

## Biggin Hill Romania Group

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# Autumn 2013



### End of Year Awards Ceremony 2013 – Congratulations Everybody!

The last day of term at the Robert Cole and Foundations For Life Centre saw all the young people celebrating their achievements. Each one was presented with their Diploma and you can see how pleased they all were to receive them (can you spot the eldest? Not sure he really attended either Centre as a student!). They also re-

ceived pencil cases and stationery which they will really enjoy using during the summer holidays. There were fun and games for all during the day and parents were also able to be a part of it. What really strikes me is the obvious affection between the pupils and the staff, and even between the older students and the youngsters.

It truly reflects the family feel of the whole building– staff and young people come to see each other as a real extended family.





**OUR VISIT TO COMANESTI -JUNE 2013:** This was my first visit to Comanesti and I was anxious to know what I would find. I had been preparing for weeks, buying up bits and pieces for our Summer Activity Week at the Robert Cole Centre. I was partnering my friend, Hazel Clifton who had been to Romania once before, leading the Tractor Team.

I was nearly 'tractored out' before I even arrived, with tractor books, toys and colouring pages. Hazel and I photocopied various tractor and farm related pages for the children to colour and had other activities arranged. I had helped the previous Saturday loading the lorry that arrived at Barclays, Poole and was due to arrive in Comanesti the Friday before we did. This was full of boxes of clothing, furniture, a football table (which was very well received by the children), a see saw, boxes and boxes of the 'Pringle Pencil Cases', carpet and other various articles including our boxes for the children's activities.



Unfortunately, due to the floods and mechanical faults, the lorry did not arrive until the Monday after we did and, together with the teachers and other helpers, we spent a busy few hours unloading.



We were pleased to be reunited with all the bits and pieces for our class and knew that on Tuesday, we could start using all the items that we'd prepared for the children. The children responded very well to our activities and we all got great enjoyment from doing the things together. I was surprised how well behaved and quiet the children



were while they concentrated on the tasks; they responded so well. We made various things, including sock puppets, (unfortunately, much to the amusement of the children, the eyes kept falling off), and scarecrow masks, which the children wore when acting the simple play that was written for the party on the Thursday afternoon. This was a wonderful success. The week went very quickly because, in between being with the children, I had the opportunity to deliver some of the 'pencil cases' and stationery supplies





to other schools. The children at the two schools were so appreciative and well behaved. We were invited for soft drinks and cakes as a thank you from one of the schools. This was lovely.

During my stay we visited a few different families, delivering donated food and essential items. I found this a very humbling and worthwhile experience. One of the things I noticed was, no matter what living conditions they were in, or how poor the families were, the children were nearly always smiling. The week wasn't all work. We had a very good team – Lyn, Jayne, Neil, Anna, Hazel and myself. We worked well together from prepar-



ing meals, sorting out the school shop, cooking with the children to acting out the play, singing and dancing, and enjoying games. At the end of the week, we went into town together for the Day Against Violence where the children watched various dance displays, chalked pictures on the road and participated in a



parade.

If you're thinking of joining a group to Comanesti, do go. Not only are you helping these under privileged children but it is such a rewarding thing to do. I will definitely be returning again. **Linda Wheel**



There are opportunities for volunteers to join groups to help at the summer activity sessions like Linda, with painting the building's interior or delivering Christmas shoeboxes. Contact details on the last page of the Newsletter.

**Wanted:** childrens' shoes in various sizes and in reasonable condition for these Romanian children and others like them. Our next trip to Romania is planned for Christmas. As well as "shoebox" gifts we would like to be able to take a supply of footwear for these children: **the Editor**



**The Roof Family:** to update our regular readers on this family, their roof is continuing to fall into disrepair and each day the threat of its collapse on the family of eleven living in the one room increases. Geraldine Dolan and Claire Williams have been working to raise money to pay for the rebuild of this home and the two either side as they are all three linked as one build. £10,000 was the quote from a local builder. Currently, £2,800 has been raised. Phil Williams who is a surveyor/engineer is travelling out at the end of September to see if there is a cheaper alternative to rebuild so watch this space!



