppers simply because they shopped through iGive.com.

2. Search the Web:

Every time you search the web using iSearch iGive, Casa Mea earns a penny for each web site you accessed during your search. How much simpler can it get? Once you have joined iGive, go to iSearch on the iGive web page and confirm your cause, "Casa Mea" then begin your web search.



3. Leave a Legacy of a Planned Gift:

What does it mean to leave a legacy? It is contributing to a cause in a manner that makes an impact today, tomorrow, and for years to come. Whether your estate is large or modest, you can create a personal legacy of hope for Casa Mea's abandoned children. Many types of planned gifts offer benefits to both you and to Casa Mea. They can be established to provide those benefits today and/or later.



By making a gift of appreciated securities Casa Mea can receive maximum, immediate value from your gift while you get a significant break on your taxes. Your banker or broker can advise you.



Remembrances or bequests of cash can be written in your will. If you already have a will you may not need to re-write it. Several state laws allow for a codicil or a simple written addendum. Your estate planning attorney can advise you.



An existing life insurance policy or a new one taken out especially for a charitable donation also can be turned into a planned gift. For an existing policy, just complete a change of beneficiary form. A new policy can be assigned to Casa Mea after you make the first premium payment. Your insurance agent can advise you.

4. Sponsor a Child:

Sponsoring a child is the most effective way to personally make a difference and become intimately involved with your Casa Mea child. Sponsoring a child will enable that child to participate in activities he or she would not otherwise be allowed to do because of lack of general funds.

For instance, if you chose to sponsor a Casa Mea child, with your sponsorship, that child could participate in enrichment activities such as swimming lessons, dancing lessons, or music lessons. Now, Casa Mea does not have sufficient funds to pay for these enrichment activities.



For your sponsorship, you will receive photographs of your Casa Mea child and annual progress reports about your child's life. You can exchange letters with your child and build a relationship that will change a Casa Mea child's life and yours forever.



A Lead Sponsor contributes \$150 per month and is the only Sponsor for the Casa Mea child whereas a Helping Sponsor contributes \$75 a month and is one of two Sponsors for the Casa Mea child.



Anyone can sponsor a Casa Mea child; individuals, families, or other groups who want to pool their contributions.

Save a Tree, Spread the Word!

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HELP!



This past year Ann & Robert Frykman have generously donated their time and energy to send the Casa Mea News to all of our friends who are not on the internet. We greatly appreciate their time and generosity. But after one year, Ann & Robert are now moving on. As a result, we need new volunteers who will print, stuff envelopes, and stamp the envelopes to send the hard copy of the Casa Mea News to our supporters who are not on the internet.

If you or your friends or classmates or church group need a volunteer project, and have the time to help us out on a quarterly basis by getting our news out, we would greatly appreciate it. Of course, Casa Mea will gladly reimburse you for the costs of printing the News and mailing it. If you are interested, please call Jan at 972 306 6705 or email her at jan@casamea.org.

To send your financial gift to Casa Mea:



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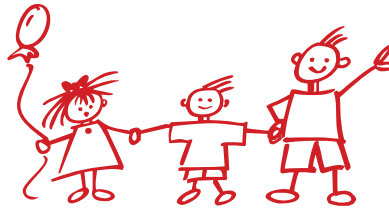
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Thank You!

CASA MEA NEWS

Summer 2009



Many "first's" at Casa Mea

**Crisina's
first year
at Casa
Mea**



FROM CRISTINA

I have now lived at Casa Mea for a little over a year. I love it here! This is why.

Before living at Casa Mea, I wasn't allowed to go to school, but last fall I finally started Kindergarten. Kindergarten is lots of fun and my teacher is very nice. I will be in kindergarten again next year too because in Romania children go to kindergarten for three years. I will have the same teacher and the same class of kids. Julia and Octavian are in my kindergarten class with me.

But now school is over for this year and we can play all day long! Yeah! We have lots of parties at Casa Mea where I get all dressed up in a beautiful dress and even play make-up. When we have parties we blow up balloons,



push the furniture back and dance after we have eaten our cake! I like to dance and ride my tricycle.

