



# Sunshine Foundation Romania Trust

Registered charity NIC 105446

Annual report 1 January – 31 December 2022



Sunshine Foundation Romania Trust (SFR) is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. It was established as a Trust on 22 November, 2001 and is governed by a board of trustees in accordance with its trust deed.

### **Trustees**

Aodh O'Loan, Denise Copeland (Secretary), Maire O'Loan, Marie Williams (Chair), Mary Duffy (Assistant Treasurer), Nodlaig Keenan (Treasurer), Ryan Williams.

### **Charitable Purposes**

Sunshine Foundation Romania Trust's charitable purposes are:

"To relieve the needs and promote the social inclusion of children, young people and adults who were abandoned as children into state orphanages ('the beneficiaries') in particular but not exclusively, those with special needs and/or disabilities in Brasov County, Romania through the provision of quality residential care, supported living services, education, vocational training, supported employment, recreational activities and by any other charitable means as the trustees shall consider appropriate.

For the prevention or relief of poverty of the beneficiaries and their families and other people in need, in the area of benefit through the provision of financial support or by any other charitable means as the trustees shall consider appropriate. The trustees must use the income of the Charity in promoting the Objects as outline above."

Since 2002, we have built three homes - Casa St Maria, Casa St Patrick and Casa Irlanda (see page 12 for more detail) - for just over 30 children and young adults who previously lived in overcrowded buildings, were rarely allowed to go outside and rarely had any visitors.

This work is enabled through our Romanian sister charity Fundatia Sunshine Romania. All three homes are run under the control of the Child Protection Authority in Romania in cooperation with Fundatia Sunshine Romania.

### **Public benefit Statement**

The trustees have paid due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The trustees are confident that SFR's charitable work is in accordance with the regulations on public benefit.

In 2022 we continued to ensure the development of the children and young adults in our homes and supported living apartments, most of whom have special needs. Viorel Mares, our co-ordinator in Romania attends Trustee meetings online to keep the Trustees updated on all activities. This report highlights some of our main achievements in this period.



## Supported living in Harman Casa Irlanda and Casa St Patrick

Our young adults, mainly those who came to us as children from various orphanages, are now working in vocational programmes or in part-time or full-time employment. They are like other young people their age, they have hopes and dreams, and sometimes these will be achievable and sometimes not depending on their abilities. For those that have employment, they take great pride in being able to go to work, but not all are able.

Everyone has their chores to do, from preparing meals and cooking dinner under the with the support of their wonderful Carers. It is wonderful to see how the Carers treat the young adults with such care and affection.



Pictured above: Casa Irlanda doing their morning exercises. Eugene has settled back in after having to live in Bradet. Pictured here taking charge of the bins. Below all sell their handcrafts at the Christmas Fair. A great opportunity for social interaction





The Carers always make a special effort for each and everyone's birthday, making a lovely homemade cake and throwing a party that everyone can enjoy.



Pictured above: Alexandria and Danutza's birthdays. Below Iulian and Nicu celebrate



Pictured below: Eugene celebrates his 19<sup>th</sup> birthday





## Supported employment

Some of our young adults continue to work in various employments but not all are able to get jobs. Unfortunately, at the end of the year Bebe, Ionutz and Alexandria lost their jobs in the shoe factory which was quite distressing for them as they loved going to work. New rules on tax in Romania has meant it is difficult for employers to keep part-time employees as they have to pay the same tax for them as full-time employees.

Unfortunately, our second-hand shop in Harman is not doing as well as it had been in the early days due to a lack of customers. There are a lot of second-hand shops in Brasov and it is difficult to compete.

Pictured below: Danutza relaxing with Mickey and the other volunteers after a day working in the shop and Bebe overseeing the clear out of their rooms



The shop is still an important supported employment training place for the young adults, and while Danutza works in it full time, she has plenty of other helpers from time to time eg Eugene, Bebe and Ionutz help out with porter duties.



## Casa St Maria children

The children in Casa St Maria are all doing well and still attending school. The Beragh group took them on a special trip up to the ski resort for some fresh mountain as it was very hot. The children had a great time playing ball and running about in the cooler mountain air.



It was also a great opportunity to take the older children on public transport to get them accustomed to using it. Afterwards we went for a stroll along the river in Brasov as pictured on the front cover and afterwards for a pizza of course!