In the beginning



6 months gone



After one year.....



One fine day, Joe Dolan, our esteemed Chairlady's hubbie, foolishly suggested he would stop cutting his hair for one year if he was sponsored. Unsurprisingly, people jumped at the chance! As it grew over the year, some people mistook him for Einstein. (the fact that Einstein died in 1955 is a worry!) He brushed it back, gelled it

The day of reckoning!



Did he go to Spec Savers?!



Fortified for the final push .....



down and wore a hair-net (I made up the last bit!) The day finally came in July when Joe's hair finally came off and he could throw away the gell. And he has raised £1,600 so far, so it was not in vain!

Ta! Da! A new man (Well, the old man returned!)

# Fundraising is Fun!



**T424 Ten Pounds!** Saturday morning in July, praying for good weather, I opened my garden to guests for afternoon tea. We had collected quite a few sets of cup, saucer and plate, along with tea pots so that we could offer a traditional, English, afternoon tea. The sun shone in the morning, the tables were set: cakes, scones, biscuits, macaroons and sandwiches were ready and the guests arrived. Many of our neighbours came to support us and because Biggin

Hill is such a small community, many people knew each other so it was a lovely atmosphere. Jill and Jade from our local Barclays Bank worked with us to keep the guests supplied with drinks and food as well as chatting and entertaining. The youngest guest was only a few months old and the oldest was ...I will not divulge! We were just reaching the cake stage, after the macaroons, when the rain started. But being British, we just ignored it. Then the fat rain began, and it came down in sheets! Most people ran for cover but we are made of strong stuff so everybody just carried on inside, eating cake and chatting some more! It was a lovely afternoon and we raised £220 which Barclays will match £4£: **the Editor**



**Jill and Jade from Barclays, still smiling after being caught in the downpour!**

**St Marks Church Fest:** Elaine, Megan, Annaliese and I set up a stall at the Church Fest and had a very busy time! We decided to offer second hand books, Jewellery, biscuit decorating (brave Megan! Decorating biscuits with icing, jellies, chocolate drops and all sorts! Very messy but great fun!) and face painting. I spent about three hours on my knees, painting faces with butterflies, Spiderman, army camouflage and flower power to name a few. I soon had a long queue! At least the rain held off although it was freezing! **Caroline Budimir**



**Sainsbury's Vouchers:** Thank you so much to everyone who collected Sainsbury's vouchers again this year for us. We received a total of 8007 and that enabled us to order an Active Kids Inclusive Kit - with over 55 pieces of equipment the products included in this kit are designed to encourage and enable sensory development and the

variety of bright and new products will set the senses alive! The kit includes a variety of auditory, tactile and visual items. Megascoops – this scoop makes catching and throwing easy and offers a choice of movement and gameplay as players can scoop the ball whilst running, walking, standing, or on a scooter. Foam fliers – hardwearing polyurethane foam throwing discs. Dancing wrist scarves – Ideal for dance activities. Each elasticated wrist-



band has 24 brightly coloured ribbons attached which trace the wrist's movement, leaving the hands free to create artistic expression. We don't have any photos of this kit being used by the students yet but you can see that



other items which have been donated are certainly enjoyed by all ages and definitely encourage them to work and play together as one large family. Such Fun! **The Editor**



**During their visit for the Activity Week this June,** Lyn and her team from Poole also visited schools to distribute either Pringle pots or pencil-cases

full of stationery supplies. The pupils were able to use those items at home over the last three months before the new academic school year started in September. Thanks to all those who helped with this project! They were also able to give out two large boxes full of school uniform which were donated from the UK. Don't the children look smart!



**Good News!** Those of you who know Razvan, our driver, and his wife, Veronica will be overjoyed to hear that they now have a lovely baby boy, Rares George. Both Mum and baby are fine. I think Razvan is besotted with this little bundle! And rightly so!



