



WINGS OF HOPE INTERNATIONAL

TRANSFORMING the lives of people in MOLDOVA

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Message from WHI President

Dear Friends and Supporters of WHI,

It is a pleasure to extend heartfelt greetings to you on behalf of our Board of Directors, our dedicated partners at AO Neemia in Moldova, and the many individuals whose lives have been touched by your generosity.

This year's newsletter is a bit more extensive than in previous years—and for good reason. This year we celebrated the 10-year anniversary of our partnership with AO Neemia in Cobani, Moldova, and we wanted to take this opportunity to reflect on and share the powerful impact this meaningful collaboration has had. Ten years is more than just a number. It represents a decade of commitment, perseverance, and love for this community. It speaks to the countless hours of hard work, creative problem-solving, unwavering dedication, resilience in the face of setbacks, collaborative spirit, and the courage to keep going even when challenges felt overwhelming.

Most importantly, it represents lives that have been touched, opportunities created, and hope nurtured—in Cobani and beyond. To mark the occasion, AO Neemia presented a beautiful gift to the people of Cobani: a community park that will be enjoyed for generations.

Within these pages, you'll find stories, testimonials, and impact numbers that we hope will provide encouragement—reminding you that your support is not only appreciated but truly making a difference.

Thank you for walking alongside us. Whether you are a longtime partner or newly joining our efforts, we invite you to continue supporting this meaningful work in Moldova.

With deep gratitude and hope,

Alec Zama 

Ten Years of Transformation: How AO Neemia and WHI Changed a Community

By Victor Zama, Executive Director of AO Neemia

Looking back over the past decade, the partnership between AO Neemia and Wings of Hope International (WHI) has brought hope, inspiration, and opportunity to the community of Cobani and beyond. Together, we have turned dreams into reality — showing that dedication, faith, and collaboration can truly transform lives.

From Vision to Action: A Journey of Transformation

When AO Neemia was founded, our vision was simple: to serve where there is need and to improve the lives of people in our community. We didn't have a detailed strategy, but we had the heart and determination to make a difference. Inspired by the story of Nehemiah — who rebuilt Jerusalem's walls centuries ago — we began our own journey of renewal, hope, and dignity in Cobani. Ten years later, we can see how that dream became reality: *how ruined walls turned into vibrant centers, waste grounds became green spaces, and forgotten places came alive again.*

From Ruin to Renewal: The Community Center

It all began with an old, collapsing building — a place that seemed to have no future. Through faith and dedication, AO Neemia transformed that ruin into a modern, lively Community Center buzzing with activity and life. Today, it hosts clubs for children, courses for youth, meetings for adults, and activities for seniors. The community kitchen prepares hot lunches three times per week for 30 elderly and 20 afterschool children. It is a place where every generation finds a reason to believe that change is possible.

From Dumpsite to Movement: A Space for Health

Where once there was a dumpsite, today you can hear laughter and footsteps. With the support of our partners, that neglected area has been transformed into an attractive space equipped with outdoor fitness equipment. Now, residents come to exercise, socialize, and enjoy a healthy lifestyle. What was once a place of neglect has become a symbol of health, renewal, and community pride.

From Neglect to Energy: The Community Sports Field

In the heart of the village, an abandoned field overgrown with weeds has come back to life. Together with our partners, we created a modern sports complex — a place where young people meet, play soccer, basketball, and tennis, train, and grow together. This space has become a hub of energy and connection, where friendships form and values such as discipline, teamwork, and fair play thrive.





Ten Years of Transformation: How AO Neemia and WHI Changed a Community (cont.)

From Danger to Safety: A New Walking Bridge

The small bridge crossing the local river and leading to the tourist area had become unsafe and risky to use. Today, after the installation of a new, wider bridge, everyone — from children to seniors — can cross safely and enjoy easy access to the tourist area.



From Wild Nature to Joy: The 10th Anniversary Gift Park

To celebrate ten years of service in Cobani, AO Neemia wanted to offer a symbolic gift to the community: a park for children and families, created in an area once overrun with weeds and unkempt trees. Now, children's laughter, parents' footsteps, and the soothing whisper of wind through the leaves fill the air. The park is more than a playground — it is a gift of hope and gratitude to everyone who has been part of this journey.



The Power of Partnership

None of this would have been possible without our faithful partner, Wings of Hope International (WHI). Their shared values of faith, commitment, and love for people have helped us achieve remarkable transformations. Together, we have not only changed places but also touched lives — giving children and youth opportunities to learn, helping adults engage in community life, and ensuring the elderly feel supported and valued. Even amid challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and migration for work, our partnership has remained strong and adaptable. While we celebrate how far we've come, we know there is still more to do — in Cobani and beyond.



