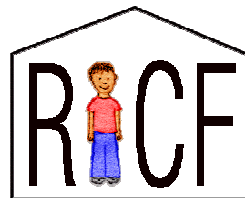




One family receiving support through RICF's abandonment prevention project



Romania International Children's Foundation

Website: [www.ricf.net](http://www.ricf.net)

Email: [admin@ricf.net](mailto:admin@ricf.net)



<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Romania-International-Childrens-Foundation>

## Summer 2014 Newsletter

Welcome to the RICF Summer 2014 newsletter! We have lots of news about the RICF children as well as news from our staff team in Romania and of a visit by our Board member Suzie.

### Board member Suzie's April visit

Suzie visited with her husband David and children Abigail (5) and Samuel (3). She writes:

'It was great to catch up with the RICF HQ team and discuss progress in each of our projects, setting key objectives for the next 6 months. There was a real vibrancy, with lots of activities going on. It was wonderful to see people really benefitting from help being offered by RICF, on a physical, emotional and spiritual level. As always it was a privilege to meet beneficiaries of each of our projects in their own homes, and to hear the real life stories behind the photographs.

'I enjoyed participating in the foster carers' monthly meeting. Flori facilitated training about discipline and rewards, which led to in-depth discussions about the difficulties encountered when disciplining children from toddlers to teenagers. It was great to see the foster carers learning from each other's experience and supporting each other in their challenging role.



One highlight was a meal with all 8 foster carers and the HQ team. The opportunity to enjoy a meal out is a rare luxury for many of our staff, and it was a wonderful relaxed occasion, celebrating the hard work everyone has done this year.



'I felt privileged to participate in a maternity project support meeting. Simona (RICF's psychologist) led a session about Maslow's pyramid of basic needs. It was humbling to hear the group share their experiences and in particular to see how participation in the group is itself giving the young parents a sense of belonging and self worth, giving them hope for the future and ambitions for their children. I led a discussion about contraception, generally a paid-for service in Romania. Many of the young mothers are keen

to access contraception to avoid further unplanned pregnancies, and RICF is exploring options for accessing free contraception.

## Foster placement project 'A Family for me' (9 children)

**Florian** (17) is now almost finished Year 10. Suzie and family were delighted to share a meal at the family's home, and to see how well Florian has integrated with the family, since he joined them aged 10. He talked fondly of his foster siblings, as his brothers and sisters. He is learning to play the euphonium, and demonstrated this recently acquired skill! He is an active member of a local church, with a genuine personal faith. He loves joining the youth group on weekends away.



Brothers **Dorel** (16) and **Nicusor** (14) both attend our music club with Florian and Sedra. Their foster father has had to move to Germany to find work. Both brothers miss him and look forward to seeing him during his holidays. **Sedra** (12) also attends our music

group and has made friends with the other girls in the group. Brothers **Aurel** (8) and **Vali** (6) continue to visit each other regularly and enjoy spending time together. Unfortunately both boys are sometimes teased by children in their village for being in foster placements. We are working with their foster carers to best support them in this difficult situation. **Alex** (6) continues to do well at preschool. She is experiencing attachment difficulties due to her unsettled start in life. **Lucian** (5) is learning to read and write at preschool and with his foster mother. He enjoys roller-skating in the park. **Miruna** (Maria) (5) is becoming more independent and learning to take care of her own toys and games. Her foster family are still in the process of adopting her. This can be a very long process in Romania.

## Family reunification project (5 children receiving full support)

Over the last few years we have been slowly stopping our support for a number of families within this project as their family situations improve. We are very conscious that this project should offer families short term support while they gain access to the long term state help that they are entitled to or find another permanent source of income. Only in exceptional cases will we support families in this project over a longer period of time.

When we wrote our last newsletter we were supporting four families with our full package of regular financial support, counselling and professional advocacy. We also had a further 28 families on our books who had stopped receiving financial support but were still tapped into our other services. These additional families continue to access our counselling and advocacy service as and when required.

**Lavinia's** mother's new hairdressing business has started to make a profit meaning that she is now able to provide financially for her family. We have therefore stopped supporting this family. We are pleased that our short term support helped them achieve their long term goal. Our new beneficiary is **Maria** (12), recently reunited with her mother having been separated from her since early childhood. We are pleased to be able to support this family as they rebuild their relationships and start their new life together.

We continue to support **Silviu** (17), siblings **Andrei** (17) and **Maria** (13), and **Ionut** (14). **Silviu** continues to live with his grandmother who is terminally ill. He has made friends in his local church and is developing his social skills. **Andrei** and **Maria** continue to live with their aunt and cousin. They are both doing well at school. **Ionut** continues to live with his mother. She has recently been unwell and cannot afford to take sick leave. Our support continues to help the family to supplement their small income.

