

BIGGIN HILL ROMANIA GROUP

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2022



Hello and Welcome to the Summer edition of the BHRG Newsletter!

We want to share some exciting news about the charity. We acknowledge that you haven't heard from us for a while or how the charity is using your sponsorship and donations, so we have included an update from Cristina Chirila the Director of the Robert Cole Centre.

The Biggin Hill Romania Group has undergone some changes, this is due to the retirement of some of our long serving committee members. For Chris Walker this has been 32 years of service, Chris was one of the founder members alongside Sandra and the late Joe Dolan. Other members of the retiring committee are Caroline Budimir, Chris Case and Elaine Budden. These women, and often their husbands and families, have committed countless hours of their time, skills, energy and thought life into the following activities: fund raising including sponsored walks; organising afternoon teas, dinners and quiz nights; performing in concerts; standing at fetes; packing and collecting family and shoe boxes; flying out to Romania at Christmas to help with deliveries to schools and families; promoting the charity; giving talks; organising groups; loading and unloading trucks come rain or shine; managing the charity finances and so very much more. For your commitment to making life better for countless children, the difference you have made is vast, and on behalf of the new committee and the children and families whose lives have been changed – Thank You!

We are pleased to say that Sandra Dolan remains as a Trustee and a committee member but has decided to relinquish her role as Chairperson.

So let us introduce our new committee

Sue Balaam – Chair (Trustee)
Jordan Doyle - Treasurer
Sandra Dolan - Trustee
Toni Shave - Trustee
Cristina Chirila - Committee Member

The charity will continue as The Biggin Hill Romania Group, although the committee members live in various parts of the UK and Romania. We are taking advantage of our newly found confidence in hosting meetings on Microsoft Teams or Zoom.

We are excited to be taking the BHRG into the future and to build on the achievements of the past 30 years. We will be keeping in touch with our supporters and sponsors on a regular basis, sharing fundraising activities and developing ways in which we can promote our work including updating our website and improving our social media presence.

We are delighted to share with you the continued work that is happening at the Robert Cole Centre. If you are one of our sponsors, this is what your monthly donations are helping to provide.



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- *The Robert Cole Centre employs 3 full-time members of staff – Cristina is the Director.*
 - *The Centre provides therapies – speech therapy, physiotherapy, behaviour therapy, complimentary therapies.*
 - *These therapies are for children with disabilities aged between 12/18 months up to 18 years of age.*
 - *The Centre is open officially from 8am until 4pm (this can be extended to 5/5.30pm) Monday to Friday.*
 - *The 7 therapists (5 Speech and Language, and 2 Physiotherapists) all have ‘service contracts’ and are working at the Special School.*
 - *There are currently 75 children enrolled at the Robert Cole Centre.*

The RCC provides a much-needed resource to local families. Without it, families would need to travel to Bacau or Targu Ocna where the treatment is much more expensive and they would incur travel costs. In many cases, this would prohibit the child receiving treatment. Also, if they were to miss an appointment they are likely to be discharged and it would be difficult to get them re-referred.

The families of the children attending the RCC do not have a good wealth status. They receive money from the state to pay for their child’s treatment. Cristina and her team spend a lot of time counselling families where there is an extremely limited budget, and not enough food, and where they need encouragement and understanding to prioritise the treatment needs of their children.

Some families who use the RCC are poor, some have children who are very ill, some have 2 or 3 disabled children in one family and some of the children are in foster families.

There is a story behind each and every one who comes to our centre, and everyone's story is different.

That's the beauty of Robert Cole Centre: we are here to support all ages and all abilities in an individual way. We are here to enable ability in all.

Since 1996 Robert Cole Centre continues to change lives for so many children with disabilities and also their families - from parents coming to terms with their child's diagnosis, children who can't access mainstream school or activities, children who need support with movement, speech and life skills.

