



# WINGS OF HOPE INTERNATIONAL

TRANSFORMING **the lives of people in MOLDOVA**

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## Message from the President

This year we celebrated the 10th anniversary of Wings of Hope International (WHI). Although we formalized the non-profit status of our organization 10 years ago, my dream to help the less fortunate in Moldova started in 1997 when I took my first return trip to Moldova. What I saw during that trip, after three years of living in the U.S., touched my heart and inspired me to become involved in addressing the many social needs that many Moldovans were experiencing.

Through the work of WHI we improved the learning conditions of hundreds of children in the town of Cobani, provided a better standard of living for hundreds of retirees and disabled individuals, and provided access to better healthcare for many individuals with health problems.

This year we also reached another important milestone. With the help of our partner, NGO Neemia, we were able to open the Community Center in Cobani. This newsletter provides details about how the center is making a transformational impact on the entire community.

We could not have made these differences without financial support from many of you, support for which we are deeply grateful. We hope you will continue supporting our work and for those of you are reading this newsletter for the first time, please consider making a donation to WHI.

With Hope for the Moldovan People,

## Community Center Transforms the Village



We would like to report that the Community Center was FINALLY opened for business in February of 2017! After almost two years of heavy work on the building and grounds, and overcoming a variety of bureaucratic obstacles, our partner in Moldova, NGO Neemia, received all the required approvals from

where children, elderly, and other needy from the village could come and engage in various activities that would enrich their lives. Although some groups (those who have difficulty walking) were not able to come to the community center, we are still able to serve all the groups through services provided through the center. Many children from the village benefit from a variety of programs throughout the school year and many elderly and the sick benefit from the hot meals that are prepared at the center. All



Before



After



Before



After

the government officials to start offering services at the Center.

Our original vision was for the community center to become a place in the village



of those receiving services from the Community Center have expressed heartfelt thanks for the benefits the center has offered to them and the opportunities the center has created for them. The local authorities and the majority of the population in the village are recognizing the positive impact that the center is having on the community. The remainder of this newsletter describes the majority of programs and services that are currently being offered by the Community Center.

### After School Program

Starting in February 2017, 20 children ages 7-10 from low income families have come to the Community Center on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, where they are fed a hot lunch. After lunch, they engage in a variety of educational activities such as completing homework, doing arts and crafts, learning civic lessons, etc. Since these children come from low income families and, in many situations, one or both of their parents are out of the country in search of employment opportunities,



these kids might not engage in educational activities outside of school. The parents and teachers of these children are very thankful that they are involved in the afterschool program as they are performing better in school and behaving better at home. There are more children who want to come to the after school program but space is limited at the present time and can accommodate only 20. WHI and Neemia are exploring options to build an addition to the current building to accommodate more children and possibly start new programs.

*Testimony: A child who is participating in this program is Chiril. He is 7 years old and was adopted by a family from the village. His parents heard about the afterschool program and wanted Chiril to be a part of it. They stated*

*that since both of them work and they are not highly educated, they lack the knowledge to help him with his homework. Also, because Chiril didn't attend a daycare or a kindergarten before enrolling in school, he lacked some early childhood preparation and had a hard time relating to other children. Now that Chiril attends the afterschool program, his parents are very thankful that he has the opportunity to spend three afternoons per week with the teacher and other children at the Community Center, learning new things and how to relate to others.*

### Hot Meals at Home

This service provides the elderly in the village who don't have any relatives and live by themselves, and individuals with disabilities, with hot meals three times per week. The cook at the Community Center prepares meals for lunch and then our partner, NGO Neemia, distributes the them to about 25-28 families. Many of the individuals who receive these meals have severe health problems: some are blind, some are bed ridden, and some can barely walk. For many of them, these home-delivered meals are the only hot meals they may eat the entire week. I delivered meals to the elderly for about two weeks this summer and was truly touched by the gratitude that many of them expressed. Although we initially planned to have these individuals come to the Community Center to eat and have a time of fellowship with others, the current conditions prevent this from happening as many of these individuals don't walk or can barely walk. We feel very blessed to have engaged volunteers from the village to assist in delivering these meals due to the time it takes for delivery because of the poor roads in the village and also to encourage service to others.







Ecaterina, who is 78 years old, is a former geography teacher who also takes care of her disabled daughter. She states the following: *"I am very thankful for everything you are doing for us. The meals that we receive are very delicious and it's a significant help in our lives. We are encouraged every time when you visit us to bring our lunches and these visits give us courage and hope to live every day and overcome various challenges"*.

### Children and Youth Clubs

These clubs provide children and youth of various ages the opportunity to interact with each other and engage in a variety of educational programs. The clubs include: The English Club, The Reading Club, The Guitar Club, The Math and Science Club, The Soccer Club, The Adolescents Club, The Youth Club, The Volunteering Club, and The Culinary Club.

