



WELCOME - to the new style of electronic newsletter from SHARE/Ascensium. We have decided, given that the vast majority of our supporters are on e-mail, that it makes sense to discontinue sending out newsletters on paper, of which historically there have been three or four each year, and replace them with shorter and more regular (monthly at least) electronic newsletters. This will have several advantages. Firstly it means that you can all be kept much more up to date with the latest developments in Sibiu-land. Secondly we are not restricted to length - they can be as long or as short as required at any given time. Thirdly, if there is a major event or need we can simply send you information almost as soon as we hear about it. Fourthly, it will help us do our bit for the environment by saving on paper and lastly it will be a cheaper and more efficient means of disseminating news and information. So, all in all it seems to make good sense.

### **Latest news from the Sibiu team:**

The health team has been considerably reduced over recent years due to the departures firstly of Arpi and then of Tavi. It now operates under the care of Aurelia Luca and we are looking to employ another nurse to work alongside her so as to better carry out this important programme. Considering the health project is basically a one man team (or one woman in this case) great things are still being achieved. Aurelia recently presented a poster (which she designed and made herself) at the European Society of Contraception Conference in Bucharest. Aurelia won **FIRST PRIZE** for her poster. This entitles her to free entry into next year's conference in Prague (entry fees usually run into hundreds of pounds) and the opportunity of presenting a poster there. This poster presentation aroused

Considerable interest and copies of the poster have been requested by clinics as far a field as Belgium, Spain, Siberia and the Netherlands. This is a hugely impressive achievement and it keeps SHARE/Ascensium to the forefront on matters of health and sex education.

The **School for Parents (Scoala Parintilor)** continues to thrive and because our office is now too small to accommodate the numbers attending these classes we have been given permission to hold the classes in the 'Community Room' at the Astra Library. This does have some small cost implications but given that there is much more space it is worth it.

The **aerobic classes** for pregnant women still take place in the office and are well attended.

Collaboration with the **hospital** remains very good and Lili, a nurse who used to work for us, is running the breast-feeding programme sponsored by **UNICEF**. We are hoping to offer some training to staff in rural health centres so that they can more closely monitor the health of newly discharged mothers, as well as their breast-feeding practices. We hope that a partnership involving **Ascensium, the Director of Health and the University of Sibiu** will facilitate an on-line course, developed by **Coventry University** to enable training, specifically focussed on breast-feeding, for Romanian nurses working with parents. This will be developed in Romanian. It will have to be rolled out over a period of time as some of the staff concerned do not yet have access to the internet.

Aurelia is continuing to teach sex education in schools where she can, and will also be developing once more the post-natal work in villages, working alongside, and supporting, the local nurses in those villages.



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**Educational Programme:** This programme continues to grow and adapt to the changing needs of the children with whom we are in contact. We are cooperating closely both with the Director of Education for Sibiu, and with teachers in many schools. Jane Williams (Coventry) visited last week with two colleagues, Margaret and Gulzar (their report and observations should be on next month's newsletter) to hold a follow-up workshop with kindergarten teachers from right across the County of Sibiu. The original workshop was held by professor Stan Tucker from **Newman College, Warwickshire** several months ago, and which explored the concept of teaching and learning through the medium of 'play'. This is quite a novel idea in Romania and needs to be utilised much, much more than at present. The workshop sessions were attended by **sixty five** teachers and the outcome was extremely positive. This is great news. Gulzar and Margaret also visited the villages to observe our educational programme and were able to make some suggestions which will be considered by Ascensium's team in due course.

**Cristiana** is involved in a national programme which is operating in three regions across the country and which seeks to promote traditions and culture among the children in schools.

We also provide space for a class of children from a nearby school who have no extra room for the children. They make a small contribution towards the rent of the office.

We still have the **Down's Syndrome** young adults with us and they meet twice a week with **Sylvia**. This continues to provide vital support both for the people themselves and for their parents. We offer them a secure and welcome place in which to meet.

**Counselling programme:** Vasile now has

**thirty three** clients registered for counselling and is seeing eighteen of them at the present time. The referrals come to him both by 'word of mouth' and, more usually, from the Psychiatric hospital. Most of the problems are related to depression, phobias, personality disorders, emotional needs or issues to do with relationships. Vasile has nearly completed his training in 'family therapy' and will be able to practice as a registered psychologist for two years under supervision. Vasile is considering starting a PhD next year. It might also be possible for him to start his own private practice so that he can take private clients to help fund his work, and subsidise social clients who are referred to us by the state. This work is highly successful and Vasile is well thought of within the profession. We need to find about **£250** for him to register, receive his own registration number and official stamp. Any offers???

**City of Culture:** As many of you will know this year has seen Sibiu declared the joint European City of Culture. As part of our contribution to this we are hosting, at the Astra library, showings of Shakespeare plays on film. People can come and watch these plays for free on the big screen.

**IT for All:** This programme has now come to an end. It offered a good, basic introduction to IT for those in villages who have little, or no experience of computers. We hope that they will continue to have opportunity to practice their IT skills using the computers that were kindly donated by **Dorothy** for the programme.

**Ecumenical Conference:** Sibiu was host in early September to a huge ecumenical gathering organised primarily under the auspices of CEC (Conference of European Churches) whose General Secretary, Ven Colin Williams, I know