**A grown man cried today!** My wife, Cristina, Monica from the charity Habitat for Humanity and I delivered a brand new washing machine, bought with money from generous donors, to a top floor flat. When the husband came outside to help carry the washing machine up the very many stairs to the apartment he shares with his wife and their four children, he saw the appliance and burst in to tears (of joy). He was overwhelmed and so very grateful for the gifts and help provided for his family. It took three people to carry the washing machine to the top floor of the building in which the



family live (while I trailed behind taking a couple of photos along the way)! The mother of the four very young children was also absolutely delighted and then when the washing machine was being unwrapped she couldn't believe that it was a fully automatic one and then literally started jumping up and down in excitement - and her husband again burst in to tears. They were both so very, very happy and appreciative and it was a pleasure and privilege being there to see their excitement and joy. The four children are aged just five years; four years; two years; and the littlest is just 7 months old. It is hoped that with support the two older children will be able to start school (or kindergarten) in September. Adrian (the husband and father) is also very grateful for the bicycle that had been included on the recent truck for him. He said that he uses it to get to and from the occasional paid work he's able to secure and he cycles many miles. The

family are also very pleased with the pram and travel cot that had been sent over for them too: **Adrian Woodroffe**

**Archbishop Tenison's Church of England School:** I received this E mail the other day from a form tutor at the school where I used to teach—'I am pleased to inform you that my tutor group, 7F, was able to raise in total £110 on Saturday during the summer fair for Romania. We ran X-Box game, penalty shoot out and sold Jollof rice. **Linda Kalu.**' I arranged to go to the school to receive the money and chatted to the class about what their donation could be spent on. I told them the above story and they overwhelmingly voted to offer their money for a similar gift to a family in need. They chose some great ideas to raise the money and obviously enjoyed doing it. Well done 7F and **THANK YOU! Caroline Budimir**



**Young Knitters:** On Monday 1st July I was invited to my old primary school, Swanage Primary. They had a small morning assembly and the children were very well behaved. Mrs Kim Gallager, the lady who organises the knitting group with her helper Mrs Mandy Best, read out to the children information I had written about Biggin Hill, The Robert Cole Centre, the children, the Pringle pots collection of crayons and pencils and Christmas shoeboxes. ( I was too nervous with all the eyes looking at me!) The blankets are very good with the school initials and with the children's names on it. The children in the picture are from the after school knitting club and they presented me with two blankets in the assembly. **Teresa Bower**

You can see in the picture with this article that blankets made from knitted squares sewn together, are very welcome, not only for cots but as large as double bed size, especially in the very cold winters—so get knitting! **The Editor**



**Building update:** the rear façade looks very patchy at the moment as repairs and new works are being undertaken. The road at the front also looks like a building site as it is dug up to repair the utilities. All good stuff!



**The Top Floor a.k.a. the Rose Centre:** scenes which previously looked like this, now look like this. The painting party begins on Sunday Sept 22nd and we are really pleased that our patron, Esther Blythe, is coming to join the merry band! We will also be choosing light fittings, doors, bathroom fittings, carpets, deciding on the placing of sockets etc.—all things which mean the project is moving on! I am due to go shopping with Adrian to look for goods—should be interesting! I wonder if we will agree .....



**The Centre Shop:** the shop continues to be a steady source of income, especially when Barclays can match sales £4£. If you are thinking of checking out your warmer clothes for winter and putting away your summer clothes (look at this weather! Have you put the heating on yet?) then



maybe you are like me and find items which you cannot believe you got into/dared to wear ! Pack them up and send them our way! We will put them to good use ....

**And Finally:** the BHRG committee is only made up of a small group and now we are losing one of our merry band. Carole Cowe has been the sponsorship secretary for many years and has recently decided to stand down. We would like to express our thanks for all she has done for the cause. However, we are pleased to welcome Annaliese Budimir to the team as our new sponsorship secretary. Please treat her gently , at least until she learns the ropes! Her contact number is 01959 576093. All the fundraising for The Rose Centre has gone so well that we are travelling to Comanesti at the end of September to put the first coats of paint to the walls. Still lots more to be done but well done everyone!! Please check out our attachments for details of the Christmas Shoebox and Family box appeal and let us have your presents ready for packing in the lorry. **Sandra Dolan—Chairperson**

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