

# BIGGIN HILL ROMANIA GROUP

## NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2023



### Welcome to the BHRG Spring Newsletter

Reflecting on our first year as the new stewards of this much-loved and vital charity, it is good to record that The Robert Cole Centre is thriving, we ran a successful Christmas appeal and we received a quantity of generous donations that enabled us to help a number of families with some larger household items. And now we are launching a new appeal – so read all about our latest news below.....

#### FUNDRAISING

**Sponsored walk** – Committee members and supporters of the BHRG live in different parts of the UK and Romania, but we will join together over the month of September to raise money by completing a sponsored walk.

We would like you to join us by walking where you live and asking your friends and family to sponsor you in raising funds for our sensory appeal.

If you would like to participate please register your interest by emailing – [balaamsue5@gmail.com](mailto:balaamsue5@gmail.com).

We are always looking for new ways to raise funds, so if you have any bright ideas please do contact [balaamsue5@gmail.com](mailto:balaamsue5@gmail.com).

### Gift Aid

*If you are a UK taxpayer and you give monthly or have made a donation – please can you complete the attached 'gift aid' form and return it to [Balaamsue5@gmail.com](mailto:Balaamsue5@gmail.com), so that we can update our records.*

*Thank you.*

### The Christmas Appeal 2022 raised £1,800.

We were able to help more than **25** families with bags of food, toiletries and colouring/craft materials for children.

All the photos on the following pages are used with the permission of recipients.

## Christmas Appeal 2022





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*In addition, during the Christmas deliveries we were able to use some donations to help buy a top-loading semi-automatic washing machine for a single dad with 5 children who was living without running water in a one room dwelling. We purchased and delivered a soba (a wood-burning heating and cooking system) to a very sick grandmother who is raising her grandchildren, to replace a broken one so that she didn't have to return from a Cancer operation to a freezing cold home. We also helped a pregnant mum with buying some much-needed vitamins and a thermometer.*



**The number of children accessing vital therapeutic support at the Centre has increased to 85.** All the children receiving therapy have been diagnosed as autistic, or have a disability, and are experiencing physical/emotional developmental delay. The RCC has a growing reputation as a centre of excellence throughout the region as paediatricians are acknowledging the change they see in their patients and are recommending families to the service.

Once enrolled, Cristina and her staff work hard to encourage parents to continue to bring their children for therapy. Helping parents to understand and appreciate how therapy can support their child's development and enhance their quality of life. In such a poor community prioritising the needs of their disabled child is in direct conflict with feeding the family.

Some children access therapy twice weekly and this can make a huge difference, as a charity we would like to make it possible for the families where this financial conflict exists to access funding that will support their continued attendance. If you are one of our monthly sponsors, your generosity is keeping this critical facility open. If you would like to make a monthly donation and partner with us and the RCC in increasing the opportunities for our poorer children to attend, please see giving details at the end of this newsletter.

**With the permission of the child's parents, in each newsletter we feature one of the children whose life is being changed by this facility. This is Ovidiu's story, told by his mum Elena.**

**Ovidiu** is my only child and was born sequelae of infantile encephalopathy and hypotonia. I noticed around 13 months that Ovidiu had no intention of walking whatsoever, and although he did pull himself up to stand, he never put his feet flat on the floor and always looked very unstable.

After many GP visits back and forth we were offered a referral to Orthopaedics where Ovidiu had a full assessment with X-rays and he was recommended physiotherapy and wear orthopaedic boots. I was absolutely heartbroken and it felt like my world had crashed around me. I was told my precious baby boy may never walk properly and if he did to what degree was unknown. Months passed and Ovidiu had made no real progress, I still had concerns so I contacted Robert Cole Centre and explained our story and asked if someone could help us. I hit rock bottom, but these people stepped up to support us and our journey began.

*Continued on next page....*



**Ovidiu's father: "The results have been dumbfounding. He is making incredible progress. Without RCC, we would be in a very different place, looking at a very different future. The RCC team has already changed his life and ours. Please support this charity".**



**Ovidiu started physiotherapy and gym therapy** in October 2018 and then speech therapy. The therapists worked so hard with him, it was very effective as Ovidiu just thought he was playing. The progress he made was completely overwhelming. To Ovidiu and I they weren't just therapists they became friends, they were always reassuring and remained optimistic.

