



NOROC NEWSLETTER

Winter 2014

Editor: Anca Oancea

Christmas Cottage: New in 2014

NOROC's "Casuta de Craciun"--Christmas Cottage--graced Tulcea's main square and gave NOROC's ministry visibility and a start on local fundraising.

The work of many hands on two continents made three weeks of fun for families possible. Students at Stephen F. Austin State University raised money in myriad creative ways to buy and stock the cottage--kind of a "Santa's Workshop." A prime space on Piata Civica with electricity--right next to the big Christmas tree--was made possible by the Tulcea mayor's office. Stefan at Hipic Real brought horses and a wagon for rides around the square.

Congregations across the United States sent

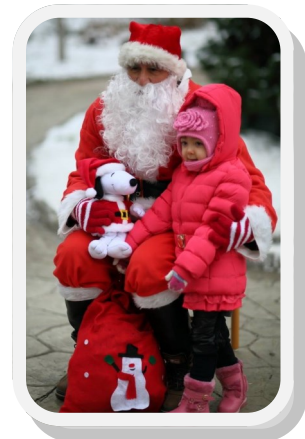


beautiful handcrafted items to sell, and the Tulcea NOROC staff and volunteers, plus youth from town and from the institutions,

worked tirelessly to sort, price, display, sell, take and deliver photos with Santa, advertise--all in bitterly cold and often wet weather-



Some gave a freewill donation. A few said: "I always wanted to help, but I didn't know how." Others said: "I never knew we had orphanages in Tulcea County." Almost everyone said: "NOROC is doing wonderful work!"



The hope is that NOROC can use the Cottage, summer and winter, for fundraising and visibility in the years to come. And we hope to encourage a new holiday tradition--family photos with Santa at the Casuta de Craciun in Piata Civica.

Spreading the joy of Christmas....



Cocorii



Pescărușul



Speranța



Mahmudia

Sâmbăta Nouă



Apartments



St. Mary



St. Nectarie



Somova



Sulina

Special gifts: personalized Christmas bags

Every year congregations and other groups in the United States and Europe send small items for giving in NOROC's Christmas bags—pungi de cadou. Each child and youth in Tulcea County institutions receives a personalized gift bag with his or her name on it, with

at least one gift selected especially for him or her. NOROC also delivers gift bags to 70 residents in the state Senior Center. This year, every senior received a beautifully knitted afghan or lap robe—MUCH appreciated!

When NOROC presents the

bags, it's a party, with songs, scripture and poems—a sort of Christmas program. Then the kids run off to their dorm rooms to open their bags and enjoy their gifts. In addition to a stuffed animal or beanie baby, candy, a puzzle or match-box car, doll or beanbag, each gets a warm hat, mittens and slippers, plus a new toothbrush and other necessities.

NOROC appreciates your lovingly sent in-kind donations and contributions to shipping costs.

Think “Christmas in July.”
Email Liz now at

thesearles@gmail.com to find out 2015 needs. The bulk shipment for Christmas will leave Texas August 1.



Operation Christmas Child

Each year, NOROC delivers hundreds of gift boxes packed and shipped in faraway places. The red van carries its precious cargo to help make Christmas merrier for kids in families, schools, and institutions throughout the county. Each box is delivered with “The Greatest Gift,” a small workbook that shares news of God's love for us, and there are follow-up Good News materials to use with classes and other groups.

In Tulcea county, Operation Christmas Child deliveries are an ecumenical effort. Planning starts early and brings together delivery teams from many denominations—Baptist, Pentecostal and Romanian Orthodox, in particular. All of these church teams join you in praying for children and youth in Romania who experience deep poverty and trauma.





New Opportunities for Romanian Orphaned Children

NOROC, Inc., a Christ-based 501(c)3 nonprofit, nurtures orphaned and abandoned children in state institutions of Tulcea County, Romania. The Romanian word "NOROC" means "God Bless."

Over 50 Romanian volunteers and staff seek to address root causes of poverty by serving the spiritual, developmental, social, emotional, educational, medical and relationship needs of traumatized and at-risk children and youth. A disproportionate number of institutionalized children are ethnically Roma (Gypsies), a stigmatized ethnic and migrant group in Europe.

Thanks to support from individuals and congregations in many denominations, especially the PC(USA), Liz Searles serves NOROC as a mission co-worker.

<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/mission-connections/elizabeth-searles/>

"Big-Hearted" programs offer children daily ongoing relationships: Grannies, tutors, small group leaders, speech therapists, psychologists and activity leaders all share in NOROC's healing work.

Joys and concerns

Our hearts are full as we look back upon 2014, a year of new beginnings and new plans. Thinking Christmas, we celebrate in prayer and praise for:

- gifts you send;
- NOROC's outreach to share news of God's loving gifts;
- the Christmas Cottage and the local fundraising and visibility it makes possible;
- the "over and above" efforts of NOROC staff and volunteers, in Texas and in Tulcea;
- our partners in Christmas giving, especially SFASU Nacogdoches, Texas, the Tulcea Mayor's office, HIPIC Real and the horses, OCC, and individuals and groups--including children, youth and seniors--in the US and Europe;
- God's greatest gift in Jesus Christ, whose love makes the invisible visible, setting the pattern and the purpose for the incarnational ministries

of NOROC.

TEAM with NOROC,
CHRISTMAS 2015:

Write for specific needs:
thesearles@gmail.com

and tell us about who is collecting or making gifts. We like to know what to expect (although we also love surprises!).

Calendar July 15: "ship to NOROC, 200 Hedges Rd., Abilene, TX 79605" (please send contributions to the cost of shipping in an envelope separate from items to be shipped; write a brief description of the items on the box).

Some suggestions for giving:

- matchbox cars (used in good condition OK) individually protected in small plastic bags, if possible.
- colorful socks— all sizes
- batches of 100 of the same-ish small toy, gift or handmade item (kids get

jealous).

- hackey sacks.
- pre-cut and folded "poufs" or "poms" out of tissue paper.
- small dolls.
- beanie babies or other clean small stuffed animals.
- pull-ups for larger children, especially needed in the intake center
- toiletries (unexpired: we can't use stale dated)

VIDEO LINKS: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0tfFoZKjo0>

Merry Christmas!