## The Beragh Support Group volunteers

The Beragh Support Group volunteers were delighted to return this summer after missing the last two years because of the pandemic. The children and young people were so happy to spend time chatting, playing, singing and dancing. They had some very early morning painting shifts so floors could be laid in bedrooms and early morning visit to the park to avoid the intense heat. Our young adults made sure *all* the jobs got done!



Pictured above: Vale inspecting Denise, Fionnuala and Sharon's painting work and Pictured below: Vale and Eugene ensuring Darragh has got all he needs to lay that floor.....meanwhile later on Ionutz has found another job for Darragh!

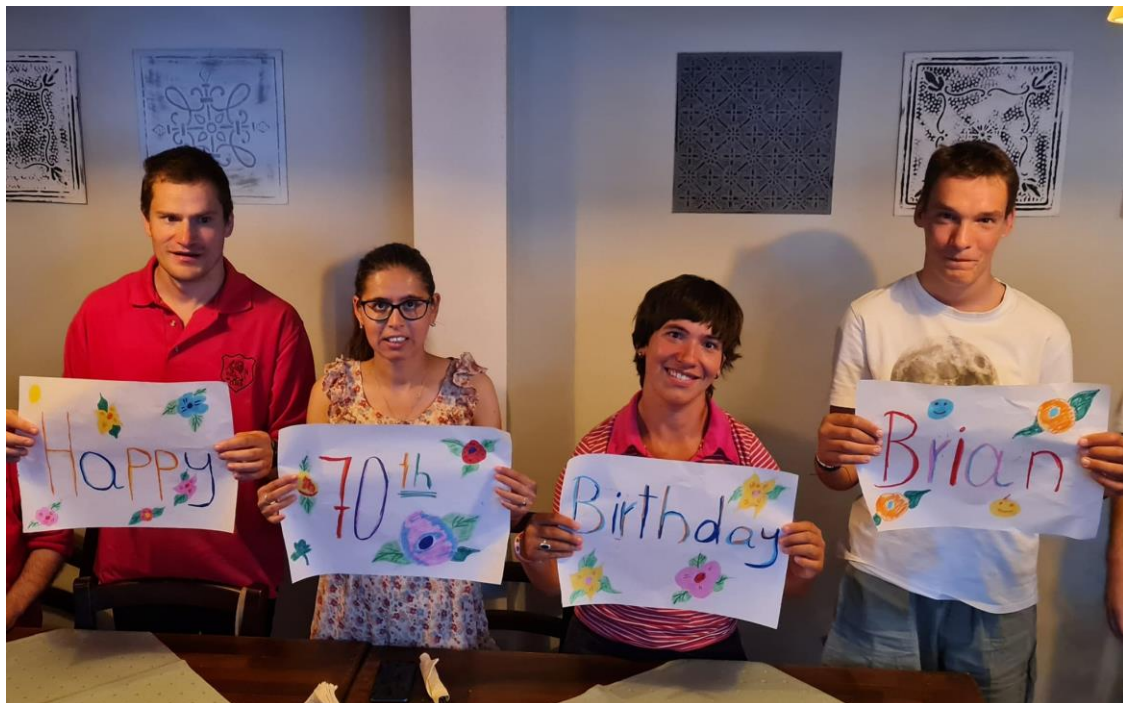




When the painting clothes were off it was time to take everyone out for a pizza



Pictured above: everyone out for a pizza and the next morning off for a walk to the park where the young adults are really able to relax.



Pictured above: a special birthday message for Brian who was due to be out with the Beragh Group but couldn't come due to illness. The kids appreciated that he was all set to visit them.



The volunteers had great chats and many a song with Jonella and Alexandria below. Jonella shared the lyrics for a song which she had written which were really touching. She loves singing and some of the volunteers left money for Viorel to buy a guitar for her. He surprised her on her birthday with the gift which she was delighted with. Alexandria is looking forward to singing along with Jonella and her new guitar!



### **The Sunshine children no longer in our homes**

Adrianna got married! She continues to live independently and works in the local pizzeria where she met her lovely husband, pictured below. She was chosen from the Bradet orphanage many years ago to live in Sunshine's first home in Brasov, with help and support she has grown into a wonderful young woman, confident and still funny and now very happily married.