Here is one story of one of the little girls you would meet at Robert Cole Centre -

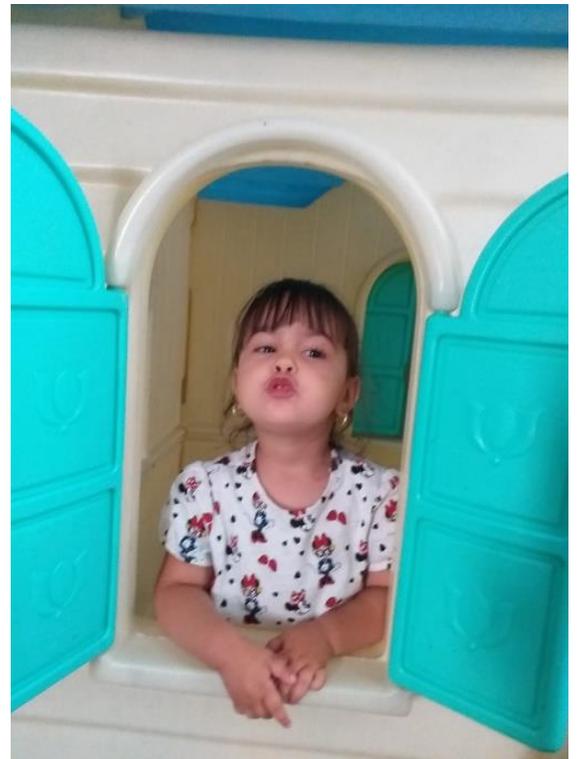
Bella was born with a global developmental disorder predominantly on the motor side and a mitochondrial disease and joined our centre in May 2019 when she was 2 years and 6 months old.

She is such a happy little girl who really enjoys her time here. It was a really difficult time for everybody. The child was crying almost all the time. She didn't allow anyone to touch her and she was staying only with her mother. It took almost 6 months to try to know us and she was coming only to play with toys. She refused any therapy. Later on she accepted physiotherapy sessions and speech therapy and now she can count and speak about colours and shapes. She loves role playing and has a great imagination.

Bella is still weaker on her left side so she finds some activities more challenging, but she is always encouraged to use both legs to enable her build strength. Her passion is arts and crafts and messy play. She will regularly be covered in paint, mud, glue and other delightful substances, much to Mum's horror!

“I was told Bella may never walk or talk, it's very easy to give up hope but having the support of Robert Cole Centre always kept me feeling positive.

All the Robert Cole staff were amazing with Bella. They showed patience and compassion through fun. Bella was welcomed as soon as she walked through the door and heard her name from all angles, which was so heart-warming. Now every day is the best day and Bella leads the most amazing life. All thanks to your people”



WAYS TO GIVE

If you would like to partner with us to support those children who are in need in Romania, 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](#)



Valerie Waterson, a long-time supporter of BHRG and frequent visitor/volunteer to Comanesti, died unexpectedly in April this year.

Valerie was a compassionate, generous woman who was greatly loved and will be missed. Valerie's family generously donated from her estate. The money donated was used to provide essential supplies to local families. The picture below shows the bags of provisions that some of the families that attend the Robert Cole Centre received.



