



Sunshine Foundation Romania Trust

Registered charity NIC 105446

Annual report 1 January – 31 December 2023



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 2023 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.

Casa St Maria children

The children in Casa St Maria are all doing well and still attending school. Some of the more able older children have moved out and so there are new children, some that require specialist support. Unfortunately, this comes at a time when there is a staffing shortage of Carers in Child Protection services.

The Carers do an exceptional job in looking after the children but it can be challenging at times as some of the children need one to one support. Viorel is liaising with the authorities to get an additional member of staff to work in the home.

The Beragh group took the children trampolining which they all loved. They could all bounce to their hearts content and then enjoyed a pizza afterwards which is always appreciated.



Pictured above: Casa Santa Maria children enjoying a day out with the Beragh Group and pictured below enjoying a special day out for Easter paid for by SAR



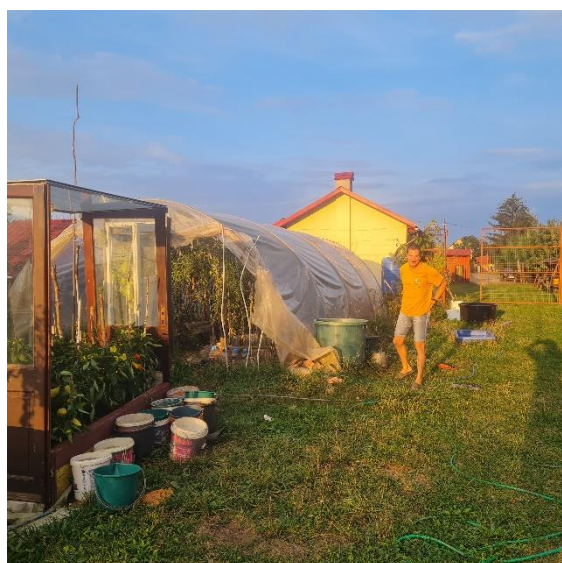
Supported living in Harman Casa Irlanda and Casa St Patrick

The young adults in our two homes in Harman are all doing great. They mainly came to us as children from various orphanages and so have lived together for a long time. There is a large outside space and garden for everyone to enjoy which is perfect for the evenings.



Pictured above: making decorations for Romania day.

Everyone has their chores to do, from preparing meals and cooking dinner with the support of their Carers. It is wonderful to see how the Carers treat the young adults with such care and affection, they really are one big family together. Iulian and Ionutz are in charge of tending the vegetables in the garden and watering them



Pictured above: Iulian watering the vegetables at sundown

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.



The young adults make sure to do their daily exercises and rest when its too hot!



Holidays and days out are enjoyed to the max!

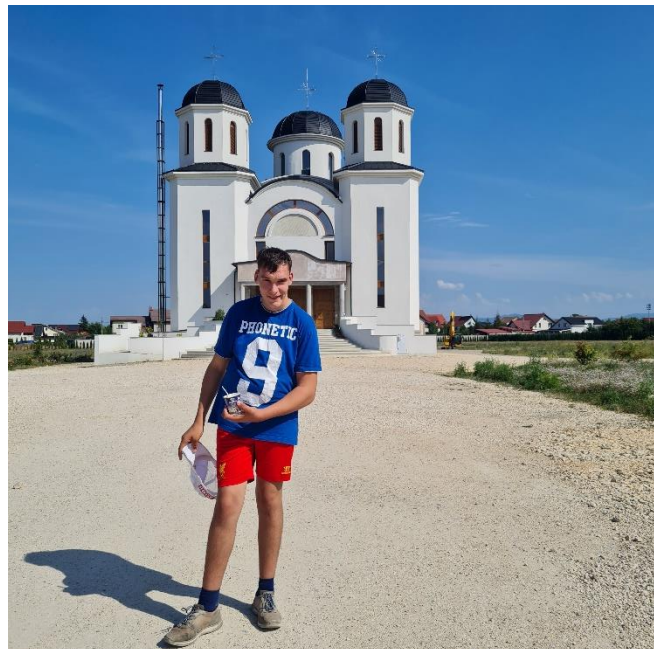


Supported employment

Some of our young adults are now working in various full time or part time employments. For those that have employment, they take great pride in being able to go to work, but not all are able to jobs.