A Call to Continue the Journey

This fall, as we reflect on a decade of hope and transformation, we invite you to join us in building the next ten years. Your support ensures that Cobani continues to thrive as a place of opportunity, health, and community spirit.

Together, we can keep turning dreams into reality — one life, one project, one act of hope at a time.

With gratitude and appreciation,

Victor Zama, Director, AO "Neemia"



When Kindness Becomes a Calling

By Andre Drost, WHI Vice President

Twenty-seven years ago, God brought Alec (also known as Iouri) Zama into our home as a temporary guest. We had only a few house rules—one being that he join us for dinner at least once or twice a week. Though we asked him not to pay rent, he insisted once he found work. What began as a six-month stay soon grew into a lifelong friendship.

In 2007, Alec invited me to join the board of Wings of Hope International (WHI), where I've served as Vice President ever since. What started as regular meetings filled with Alec's updates about his summer trips to Moldova—working with children, the elderly, and the sick—gradually grew into something much larger. Over time, the impact of WHI became even more significant, especially after WHI and Neemia entered into partnership ten years ago. The love and compassion shown through WHI deeply touched my heart, and I wanted to see firsthand the difference it was making.

In July 2019, I traveled with two of my sons, Foster and Porter, to Moldova to work alongside Alec's brothers, Victor and Vasile. Together, we helped run a soccer camp for local children, delivered meals to families in need, and participated in other community projects.

This year, I was blessed to return with Foster and my eldest daughter, Kindle, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Neemia's work in Cobani—marked by the dedication of a new community park. The project was a collaboration between Neemia, WHI, the mayor's office, and local youth volunteers.



Andre, Kindle, and Foster plant a tree for the 10th anniversary



When Kindness Becomes a Calling (cont.)

The trip was a profound experience for all of us. Reflecting on his visits, Foster shared that his first trip made the struggles of developing countries “real” to him, while his second revealed how much farther our resources can go in places like Moldova compared to the U.S. Kindle was inspired by the youth volunteers who regularly serve their community—delivering meals, assisting the elderly, and leading local projects—and remarked that she had never seen such consistent dedication among young people back home. She was also struck by the joy and resilience of the elderly residents, who remain thankful and full of grace despite many hardships.

Our journey with Alec and Wings of Hope International has shown me how one act of kindness can grow into a lifelong mission of service. From sharing meals at our kitchen table to partnering with communities in Moldova, we’ve witnessed how compassion can cross borders and transform lives. Through our work with Neemia, we’ve seen the power of hope in action—and we’re reminded that when we give of ourselves, we often receive far more in return.



Andre, Kindle, Victor, and Foster deliver a meal to an elderly villager

The Power of Community: Cobani’s Story of Hope

By Adam Minahan, Peace Corps Volunteer in Cobani

I’m really honored to be writing another column for Wings of Hope, my second since coming to Cobani in August 2024. During my time here, I’ve contributed in many small ways, such as helping to deliver food to the elderly and people with special needs. I help others with grant writing, including a current project to bring accessibility ramps to community buildings. I help the librarian with digital skills and promotional work, and I run a weekly teen club where they can practice English and explore new skills. I teach English at the kindergarten and to adults, including retirees who would like to communicate with their grandchildren who are growing up abroad. I also document cultural events and community projects, creating short videos to share Cobani’s story with the wider world. My 15 months here have taught me a lot, not just about this community and Moldovans, but also about what Moldovans would call “*a fi om*”: being a decent human being.

Even coming from a small town myself in the U.S., village life here in Cobani is very different for me. More surprisingly, there is a strong sense of community. When an elderly widow needs wood chopped for winter, there is always a neighbor to lend a hand. When youth yearn for a space to play sports together, adults volunteer their time and money to build it. When any member of the community passes away, dozens walk the streets in remembrance. Cobani has shown me people who care for and cherish their neighbors.



Adam in native Moldovan dress

Despite this, and as supporters of Wings of Hope you certainly know, poverty and other hardships persist. One of the struggles of the community that has made the biggest impact on me is that so many parents are forced to go abroad for work, so that they can have enough money to give their children a good life. While the benefits are obvious, so are the problems that children face when trying to grow up without their parents’ daily guidance.

And that is where Victor Zama, as director of Neemia and with the financial support of Wings of Hope, fills a much-needed void so wonderfully—he provides not only a space for youth to learn and grow, and to contribute to their community, but also moral direction and an example of what hard work and love for community can accomplish. I have high hopes for Cobani’s future because of the Moldovan people’s spirit and community mindedness, as well as leaders like Victor Zama who step in to help pass important values—that is, how to “*a fi om*”—on to the new generation.