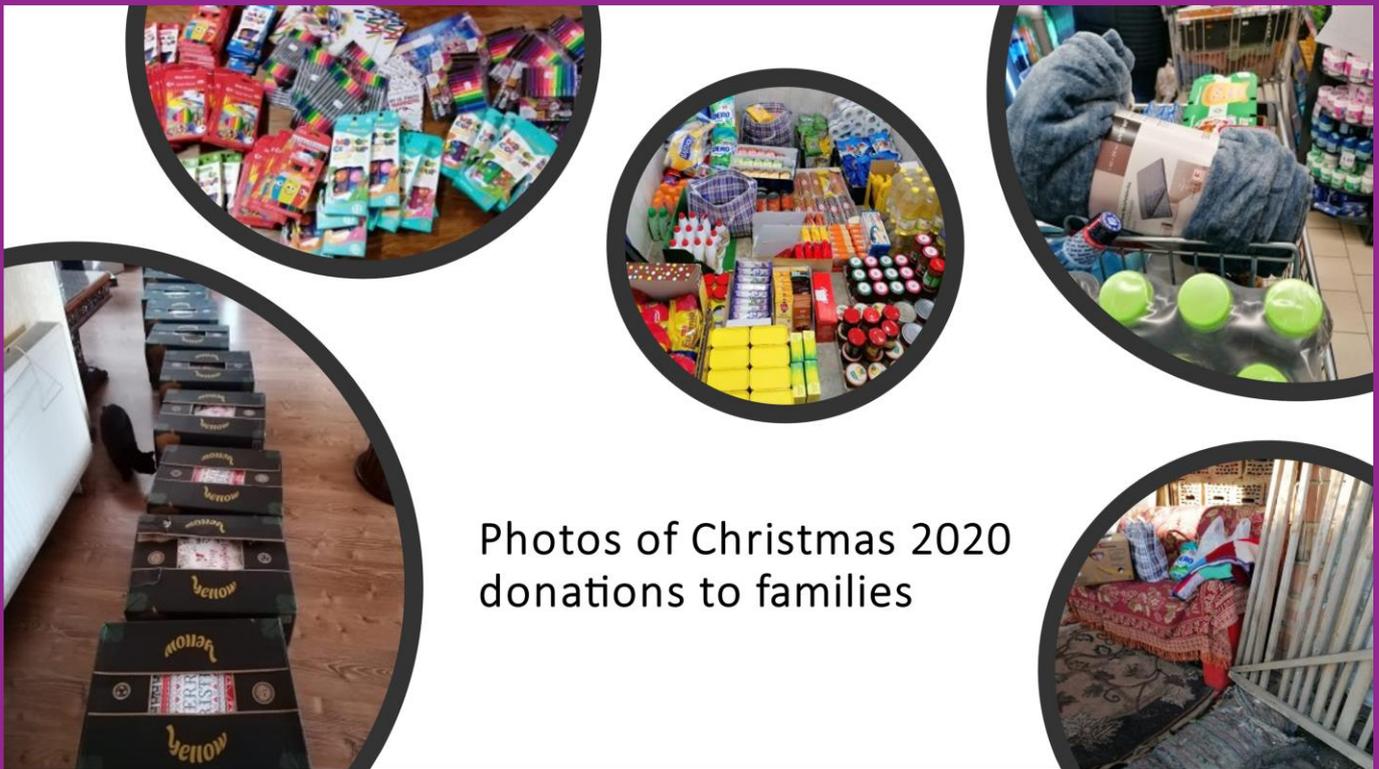
To all our sponsors and supporters who have continued to donate, raise funds, and keep the charity viable despite the challenges of Covid, cost of living and competing causes – Thank You. We could not continue without your support.



CHRISTMAS 2022

2020 Christmas Appeal - In the months leading up to December 2020, the charity launched a social media appeal and raised an incredible £5,324. We were unable to send any volunteers to Romania because of the pandemic and the rules in place regarding testing and isolating.

As a result, Adrian Woodroffe enrolled the help of his wife Cristina and son Stefan along with Cristina Chirila. Together they shopped, purchased, packed and delivered – in the snow, household items, food and toys to help ease the burden and bring a little relief to some 270 beneficiaries whose lives had been impacted by the pandemic. As you can see in some of the photographs, Adrian's home was overtaken with boxes and bags.



Photos of Christmas 2020 donations to families

This year we hope to launch another appeal and send a team out to help, we will be launching in September – so watch this space.....



And last, but not least, Adrian Woodroffe is a granddad! 😊

Congratulations to Adrian who became a grandfather in November 2021 when his daughter Hannah and her partner David gave birth to a boy, named Forest.

Adrian is besotted.