**The English Club** Has two groups: a beginners group and an intermediary group, both meet two times a week. The beginners group has 16 children and the intermediary group has 10 children, ranging in ages from 12-17 years old. The children in the beginners group learn basics of grammar, vocabulary and English communication. The children in the intermediary group learn advanced grammar and engage in verbal communication on various topics. The club also assists the children in completing their homework for their English classes and also provides opportunities for them to improve their English communication skills.



*Testimony: A few weeks ago we talked to the grandfather of Ana-Maria, a student who attended the English Club last year. Ana-Maria's grandfather greatly appreciated that his granddaughter (who is staying with him because her parents are working abroad) was able to attend the club. More specifically, he stated that the environment at the club was great for her personal development and for improving her knowledge of English. Now she is studying at a college in another city and she is one of the best students in her English class. Her English teacher at the college is very impressed by her knowledge of English and that is due to her involvement with the English Club.*

**The Guitar Club** Also has two groups: a beginners group and then an intermediary group of those that attended the club last year. Each group has 8 children who range in age from 12-17 years old. They meet two times per week to learn how to play guitar. We are thrilled to see the children use their new skills to perform songs at various community events, once again encouraging service to others.



**The Math and Science Club** Has a group of 16 children, ages 14-16, who meet two times per week. This club started at the beginning of September 2017 and is attended by those who are interested in learning more about science and mathematics.

**The Soccer Club** Is attended by children ages 11-13. They have practices two times per week. During their practices, children engage in physical exercises and various soccer playing skills. After practices they have opportunities for relationship building and to learn various aspects of character development and integrity. Most of the children in the soccer club have attended the summer camp.



**The Adolescents Club** Has 25 children, ages 12-14. They meet one time per week for games, discussions, competitions, watching videos, etc. The goal of this club is to create a healthy environment for relationship building and character development.



**The Youth Club** Has a group of about 20 students, ages 15-18, who meet at the Community Center once per week for discussions on various topics, watching

videos, playing games, etc.

**The Volunteers Club** Has a group of 28 students, ages 14-18, who volunteer to work with our partner, NGO Neemia, on its projects. There are monthly meetings and students participate in weekly cleaning activities at the community center, volunteering for the Children's Club, and volunteering in various social activities in the community. Our partner NGO



Neemia also organizes two conferences per year and a summer camp for the members of the Volunteers Club.

**The Reading Club** Has a group of about 10 students, ages 13-17. They meet one time per month to discuss a certain chapter from a book that was read by all students. During the meeting, students analyze, compare and contrast, and derive conclusions from the reading.

**The Culinary Club** Has 9 students, ages 14-17, who want to learn various cooking skills. The students in this club meet once every two weeks. They expressed interest in learning how to cook in order to become independent when they go to college.



## Summer Camps

**Day Camps** This year was the first year the Community Center was effectively functional. This allowed our partner, NGO Neemia, to fully utilize the space every day during the months of June and July. Immediately after school ended at the end of May, NGO Neemia, started the day camps at the community center. Starting with the first week in June, they had students from the first grade for one week on the first week, then second grade for the second week, third grade during the



third week, fourth grade during the fourth week. The same happened during the four weeks in July. Each grade was engaged in various educational activities including reading, arts and crafts, games, competitions, civic lessons and other activities. About 80 children participated in the day camps over the months of June and July. From July 20-25, NGO Neemia organized an Arts camp for a group of 17 children, ages 8-10, which focused on the drawing and painting.



**Soccer Camp** This year was the second year for the soccer camp with 40 children from Cobani, ages 8-14, attending. For one week they organized various practices in the mornings and in the evenings and in the afternoons the participants engaged in various team building exercises, character development activities and volunteering. The camp culminated with a highly successful and well-received soccer tournament for about 100 children from 5 surrounding villages. Our partner NGO Neemia has decided to continue working with some of the children who participated in the camp on coaching soccer practices during the week.



## WHI Goals for 2018

On behalf of those who benefited from the services of WHI during the past year, we would like to thank you for your generous support. WHI will continue to improve the lives of the most needy in Moldova in 2018. We will focus on improving educational opportunities for children, improving access to quality healthcare and assisting the elderly. Here are the fundraising goals for the upcoming year:

**Community Center - \$18,000**  
**Children projects - \$2,500**  
**Healthcare projects - \$2,000**  
**Elderly projects - \$2,500**

*Please join us in achieving these goals and remember, your WHI contribution is tax-deductible!*



Although this newsletter focuses solely on the activities of the Community Center, we continued to assist other entities in the village. We provided support to the kindergarten to insulate the building to save energy in the winter and keep the children warmer; to the school in Cobani to build a cellar to store some of their produce for the school cafeteria; and to the health center to purchase new medical equipment.

We would like to thank you for all your support during the last year and would like to ask you to contribute for the work for next year. Please see the financial goals for next year in the left column of this page.

## Board of Directors

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