## Maternity project—prevention of child abandonment (10 babies)

All of the five babies who were in the Maternity Project in the Autumn have graduated from the project since our last newsletter. We have included ten new babies in this project and are now at our full capacity. Low family incomes and housing problems continue to be the key problems that families in this project face. We are currently supporting three baby girls and seven baby boys in this project. Baby **Patrick** is our oldest baby at 19 months old. He lives with his mum Adriana. As a single mum Adriana is struggling to look after Patrick on a very low income. We also support four babies who are now 12 months old. Twins **Rania** and **Anastasia** live with their mum Maria and her partner. They are currently looking for a new place to live as their current accommodation is no longer available to them. Baby **Ricardo** is one of the most recent additions to our project in March. He lives with his mum Petruta who is supported by her parents. Baby **Maria** is a healthy and happy baby. Her family are struggling to pay off heating debts accumulated in the cold winter months.



Baby **Daniel** is 8 months old. He is cared for by his mother Alexandra and his maternal grandparents. **Ianis** is also 8 months old. He is looked after by his mother Mihaela. Unfortunately his father has decided that he doesn't want to be involved in Ianis' young life. Baby **Ezel** is our third 8 month old. He has recently been in hospital for several days. Unfortunately the relatively high medical costs associated with this have left the family in debt. Our second youngest baby is 4 month old **Iacob**. He is forming close attachments to his mother Ana Maria and his father. His father has an occasional job as a painter and decorator. **Marius** is our youngest baby at 3 months old. His mother receives no support from Marius' father or from her family. She feels very isolated. We hope that our support can help this new family form strong attachments and develop new support networks.

Congratulations to board member Alice and husband James on the safe arrival of baby Esther Jane in November 2013. Congratulations also to Ruth on her engagement to Kevin, and congratulations also to our director Ovidiu and HQ team member Flori on their marriage in October 2013. Flori has been covering Mona's maternity leave, and we are grateful to her for her incredibly positive contribution to the team.

RICF continues to teach social work students from the University of Bucharest. Suzie had the opportunity to tell our 7 current students of her experience setting up RICF, and hopefully to inspire them that they can make a difference. It was encouraging to see some of the students have already set their hearts on areas of social injustice they wish to help put right in Romania.



We are pleased to have started a new social activity thanks to a donation from the International Women's Association of Bucharest (IWA) and a volunteer from the National University of Music in Bucharest. Ema is running regular music workshops with 11 of our young people on a Saturday afternoon where they can learn to play a musical instrument and take part in singing lessons. Thanks to IWA we have also been able to buy a video projector to help us use a variety of teaching materials

in our support group sessions with foster carers and young parents.

Thank you to all those who have made financial donations and given equipment and clothes to support our work. Unfortunately we have had a significant drop in our funding from the UK and may need to reduce costs from the autumn, which could mean reducing staff time and numbers of project beneficiaries. Please do let us know if you know of openings for potential financing for our projects or if you would like to get involved in fundraising. With love and thanks from RICF UK charity trustees (Suzie, Alice and Jean) and from the RICF Board (Suzie, Alice and Ruth).

I would like to see RICF continue to help needy and abandoned children and give them a chance of experiencing family life



I would like to offer **financial support**. I understand every penny I give will go to Romania. A **standing order** for a regular monthly donation is an ideal way to make a difference to a Romanian child's life. Please set it up here and now.

I would like to set up a monthly standing order

- my bank details are below

I enclose a cheque payable to 'RICF'.

I have made an online donation of [£        ] to RICF (RICF account details below)

Please tick if you are a UK taxpayer and would like to increase your donation(s) by 25% at no extra cost to yourself, through the **Gift Aid scheme**. (NB you must pay an amount of tax that exceeds the tax reclaimed by RICF.)

I would like to receive RICF's monthly email news.

Full Name    *please print* .....

Address .....

Post Code: .....

✂ .....

### Instruction to your bank to set up a monthly standing order for RICF

Please pay to the account of RICF (UK registered charity no. 1063235)

Sort Code: 20-74-09

Account no: 10114898

The sum of £ ..... on  /  / 20       *dd / mm / yyyy*

and on the same day each month thereafter, until further notice.

Signature: ..... Date: .....

### Your bank details

Sort Code:  -  -       Acct no:

Name of your bank: .....

Address of your bank: .....

Post Code: .....

Please ensure you've filled in your name & address above, and ticked gift aid box if applicable, then send completed form to: Romania International Children's Foundation, 12 Corder Close, St Albans, AL3 4NH.

For details on how to give from outside the UK please see [www.ricf.net](http://www.ricf.net).      **Thank you!**