

2016: Year in Review

Educational Programs

In 2016, 212 students were enrolled in the Ruth School. These students received a quality education from fully qualified teachers and school support staff. In addition, each student was provided with all necessary educational materials including textbooks and manuals at no cost to them or their families. In June 2016, 12 students graduated from the Ruth School. In the fall, 9 *of these students* continued their education either in formal high school or secondary education training programs.

Mathematics and Romanian Language & Literature are the two main subject areas used for the national exam at the end of the 8th grade which consists of subject matter accumulating from years 5 - 8 instruction. In order to ensure that students the best potential understanding, 30 *students* participated in after-school & Saturday tutoring with specialized instructors in these areas.

After finishing completing their first eight years of education at the Ruth School, 32 *high school* students returned for individual and group tutoring in Romanian Language and Literature along with Advanced Mathematics on Saturdays at the Ruth School. In addition to tutoring support for graduates, the Project Ruth social worker maintains contact with 30 *former Ruth School* who are in high school and trade school to encourage them through school supplies, references and contact with current educators.

In 2016, 44 *Ruth School students* in years 1- 4 participated in the **Afterschool** program. This program continues to follow format of providing two hours of homework assistance time with qualified tutors who are often Ruth School teachers themselves. After these two hours of homework time, the after-school director along with spirited volunteers organize enrichment activities including library time, English lessons, computer time, craft, personal development class and other age appropriate lessons. These students are provided with a nutritious sandwich daily along with fresh fruit three times per week.

Through a collaboration with CBF, *13 students* with learning difficulties as identified by their teachers and evaluated by a third-party psychologist. These students have been receiving individualized learning attention by the Ruth School Special Education instructor. These *13 students* have one on one lessons on in areas of difficulty with the instructor while also having group sessions. Each student has personalized services averaging four hours per week.

The **Obed Day Center** served as a pre-school education program for a total of *27 4 & 5 year-olds* during 2016. These children are very well prepared for classroom instruction with basic knowledge and exemplary classroom decorum in contrast to children who did not attend pre-school education before enrolling in the Ruth School.

239 current students and *20 graduates* received complete back-to-school packets consisting of all the grade level appropriate needed material such as notebooks, pens, and art supplies. These packets were funded through various donations and made it possible for these students to not only attend classes but to actively learn and obtain knowledge from classroom instruction.

9 individuals passed traditional school age enrolled through the assistance of Project Ruth staff in local Second Chance programs in the Ferentari community. Project Ruth has also provided them with all the supplies they need for these programs.

To further increase the quality of education, Fundatia Providenta coordinated and hosted several Academy of Teachers for Ruth School teachers and other Bucharest/Ifov educators.

Women's Programs

In 2016, *35 women*, mainly from the Ferentari community, had one or more sessions with a professional counselor at the Naomi Center in regard to personal psychological issues. In addition to psychological counseling, many of these women also benefited from career counseling services including career aptitude tests, CV assistance, mock interviews and other services. *61 different women* participated in large group meetings during which topics that were applicable to their lives are were presented on a monthly basis. Also, at the **Naomi Counseling Center**, *44 women* took part in sewing club, which is held on a daily basis during which women learn basic sewing skills. Many of the women advanced beyond repairing their

family's clothing. They produce items which are then sold by the Naomi Center in festivals in-country and through various international platforms.

In 2016 through the partnership with CERI, Fundatia Providenta launched a childcare subsidy program for mothers seeking employment. As part of this pilot program, 5 women were selected and their children (totaling 7) were enrolled in a full-time childcare facility. The agreement with the mothers was that this program would fund this child-care as long as the women were able to find & maintain employment. All five women found employment or vocational training programs within the first three months of programming. The childcare expenses will be covered through this program at 50% for the second year of childcare until the children are school age as long as the mothers maintain employment.

Social Assistance

Once a semester, each Ruth School student receives various articles of often brand-new **clothing** donated by various supporters with the majority coming from supporting churches in the UK. Many of the students were also able to select a pair of lightly used shoes. These donations helped increased each student's ability to attend school during the winter months as they had warm clothes and decent shoes in which to make their journey to the Ruth School.

In December of 2016, three Project Ruth Staff members, nine Project Ruth volunteers and 24 American volunteers through a partnership with CERI joined together to distribute over **4000 pairs of winter boots** to children and young adults in need across Romania. These boots were purchased through the fundraising efforts of CERI and distributed through the network of contacts that Project Ruth has built through Gypsy Smith School graduates. Each individual pair of boots was placed on the recipient to insure that the sizing was perfect.

Fifty-five students in years 6-8 participated in the **Transitional Care Program** which is coordinated and led by a social worker. This program focuses on preparing these young teenagers to be successful in adulthood through monthly discussions and lessons on various topics such as time management, nutrition & food safety, human trafficking awareness, study skills and drug abuse.

All 212 Ruth School students had access to a **hot meal** each school day which was prepared in the Ruth School kitchen. The Ruth School administrator and kitchen staff worked to further

improve the further the nutritional content of the meals and revised the menus in accordance to consumption rates.

In 2016, the Project Ruth social worker supported **19** beneficiaries through the acquisition of **legal documentation**, 3 beneficiaries assistance to obtain access to social canteen, 10 beneficiaries to enroll in National Medical Institute, 4 beneficiary families through preparation of documentation for emergency aid.