The Beragh Group caught up with Anca, pictured left with Fionnuala, for a coffee and she is very happy living independently and working in Brasov. Vali is still in a boys' home near Bran and has settled in well and is very happy there. Viorel keeps in contact with him.

Vasile has been back living with his family for a number of years now and we continue to support him and his family. We brought food parcels when we visited in the summer, and Viorel keeps in contact with him and his family throughout the year.



We also brought food parcels to the Ouigi family who Gerard McDonald's team had put a new roof on for several years ago. We always think of Gerard when visiting and know he'd be pleased. And when the minibus comes to Commona, there's always plenty of children following waiting for the great sweetie handout.



### Post pandemic – the volunteer visits

While life appears to have gotten back to normal in Romania post pandemic, unfortunately the various groups of volunteers that would've visited before covid has not returned to that in pre-pandemic. The children and young adults really missed the



visits from these various groups and are hoping that they will return in both the winter and the summer.

They had great fun with the young people from Hands on Brasov from Belgium when they visited before the summer and the Beragh group in the summer. They are really looking forward to the School Aid Romania groups returning next year.



Pictured above: Hands on Brasov, Belgium with our young adults in Harman.

While it has been difficult for other charities to visit this year, they still supported our projects by helping with paying costs for some of the trips and meals on special occasions, all of which is so greatly appreciated.



Pictured above: Casa Irlanda and Casa St Patrick enjoying a meal out and presents for everyone from The Eileen Moreland Foundation.



Pictured: Casa St Patrick, very happy on holidays. If it wasn't for the minibus these trips probably wouldn't be possible. Thanks again School Aid Romania for providing the much used bus.



Pictured above: Casa St Maria receive Easter treats from School Aid Romania





### **Co-ordinating our work in Romania**

A special word of thanks to Viorel, our project manager in Romania, who ensures that the work of SFR is maintained and developed.

He really looks forward to the various groups of volunteers who visit the project each year and hopes to see everyone back again soon.

We are forever grateful to Viorel for his dedication and commitment to SFR and the many other charities that he engages with on behalf of Fundatia Sunshine Romania.

Pictured left: Viorel with son Radu.

### **Financial support in Romania**

Our work is also greatly supported by other charities working in Brasov County in Romania who contribute to our sister charity Fundatia Sunshine Romania.

Special thanks to the financial support provided this year by The Eileen Moreland Foundation and School Aid Romania including St Patrick's College, Maghera; Methodist College, Belfast; Cookstown High School and St Patrick's College, Armagh.

Many thanks also to Hands on Brasov and An Dumon from Belgium for their continued generosity and support.

### **Fundraising**

Many thanks to our regular donors who continue to donate monthly to us via standing order or via our online fundraising platform [CAF](#).

Our fundraising took a bit of a setback this year also as it was hard to plan for our usual events because of concerns with adhering to social distancing in indoor venues. Thankfully we were able to benefit from two sporting events in the period:

Ryan Williams and his son Jude took on one of the world's oldest open water swims across the Hellespont to swim 4.5km from Asia to Europe. An amazing achievement especially for young Jude. They raised an amazing £5,725 from their sporting prowess! Thanks to all who sponsored them.

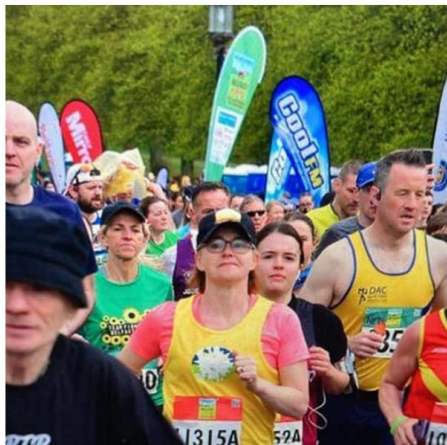


Pictured: Ryan and Jude share a very proud moment as they receive their medals



## Belfast City Marathon

Past and present staff from NICVA got together to enter a relay team in the 2022 Belfast city marathon and raised an amazing £2,250 from sponsorship. A special thanks to all the runners and to everyone who donated, we are so grateful for your continued support!



Pictured at their relay change over points: Caroline McCoubrey with Denise Copeland, Roisin 'jazzy' Kelly with Jimmy Laverty, Sandra Bailie in full flight, Caroline with Sandra and Jimmy with Denise.

