

Mustard Seed [Jersey]

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Newsletter December 2012 / January 2013



Thank you to the individuals, schools and groups who packed Christmas Shoeboxes, and who helped in any way: making premises available, collecting, checking, raising funds, praying, loading, driving, distributing to all who made it possible for 2000 children in Bihor county of Romania to have what was undoubtedly their only Christmas gift to all who packed so that 800 grateful pensioners had a Christmas shoebox.

Our thanks go to those businesses who help us especially Garage Sarl Godard in Brittany, Condor Freight, Sutton Transport, BAG transport in Germany and many others, too many to mention.

Our motto: **Your Help makes a Difference**

For me personally this December 2012 shoebox and general aid trip to Romania was one of the most stressful trips ever. It has undoubtedly been our most expensive trip with a mechanical breakdown in Germany. A replacement part was sent but (due to adverse weather conditions) it was 3 days before it was delivered!



It meant Hilary and I had almost a week in Romania before the aid trailer arrived, and the party from Beaulieu Convent School (who were delayed by a technical problem at Budapest airport) arrived before the trailer could clear customs and be unloaded, so this affected their planned programme also.

The time was not wasted. One way we used the time was to shop for food parcels and then pack them up. (See the photo)

Florence from Crestina Vineyard and Bob from Jersey packing up food parcels:



Also before the trailer arrived we were able to distribute some aid and to visit some of the different families and projects we support.

One family we visited included a 9 year old girl, who did not listen properly when the social worker told them about the delay to the shoebox arrival and so she was jumping up and down in excitement convinced (as I was there in December) there must be a Christmas shoebox for her in the van!

Of course she did get her shoebox later but it didn't stop her obvious disappointment at the time.

If we needed proof about how much children value the shoeboxes, we saw it there.

Pensioners & Families

Mustard Seed Jersey runs a sponsorship scheme to assist vulnerable and needy families and pensioners. Many sponsors pack shoeboxes (or sometimes very large boot boxes!) for the person/s they sponsor.



The pensioner in the above photograph was clearly unwell (in fact she collapsed on her way home) but she was so anxious to get her monthly food parcel and Christmas shoebox that she had struggled to the meeting, then needed help to get home safely.



This family live in a single room. A wood burning stove provided heat but made the atmosphere smoky. They benefit from our Bread distribution

programme. When we visited we took some non-perishable food donated by churches in Jersey.

Families and pensioners on Mustard Seed's sponsorship programme are able to choose how they want the money used – most select food, either loaves of bread several times a week or a monthly food parcel, but others prefer that the money is used for medication or firewood.

Another group who are assisted through our sponsorship programme are young people who would benefit by attending high school but whose parents cannot afford this.

Usually they have already been assisted by Mustard Seed's education programmes through our homework clubs and kindergarten. We believe that this investment in education, (hopefully resulting in better paid employment) is often the key to breaking the continuing cycle of poverty.



Pictures from December 10th with the party from Beaulieu Convent School

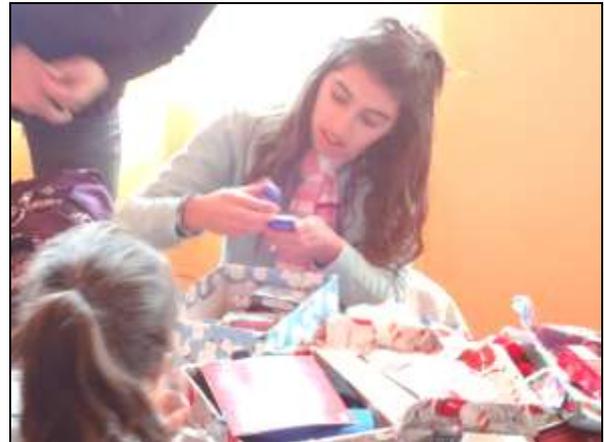


On arriving at Cefa, the Beaulieu team immediately began to pack up the 60 food parcels for distributing to needy pensioners and families.

As soon as the trailer was unloaded distribution of Christmas shoeboxes to children began.



At this school it was the end of the school day. We distributed shoeboxes outside in the snow. The children went home clutching their shoeboxes, joyfully waving at us when we saw them on the road.



Some shoeboxes were given out in the schools. Here a girl opened her box up while we were there.

This year we were very short of boxes for teenagers.

After lunch the distribution of shoeboxes and food parcels to the pensioners took place.



Each pensioner went home with a food parcel and a Christmas shoebox.

Afterwards the Beaulieu group went to Casa Mabel. (More about Casa Mabel later)

More Pictures from Romania



The team from Beaulieu gave Christmas shoeboxes to the residents at Casa Mabel.



Working with FI: providing computers for young people with special needs.



Inside Casa Mabel. It is Mustard Seed's home for needy pensioners in Cefa, Romania.