Medical & Hygiene

The United Way of Romania is facilitating to Fundatia Providenta a grant from PEPSI which began in November 2015. This grant seeks to improve the daily consumption of **fruits** and vegetables by at least 50% by enhancing its existing hot lunch program with a mid-afternoon nutritional supplement including a piece of in-season fresh fruit along with other a la carte items as prescribed by a professional nutritionist after reviewing the nutrition levels in students' blood tests. Furthermore, the overall health of the students is sought to be bettered through twice weekly **sports program** at a state of the art facility which will not only result in better performance on the sports field but also in the classroom as the CDC has demonstrated in various studies that there is in fact a positive correlation between extra-curricular physical activity and grade point averages. The 50 Improvements in 50 Weeks program seeks not only to have a direct impact on the 50 students who are enrolled in the twice weekly sports training and daily nutritional support program but also the community at large by monitoring the progress of these beneficiaries over the course of 50 weeks with the intention of share this progress in order to increase the community knowledge of the importance of proper nutrition and sports activities.

In the calendar year of 2016, more than 1800 individuals from the Ferentari community were enrolled in the **Medical Cabinet** that operates in partnership with Dr. Denisa Baboi.

Because of the low levels of personal sanitation facilities and high poverty rates, many Ruth School girls in the older years are unable to attend school during their monthly menstruation. The Ruth School nurse combats the mentality of shame and barrier to learning by providing **feminine hygiene products** to more than *35 Ruth School girls*.

Gypsy Smith School

The **Gypsy Smith School** graduated *three church leaders* in 2016. These men had completed a total of 16 courses over the course of eight sessions. During the three sessions of the Gypsy Smith School in the traditional setting, *32 leaders* participated in at least two courses.

Administration

The Ruth Center main floor and church building were made handicap accessible by the installation of a concrete ramp that conforms with the standards of local authorities for public institutions.

The Ruth School kitchen storage space and bathroom was renovated to conform with the most recent health standards set forth by the local authorities. Furthermore, the entire basement including chapel space, dining room and sports room was rehabilitated and repainted.

Climate control units that were received in a donation were installed in the Foundation office, Library and IT room. These units allow for these spaces to be fully utilized even during the hot summer months for Foundation activities and summer clubs with Ruth School students.

Volunteer Teams

Project Ruth was blessed by many various volunteer teams in the 2016 calendar year. These teams enhanced the various ministries of Project Ruth by providing fresh energy, renewed strength and overwhelming encouragement to current staff and programming.

- First Baptist Dalton
- Five Oaks Church
- Ronella Daniel
- Andy Brockbank & team
- Wollaston Free Church
- Bonsack Baptist Church
- Impact Bucharest (Virginia Baptists)

- CBF Heartland
- CERI Shoe Mission

Other Activities

After the passing of long-time Project Ruth advocate Klaus Dahm, Project Ruth assumed the responsibility of creating Christmas gifts for all Ruth School students through donations from various individuals and churches including Klaus' memorial fund. The gifts were created according to the needs and interests of each age group and gender.

In partnership with the United Way of Romania, Fundatia Providenta organized periodic meetings with parents of children enrolled in the Ruth School and Obed Day Center. In this year, **81 parents** benefited from trainings in subjects including but not limited to human trafficking awareness, drug addiction & abuse, how to read with your child, discipline styles.

Grants

The United Way of Romania continued to subsidized maintenance costs by providing funding for utilities. In addition, the United Way supports the Ruth School through food programs and literacy materials. Furthermore, United Way helps to support the work of the Foundation through funding for administrative costs such as accounting.

Through CERI, ExxonMobil continues to support the Naomi Center Counseling Center and its sewing programs. Furthermore, ExxonMobil supports the afterschool program along with the transitional care initiatives.

Overview of Project Ruth Activities in 2016

Education

212 socio-economically disadvantaged children were enrolled at the Ruth School

265+ school supply packets distributed

27 children were given a strong educational foundation at the Obed Day Center

77 students in grades 1 - 4 completed their daily homework under the supervision of tutors

515 hours in Romanian & Mathematics tutoring for current students

13 students received specialized instruction as part of the Special Education program.

26.45% increase in knowledge in Life Skills Training courses by students in grades 6 - 8

12 students completed the 8th grade

30 Ruth School graduates received continued support by Project Ruth Social Workers

350+ hours of high school tutoring for Ruth School graduates

50 Ruth School students learned how to live healthy lives through Rugby, Soccer, Volleyball, Basketball & Handball instruction at Steaua Sports Club

Humanitarian Aid

32,000+ meals served in Ruth School cafeteria

Dental care instruction and supplies provided to **165 children aged 7 - 11**

1800+ individuals provided health care through partner clinic on Project Ruth campus

2000+ articles of clothing distributed to those in need in the Ferentari community and neighboring villages

4000 pairs of winter boots disbursed amongst children and teenagers in **15 villages** across Romania in partnership with CERI.

Community Development

32 church leaders attended the Gypsy Smith School

3 leaders completed their training at the Gypsy Smith School

81 parents and caregivers participated in periodic Parents Academy seminars

9 adults enrolled in local Second Chance Educational Program to make up missing years of education.

Women's Empowerment

44 women participated in sewing club

2500+ sewing hours completed

In November & December, **16 women** on average had a profit of **436 RON** from Christmas sales

61 women attended Group Counseling meetings

5 women found gainful employment through Childcare support programs

15 women benefitted from Career Development Services

6 women attended and completed vocational trainings sponsored by Fundatia Providenta

Working hours extended by 4 hours per day for **150+ days** for more than 40 working parents of Ruth School students through After-School initiatives.