WHI Board of Directors

Alec Zama, President
Andy Otto, Treasurer
Corbin Zea, Member at Large

Andre Drost, Vice-President
Becky Zama, Secretary



Ten Years of Impact in Nine Villages

Community Development

Donations to community schools and health care center
Construction/Installation of various projects such as benches, trash bins, sports fields/courts, playground, park, footbridge, fencing, waste management site (cleaning and development)
Organizing Participatory Budgeting Mechanism and free transportation to local markets and religious services for elderly and those with special needs

Educational Impact

Children's Club (3x/week) - 2,700 hours for 200 children
English Club - 80 hours for 35 individuals
Guitar Club - 70 hours for 25 individuals
Reading & Handicraft Club - 300 hours for 50 youth
Culinary Club - 60 hours for 20 individuals
Science Club - 50 hours for 30 individuals
Seniors' Club - 300 hours for 20 individuals
Handy Hands Club—50 hours by 20 individuals
Mothers with Young Children Club - 80 hours for 20 mothers
Volunteers' Club - 750 hours by 100 youth
Summer Camps - 50 camps with over 5,000 participants
Thematic Conferences (Training) - 300 hours

Social Impact

Social Canteen (M,W,F) - 50,000 meals to 550 individuals
Coal/Briquette donations - 283,000 kg coal to 1,275 people
Adult diaper donations - 1,000 packages to 180 individuals
Food package donations - 97,000 packages to 9,700 families
Clothing and footwear donations - 150 families
Mobility aid donations - 50 individuals
Chicks and vegetable seeds donations - 120 families
Garden tool handle donations - 80 families
Laundry service - 35 elderly individuals
Free transport with wheelchair accessible vehicle

Volunteering Impact

Over 100 local youth have volunteered 8,000 hours while two U.S. Peace Corps Volunteers have volunteered 75 weeks, and the Seniors' Club have prepared numerous treats for events.

WHI Goals for 2026

Please join us in 2026 as we continue to support the operations of the Community Center in Cobani, improve educational opportunities for children and access to quality healthcare, and assist the elderly. Almost 99% of funds raised go to projects in Moldova. WHI's fundraising needs for 2026 year include:

Community Center	- \$63,000
Educational projects	- \$ 1,500
Healthcare projects	- \$ 1,500
Elderly projects	- \$ 2,500



You may donate online or by mail by sending a check to the address indicated at the bottom this page. You may also donate tradable securities. Your WHI contributions are tax-deductible under IRS regulations!

Testimonials from Community

Melnic Livia, Director of the Health Center in Cobani: "The employees from the Neemia have always been responsive to our needs. As a management team, we have always been focused on offering high quality medical assistance and services to the locals, and Neemia's contribution has always added value to our work for the benefit of the community. We have always found a reliable partner in Neemia who, like us, is focused on contributing to making people's lives better and bringing hope to those around us. On the 10th anniversary of their service in Cobani, I would like to thank them from the bottom of my heart, and we hope that our joint efforts will bring positive change for the people of Cobani and the neighboring villages."

Maria, age 65: "I wait for each Seniors' Club day with excitement. Attending the meetings is like a celebration for me."

Victor Zamă, Director of AO "Neemia": "The Handy Hands Club gave us the chance to teach children and youth how to make or repair things. Many fathers are working abroad and are not spending time with their children, especially the boys, to teach them essential life skills. It's a privilege for us to somehow fill this gap through this club."

Paula: "I love coming to the Children's Club where I'm always warmly welcomed. Here I can spend time with my friends and learn interesting things."

Vera, age 78: "I always look forward with joy to the visits from the Neemia team. I used to be a cook at the kindergarten when I was younger and cooked a lot, but the food they bring is very special and tasty. Beyond the delicious meals, I get to spend a few minutes with them, which is a precious gift for me. I thank them from the bottom of my heart for everything they do for me."

Ion, after helping lead children and youth summer camps: "It was an intense and interesting experience. Only after stepping into a leadership role, did I realize how much work goes into preparing and organizing a camp. I understood how much effort happens 'behind the scenes' so kids and youth can enjoy a meaningful program."

Artiom, after participating in several local activities and helping feed homeless people in Chişinău: "Please, anytime you need my help, call me. I want to be involved and help."

Cristina, after delivering food packages to elderly villagers: "There are people living near me, and I had no idea they were struggling this much. Thank you for involving me in this work—it opened my eyes to the reality. I want to keep helping."

Luminița, after visiting and assisting elderly people: "It's a special feeling to see how happy people are when we visit and help them. Bringing a smile to their face is a huge reward for us as volunteers."