But my favorite activity is styling my hair! I love fixing it in different ways. I never did that before I came to Casa Mea. Right now I am letting my hair grow so I can wear it in a pony tail like the older girls. (I am the youngest one at Casa Mea). We are all waiting for new children to move in with us, but especially me so I won't be the youngest one any more. I will be a big sister!



If you know Cristina, you know how much she likes to do her hair. She would have three different styles a day if she could!



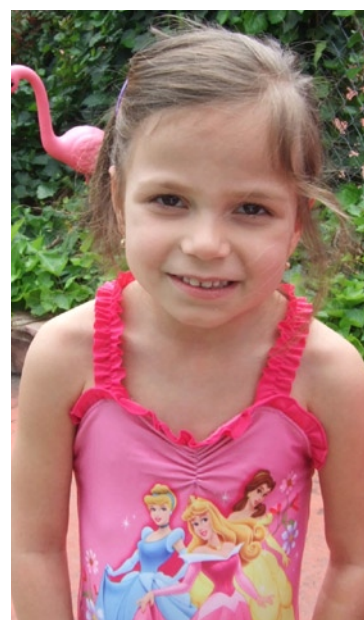
**Julia's
first trip
to the
States**

FROM JULIA

This spring was my first trip to the U.S. I had many "firsts" in the States. It was the first time I was on an airplane. I liked being way up in the sky but it was hard not to spill my drinks. So coming and going I got just a little wet!

It was the first time I swam in a big pool. I went swimming in three different pools and never wanted to get out of the water. It was the first time I went shopping for brand new clothes. My friend Melanie took me shopping and bought me new dresses, jeans, dress shoes, and more. I had donuts for the first time, thanks to my new friend Michael. I had my first professional manicure with my friend Susan. I had a slumber party in a hotel for the first time with my Auntie Mary.

Everyone I met was so nice to me and gave me lots of presents. Thanks to all of you who made my first trip to the U.S. so much fun!



**Thank
you
Thank
you
Thank
you**



The children do have fun at Casa Mea, thanks to YOU. Some of their regular activities include playing cards and games that you have donated to Casa Mea. They all like to play cards even though the little ones make up their own rules as they go along. Candyland is their favorite game and even the little ones can join in that game.

On rainy days we bake cakes, brownies, or cookies. We have



acquired several very easy recipes that the kids can make almost by themselves. Their favorite recipe is Chocolate Cake in a Coffee Mug. (You should try it. It is not only easy and fun to make, it also tastes good!)

They play with the dolls, balls, and cars you have donated and love to do art work with all the art supplies you have contributed. Thank you for helping us to make their lives rich and full.

Our friend Ivy and her British friends in California have graciously agreed to take on the volunteer job of getting the Casa Mea News out every quarter to those of you who receive it by mail. We are so grateful they agreed to do all that stuffing and stamping of envelopes!

Thank you to our friend Elizabeth who held an afternoon coffee for some friends of Casa Mea who live in the Twin Cities while Julia and I were there. She even had converted her solarium into a fantasy play area for Julia. It worked like a charm by keeping Julia entertained all afternoon.

Lastly, thank you to our friend Anne in Dallas who graciously introduced us to some of her wonderful friends.

Casa Mea so depends on people like you who generously offer their time, talent, and financial support.

Bee a Sponsor!



Casa Mea is searching for monthly sponsors for our children. For a \$150 monthly donation, you can be a Lead Sponsor, whereas for a \$75 monthly donation you can be a Helping Sponsor. Your donation would contribute to the care of a specific child at Casa Mea.

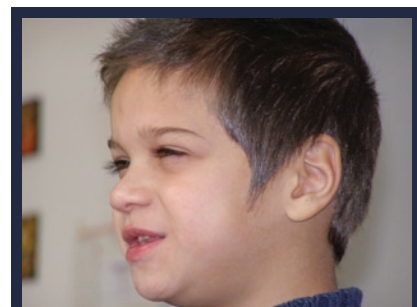
Right now we could use a few new bikes. We currently have hand-me-down bikes that have been repaired and re-repaired many times. The children ride one bike on its wheel rim because its tire is worn to shreds.