We continued to receive donations from Amazon Smile in the period. Amazon shoppers who choose to shop via Amazon Smile results in 0.5% of the purchase being donated to SFR. If you're shopping on Amazon, choose Amazon Smile and look for Sunshine Foundation Romania.

### **Financial scrutiny**

Many thanks to Enda for carrying out the independent examination of the annual accounts. Enda's continued support and advice is very much appreciated.

Thanks also to Nodlaig, our treasurer for the financial analysis of the income and expenditure in Romania and the work on keeping our gift aid claims up to date.

### **Financial review**

During the year the total Income was £14,471 (2021: £11,979)  
Expenditure was £18,969 (2021: £11,639).

### **Reserves**

The trustees have calculated that the charity needs to maintain Reserves of 10 months running costs which are unrestricted reserves, not invested in fixed assets and available for general use.

### **Gift Aid**

Sunshine Foundation Romania is recognised as a charity for tax purposes with HMRC and as such claims back gift aid on all eligible donations from UK taxpayers. This means that for every £1 that is gift aided, the charity can claim an additional 25p from HMRC.

**Registered charity address** C/o Marie Williams, 89 Derryhale Rd, Portadown, Co Armagh, BT62 3SR

### **Governance in Romania**

The Project Manager from Fundatia Sunshine Romania, Viorel sends monthly reports to the trustees in NI. He also oversees the running of the shop as well as liaising with all the charities that support our work in Romania.

### **The Sunshine Foundation Romania Properties**

Sunshine Foundation Romania Trust established a Romanian charity called Fundatia Sunshine Romania in 2002 so that it could purchase its first house in Brasov city. This first house, Casa St Maria, was converted into a residential home for the children rescued from Barza Mica orphanage.

A further property was purchased the next year in the town of Harman not far outside of the city. A second home, Casa St Patrick, was built the following year from a timber frame structure donated from N.Ireland.



A few years later, Casa Irlanda was built in Harman to accommodate two self-contained apartments for the first of our young adults who were being moved from Casa St Maria.

Many teams of volunteers travelled out from N.Ireland to work on all three houses including both skilled tradesmen to carry out their craft and willing volunteers to paint and do whatever else needed doing.

The original homestead was converted into a shop, storeroom and an office. With the help of a seeding grant from Lloyds TSB Foundation, we established a second hand shop to sell donated items sent out mostly from Ireland.

Unfortunately, there is no such thing as a 'charity shop' in Romania so this had to be established as a separate business, having to comply with the same regulations as any other private sector business in Romania.

All properties are held in trust by our Romanian sister charity – Fundatia Sunshine Romania. Two of our founder trustees, Marie and Mary are also trustees of this charity.

Fundatia Sunshine Romania is fully registered as a charity with the Romanian authorities.

### **Declaration**

The trustees annual report was approved on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:

Denise Copeland (Honorary Secretary) 

**If you would like to help Sunshine Foundation Romania, there are several ways to do this:**

**Volunteer** – hold a fundraising activity to raise money for SFR or volunteer to work with our children and young adults in Harman.

**Text Message** - Donations can be made in the following amounts; £1, £2, £3, £4, £5, £10. To donate all you have to do is text SFRM00 (followed by the amount) to 70070.

**On Line** -You can donate securely online via our online fundraising platform provider. To make a regular or one-off online donation visit

[Sunshine Foundation Romania Trust - Donate now \(cafonline.org\)](https://www.cafonline.org)

Or organise a fundraising appeal or sponsored event via

[www.gofundme.com](https://www.gofundme.com) and choose Sunshine Foundation Romania Trust when you create your fundraiser page. Please get in touch with us if you have any issues with setting this up.

**Standing Order** - Make a regular donation by completing a standing order form at your bank with your account details and SFR's account details:

Ulster Bank  
English Street  
ARMAGH

Account No 48043098

Sort Code 98-01-90



If you would like more information on our charitable work please visit our website [www.sunshine-foundation.com](http://www.sunshine-foundation.com) or email [info@sunshine-foundation.com](mailto:info@sunshine-foundation.com) or follow us on Facebook at [Sunshine Foundation Romania | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/Sunshine-Foundation-Romania) or Twitter at [SFR \(@SFR\\_Romania\) / Twitter](https://twitter.com/SFR_Romania)