Being a special needs mum is tremendously challenging, not just physically but emotionally too. Sometimes it's very easy to give up hope but having the support of the Robert Cole people kept me going and feeling hopeful for Ovidiu. I always left our therapy sessions with a positive vibe.

Ovidiu got stronger and became even more confident with his walking and he also started talking like the other children. The people in this centre had literally helped Ovidiu find his feet and voice, he went from strength to strength and totally exceeded our expectations and the doctors. He is such a determined little boy despite his everyday challenges.

Today Ovidiu is almost six and attends a kindergarten in Comanesti. Life has taught me what's important and what really isn't. Ovidiu has taught me so much.

**"Always stay positive and have faith because miracles do happen. The Robert Cole Centre has completely changed our lives and made every day the best day. Ovidiu is an inspiration and to see the happiness and smiles on Ovidiu's face and his ability to be the same as everyone else, I am forever grateful."**

Elena

### **INTRODUCING OUR NEXT APPEAL.....**

*The charity is launching an appeal to raise money to fund the development of a 'sensory room' that will be situated within the RCC. We need to raise at least £10,000 to make this possible. We intend to apply for some funding, and we will be fundraising (see planned walk for September 2023 below). The sensory room will be named the Dolan Room as a way of acknowledging the legacy that Sandra Dolan and her late husband Jo have created with their enormous contribution to helping the children of Comanesti over the past 30 years.*

*Sensory rooms are evidenced as providing a multitude of developmental opportunities for those who can access them.*

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PARTNER WITH US IN FUNDING THE ROBERT COLE CENTRE OR TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO THE DOLAN ROOM APPEAL, YOU WILL FIND DETAILS OF HOW TO DONATE AT THE END OF THIS NEWSLETTER.**

## WAYS TO GIVE

If you would like to partner with us to support those children who are in need in Romania with this essential resource, please consider giving via one of the methods below.

### **Bank Transfer to**

**Sort Code: 20-14-33**

**Account number: 80760706.**

### **Why not set up a standing order?**

**BHRG is a registered charity so completing a Gift Aid form increases the value of your donation by 25%.**


### **Everyclick**

**If you are a regular online browser please consider the following way to raise funds for the BHRG: Visit the [Everyclick](#) website and click on Sign Up. Choose Biggin Hill Romania Group as your supported charity.**

In Association with The  
Registered NGO in Romania  
Asociatia Robert Cole.

Registered Charity Number  
1006937.



Find us on  and here  
[Biggin Hill Romania Group -  
Home](#)

## LETTER FROM ADRIAN WOODROFFE – OUR ‘MAN ON THE GROUND’ IN COMANESTI.....

I’m delighted that Sue Balaam has been appointed Chairwoman of Biggin Hill Romania Group so that the charity may continue and flourish, serving and supporting families and individuals in and around the area of Comanesti where, unfortunately, there remains so much hardship and need. It was lovely that following her successful online Christmas appeal towards the end of 2022, Sue was again able to come to Comanesti for a few days and help with the purchase, storage, sorting, packing and distribution of food, toiletry items as well as gifts that were delivered to people – some of whom are known to those of you who have ventured to Comanesti with the charity. A few photos of items purchased and delivered are shown within this newsletter.

Life here in Comanesti continues to hurl various and often unexpected challenges but I’m pleased to be part of the community. Other than, on occasions the weather, there’s never a dull day in Comanesti. Virtually every day I’m shocked or surprised by something or someone – whether it’s another electricity power cut or the mains water supply being disconnected without warning again; the beautiful and heart-warming smile on someone’s face; conversations in the street; the plight of the destitute; the gentleness and comfort of someone who cares and supports; the unexpected death of a good friend; the politeness of strangers; the number of stray dogs that have been rounded up elsewhere and unloaded from the back of a vehicle and released in the town; the quite remarkable excitement, happiness - and sadness - that was almost overwhelming after two logs for a fire were collected from a forestry road (but that – like so many – is a long story); being understood/ misunderstood; an update on a family struggling to survive. The list goes on.

I hope you’ll help and support the revamped charity. As I mentioned above, there is still so very much hardship and suffering with a lot of desperation and need. If you’re in a position to make a one-off, or better still, a regular donation it really would be very welcome, be put to good use, and be much appreciated.

Adrian Woodroffe