



**Friendship
INTERNATIONAL**
*Empowered by the Holy Spirit,
Reaching Out to a Needy World*

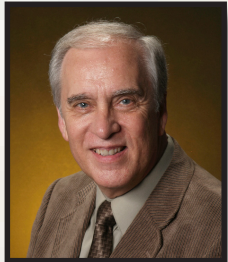


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Del Huff
Executive Director

GIVING THANKS IN THE MIDST OF WAR

In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus towards you.

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

While the tale of the Pilgrims' first Thanksgiving is deeply ingrained in our modern understanding of the holiday, few realize that Thanksgiving is also deeply rooted in the American Civil War. In October 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation of thanksgiving, calling upon the nation to set aside the fourth Thursday of November to pause and give thanks to God.

The incredible events of that year provided context for Lincoln's words of thanksgiving. While the nation had gone through difficult times before, especially during the darkest days of the Revolution, the challenges which Lincoln and the country faced in 1863 were unique in many ways. By year's end, 1863 had proven to be the bloodiest year yet of the war, though the fighting was still far from over.

The number of soldiers who died between 1861 and 1865, generally estimated at 620,000, is approximately equal to the total of American fatalities in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the Spanish American War, World War I, World War II, and the Korean War, combined.

Even in the darkest days of American history, Americans have still found time to pause and give thanks for what we have.

Today, we find ourselves with wars raging on two world front, Ukraine and Israel. It's time to again bow before our God and offer up Thanksgiving and praise for all the many blessings we have received in the midst of war. May we also take time to commend to God's care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners, or sufferers in the lamentable sorrow of war.



CHRISTMAS IS COMING!

December 2023

**You Can Have A Part This Year
Celebrating Christmas In Romanian Orphanages
And Among Ukrainian Refugee Children
WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

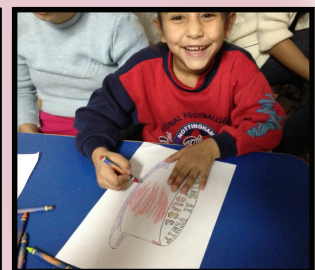
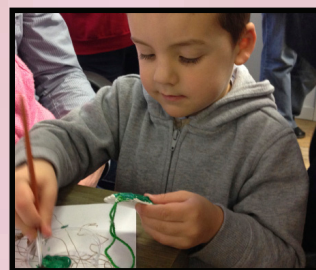
We will not be able to send a mission team this year, unfortunately, there was not enough interest shown to prepare a team. Of course, we are disappointed, but we know that God's timing is always perfect, and we rest in that knowledge.

We are still committed to making this a wonderful opportunity to celebrate Jesus' birth with orphans and Ukrainian refugee children in Romania.

It is also too expensive and uncertain to consider sending gifts by mail because of the challenges with shipping these days. So, we want to invite you, again, to share with your donations, as many of you did last year.

We are still living in the shadows of the COVID aftermath, but the Romanian government is allowing our Romanian team to organize Jesus Birthday parties in several orphanages in and around the city of Arad.

Our program will begin with our team singing some Christmas Carols with the children, then the Christmas story will be told and the children will be given the opportunity to ask Jesus into their heart. This will be followed with a snack and they will finish with the distribution of Christmas gifts for each child.



Our team, led by the Muscan family, will be visiting the orphanages the second weekend of December, so **we are asking that all donations be received at our office by November 27.**

Here's how you can participate.

Send donations to our office - Friendship International, PO Box 50884, Colorado Springs, CO 80949, **with a note Orphanage Christmas Project '23,**

OR, through e-Giving found on our website - friendshipintl.org. Look for the DONATE link at the top of page. Find the fund - Orphanage Christmas Project, enter your donation amount and follow the instructions as to how you want to make your donation. It's simple, but what an impact you can have in the lives of these children!



REMEMBERING F.I.'S FIRST MISSIONARY TRIP TO ROMANIA

Chapter 4
by Natalie Klostermann

Editor's Note: Natalie's story continues. This is Chapter 4. Here is a brief statement from the last article from August UPDATE'23. If you are interested, you may catch up from the first article by going to friendshipintl.org, click on UPDATE and open the June '23 edition, where Natalie's memoirs begin.