Working with FI: sharing our pizza with a needy pensioner. [FI assist the poorest of the poor]



Outside Casa Mabel in December – home to 12 needy female pensioners. It opened in 2009.



Agape offer education & life skills to young people brought up in state orphanages.

Challenging and thought-provoking

"Challenging and thought-provoking ~ that would have to be how I would describe the visit to a state run residential home for young people with learning difficulties".

This year for the first time Mustard Seed Jersey packed special boxes for these young people as their needs are different from other young people their age.

It is rare to be allowed into these orphanages or homes, normally they are closed to the public. The only reason Mustard Seed representatives were allowed in was because of help given in the past and the promise of Christmas shoeboxes.

Conditions in the house were comparatively good. There were no more than two young people per bedroom. The building seemed well maintained and well decorated. The staff were caring and compassionate. But we saw little evidence of activities to occupy or stimulate the young people.

In one home there were 14 or 15 young people, all with learning difficulties and other needs; half of them shuffled or crawled, some could walk. The age range must have been between early teens and maybe late twenties.

"As soon as we arrived young people flocked round us wanting to hold our hands, stroke our arms, all desperate for love, all wanting to be hugged".

The Christmas shoeboxes were a big success, especially the soft flashing toys. Another joy for them was the chocolate that was given separately.

Most of all these young people wanted love. The toys could wait till another time, but now they had visitors who showed love, smiled, held their hands, showed interest in them, put an arm round them.

"The most important thing we gave was ourselves and the fact that we offered love for the short time while we were there".

"Several of them cried when we left".

- There are no photos from this visit as photos are not allowed in those residential homes, so our only record of this visit is our memories.
- Possibly it was the place where we made the most difference in the lives of the people who we met for a short time.

LOOKING BACK OVER 2012

We sent out 4 aid consignments, one in the spring, one in the summer, one in late autumn and the December load. So over 55 tonnes of aid was sent including building materials. We have heard Alex's plans for the donated roofing materials. He hopes they will be used in the provision of a community hall in a poor village; in another village to assist with a special hall to be used for funerals and to provide additional housing for Mustard Seed's own animals.

We have continued to pack Welcome Boxes for repatriated victims of people trafficking and these are much appreciated when they are given out in Romania; sadly they continue to be needed even more as this problem has increased.

We have had some very successful Aid Collections at Holme Grown Farm Shop carpark and also at St Peters Parish Hall.

Our bookstalls have continued to bring in a steady flow of money, but our market stalls and carboot sales have not been so successful.

By early autumn our number of sponsors for pensioners had decreased, undoubtedly due to the recession; this was a big concern to us knowing the hardship this could cause, but we were blessed in November when a donor came forward to assist 12 pensioners during the winter months, when their need is greatest.

Our Christmas shoebox numbers INCREASED to 2850 (an increase of 600). Thank you generous people in Jersey! Thanks to people's generosity this winter we will have been able to provide close on £4,500 worth of bread, food to the value of over £3,000, also £700 for heating.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2013

We plan 3 aid consignments to Romania providing the aid is donated and the needed help is available:

One in the spring

The second in the early autumn

The third to be the December trip with Christmas shoeboxes and general aid.

We plan to continue our aid collections at Holme Grown and St Peter ~ we may try a new extra venue in the summer.

WAYS TO HELP MUSTARD SEED JERSEY

We are always keen to hear from **POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS** and need help with PACKING, LOADING, FUND-RAISING, COLLECTING ... if this could be for you please contact Rose either phone 482637 or email mustardseedjersey@yahoo.co.uk

DONATE your surplus good quality clean clothing, bedding, footwear, toiletries, stationery, medical apparatus, educational equipment, hygiene items, bicycles, household items, etc. Check the answer phone on 482637 for details of our collection places – at time of printing they are All Saints Church (opposite the General Hospital), St Peters Church, St Marys Church and St Lukes Church – all during their normal opening hours.

Support our aid collections (details in media or our answer-phone)

Support our book stalls at Rozel Bay and St Johns Village.

Suggest Mustard Seed as the beneficiary at dress down days, etc.

Sponsor a pensioner through our **Adopt a Granny** scheme

Sponsor a needy child or family

Pack a **Welcome Box** (details on website)

Plan ahead to pack **Christmas shoeboxes**

Remember Mustard Seed Jersey in your **prayers**

If you shop at the Co-op use our divvy number **321340**

Put your loose change in a **collecting box** for Mustard Seed

Organise a **fund-raising** event (please contact Rose before).

Keep up to date

through our website www.mustardseedjersey.co.uk

on Facebook www.facebook.com/mustardseedjsy

THANKS to all who support in any & every way: practically, prayerfully, financially

Thanks to Paperclix for their help printing this newsletter

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