With summer here Vlad would like to take swimming lessons. The cost of the lessons and the daily transportation into Brasov is not in our current budget. With a Sponsor, Vlad could take those lessons.

If you would like to become a Sponsor, please contact Melanie at mel@casamea.org.

Save a tree, spread the word!

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Thank You!



CASA MEA NEWS

Winter 2009 Holiday Greetings



Peace
Joy
Love



May the spirit of Christmas bring you peace
The gladness of Christmas give you joy
The warmth of Christmas grant you love

Author Unknown

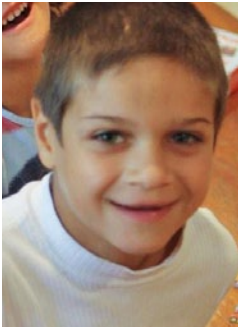


from Vlad

Dear Santa,

I have been very good this year, well mostly. I still suck my fingers and I know I shouldn't because I am now 8 years old. But I am trying to stop, really. And sometimes I do bad things but most of the time I am good. I do my chores and help around the house.

Could you please bring me a remote control car for Christmas? I would love to have a car



that I could drive by remote control. Or it could be a plane or even a motorcycle. I would like any remote control machine.

Please don't forget my brother and my sisters. They have been good too.

Thank you.
Vlad

2009 Happenings



Falling Stars



This past year has been a tumultuous one for all of us at Casa Mea with many ups and downs. Perhaps you too have experienced the same type of year!

We began the new year with much hope. Three new children joined our Casa Mea family. We immediately fell in love with Mihaela, Ana Maria, and Robert. However, as the year progressed, Amalia, Maria, Octavian moved to a governmental group home and Mihaela to an orphanage. Mihaela is back in the orphanage simply because she does not have a birth certificate. We are forever hopeful that this problem will be resolved quickly and Mihaela will be here to celebrate Christmas with all of us. We miss her terribly and cannot wait until she returns to our Casa Mea family.



Also this year we lost one of our dear supporters, Ivy Kilgannon, who passed away in the fall. Even at 89 years of age she was always there for us, donating her time and energy to Casa Mea and the children. We will greatly miss her generous spirit.



But 2009 wasn't all about losses. We still have five beautiful children; Vlad, Ana Maria, Julia, Cristina, and Robert. The children are all healthy and happy and for that we are all very grateful.



Rising Stars



We also have a brand new manager at Casa Mea, Florin, who is truly a rising star here at Casa Mea. Florin is a 28 year old Romanian man who has much experience with non-profits, most recently as a volunteer at a shelter for mothers and their children. He is extremely well qualified with an undergraduate degree in economics, a master's degree in economics, and a law degree. In addition, he speaks English fluently. But his most valuable qualification is that he loves the children and they love him. Florin is an exceptional person and we all feel very fortunate to have him here with us.



Shooting Stars



We are extremely grateful for all of you and your continuing belief in us and in Casa Mea's mission. With your support and inspiration Casa Mea can soar high and higher still. You make our dreams come true. Thank you to all of our volunteers, supporters, visitors, and donors for all you did for Casa Mea throughout the year.



2010 Hopes



**We
want
to
grow!**

Casa Mea is actively pursuing filling our house with more orphaned and abandoned children. Our goal is to have 10 to 12 children here who will call Casa Mea home.

Another goal for the coming year is to build a solid Casa Mea organization in the States. Currently, only a handful of people "work" for Casa Mea and all of these people have other fulltime positions. When they have free time in their busy, hectic lives, they volunteer for Casa Mea without any compensation. Casa Mea would like to find a new office and be financially strong enough to hire a fulltime staff to run Casa Mea as a business rather than as a solely volunteer organization.

Casa Mea is now in the stage of its development where we would like to pursue

opening another home for orphaned and abandoned children. This home would not necessarily be in Romania, but possibly in some other developing country where there is a need.

These are very ambitious goals and dreams but we know they are possible with your continued support and inspiration. We know we can continue to count on you because you believe that the **JOY** of brightening others' lives, the **PEACE** of easing others' burdens, the filling of others' hearts with your **LOVE** is the magical gift you can give not only during this holiday season but throughout the year.

Happy Holidays!

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spread
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