**Looking
Forward**
by Callum King,
Camp Supervisor

In closing of last month's article, Natalie recalls her experiences during the time she spent visiting the sports camp. This was not only an exciting time to see the kids coming together to enjoy playing basketball, but all the fellowship and freedom they were enjoying during those days together. But there was one particular incident that was not so positive, that was the visit made to the camp by the military police. They said they were just checking to see what was going on. But they frightened the children by displaying their military weaponry. Natalie was able to put their fears to rest by suggesting that they commit this time to the Lord and trust in Him even under such tense moments. And now the story continues.



Next, we were off to the Singing group's rehearsals and first public concert. Their concert venue was recognizable as what once was a beautiful concert hall, in its day. I was able to encourage the kids to be very careful with their body language, not to convey any sort of disrespect for how run down and in disrepair the building appeared. We were seeing and experiencing one of the most depressing and oppressing times in the history of this country. The people were under such bondage and suppression and left with very little to survive.

My advise to the music team was anytime they had a chance to speak to the people personally, continue to share hope, joy and love, which they were doing especially through their music. After the concert we went to a restaurant. We spoke with the business owner and encouraged him in his business to hire employees who were clean, honest, polite and hard working. We explained that, is what will make his business a success.

The last stop before I was to leave was to visit a mother and her daughter for lunch, who lived in an apartment, typical of those Ceausescu built all over the country, requiring people to move from the countryside into the apartment blocks as a means of controlling the activity and movement of the people. It was a very modest apartment. One thing that came to mind as we sat down to eat was how generous they were. Our hosts prepared a meal that was amazing. We had heard that people gave sacrificially, especially when it came to preparing for guests, it was the very best. One thing I especially remember is the meal began with soup, which was typical at lunch every day. But this time it was a bit unusual, every bowl had a round white ball floating in it. The three of us who were sitting together were imagining what it might be, maybe an eyeball from some animal, or . . . ? But what a relief, when we found out it was a pheasant egg, whew!

After a precious time of fellowship and saying our goodbyes, we left to drive back to Hungary, where those of us who had to leave the mission trip early boarded a train to take us back to Germany.

We were advised before leaving for Germany that we should by no means ever give up our passports along our journey. Well, wouldn't you believe it, we weren't on the train long until the porter came through the train asking to see our passports, and of course, he ended up taking mine, somewhere. I became quite uneasy and concerned. We all immediately began praying he would bring it back. The porter never returned, until the last minute before we were to exit the train, of course during the time it was not in my possession, I was imagining all kinds of things that might be awaiting me. I never found out the reason for him taking it from me, but was so thankful when he showed up and returned just before we got off in Germany. And again I had to say thank you Lord for protecting me from harm, another lesson in trusting the Lord on this journey to the country of Romania. **Editor's Note:** To be continued, Chapter 5

Year End Contribution

As we near the end of another year we want to encourage you to consider making a contribution that will help us move into the next year, able to continue what God has called us to do for over 40 years. But we do need your continued financial support. Won't you please consider giving a generous donation?

Checks can be made out to **Friendship International** and mailed to our address - PO Box 50884, Colorado Springs, CO 80949, or use our convenient online giving tool on our website, www.friendshipintl.org and go to the menu bar at the top of our home page to use our safe and secure app, e-Giving.

As we reported in last month's and this month's UPDATE, the number of campers far exceed our hopes or imagination this past summer. We were amazed at how everything went so well.

We were full to capacity all summer with our cabins, tepees and covered wagons full, sometimes over the number allotted in order to be able to provide housing for everyone. In fact, we had an additional weekend group of Ukrainian campers ask to come in September. These were young people from Ukraine but who have settled as refugees in the Arad, Romania area.

This past Spring we were able, with massive help from our friends in Scotland, to get almost completely caught up on remodeling, repairing and upgrading the facilities before camps started this year. What a blessing it was!

Now, as we look forward to 2024, we are full of anticipation, but also recognize the challenges that lie before us.

We have mentioned this project a couple of times, but we will need to do everything we can to make one specific major change for next year. We were only able to invite about 60% of the campers this past summer due to the strict regulations of the government as to how many kids we can put into one sleeping structure. We need 6 new "cabins" to bring our capacity back up to what it was before COVID, which was 100. This is what the bare structure looks like. But in the coming months we want to share with you what they will look like when they are completed to fit into our Old West Town camp.



One finished container - including the cost of delivery, outside wood cladding, porch and furniture for the inside will be \$6,500. Every dollar/euro/pound or Romanian lei helps. Maybe your church or business could consider sponsoring the cost of one container. *Can you help?*

Donations can be sent to our office or made online through e-Giving, friendshipintl.org.