Unfortunately, at the end of last year several of our young adults lost their jobs in the shoe factory and they still haven't been able to get new jobs. 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. It is also very difficult for smaller companies to pay the increasing taxes, and some have closed.

The tax increases have affected our second-hand shop in Harman which has also seen a decline in customers over the last few years as there are many second-hand shops in Brasov and it is difficult to compete. Financially it is not bringing in the income that it did, but it still provides supported employment for our young adults as they are kept busy rotating the stock. This is important at the moment now that other work is difficult to find.



Pictured above: Vasile visits his Sunshine family in Harman and Danutza helps him choose a new pair of jeans in the shop. Eugene shows us the new local church where he loves working part-time.

Danutza was employed for many years in the shop but she really needed a change and is delighted to be working as a cleaner in Brasov. Her new job gives her a greater independence in that she has to take public transport and she is interacting with more people outside of the village. She still enjoys helping out in the shop.

The Beragh Support Group volunteers

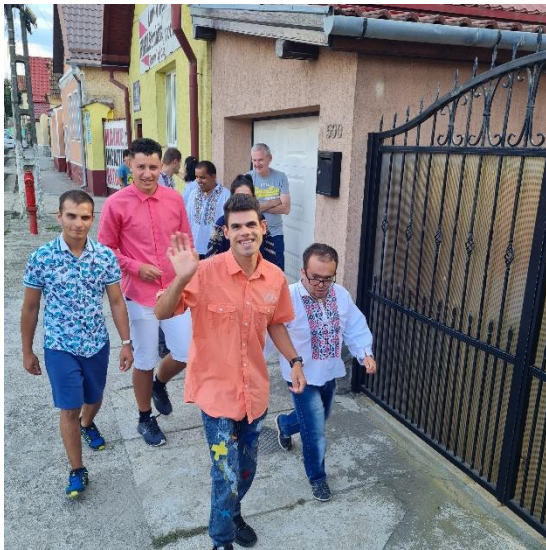
The Beragh Support Group volunteers were delighted to return this summer with a small team. The children and young people were so happy to spend time chatting, playing ball and dancing. The Team focused on painting the exteriors to protect it from the harsh winter and then playing ball. Great chats and laughs were had by all!



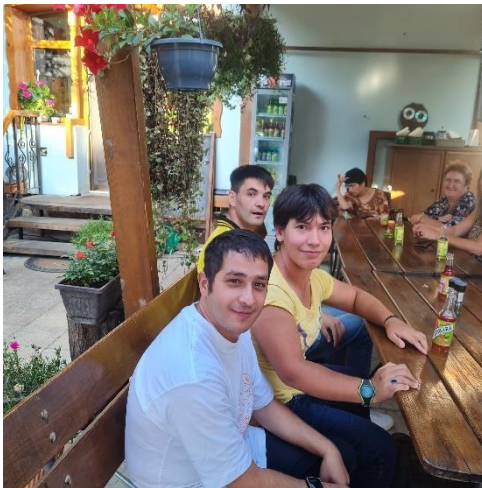
Pictured: Sean, Brian and Denise get stuck into the painting and below enjoy a lovely stroll with tour guide Vali...and have a kickabout in the Carrick-keel kit that was donated



When the paintbrushes were down it was time to take Casa Irlanda and Casa St Patrick out separately for a pizza. Everyone gets their good clothes on!



The walk to Adriana's pizzeria is filled with such excitement.



All made possible with the help of their lovely Carers.



Ionutz has no problem polishing off that enormous dessert!

The Sunshine children no longer in our homes

The Beragh Group visited Vasile in Commona where he 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.

Big Vali has now left Harman and is living and working in Fagares where he is adapting to life on the outside of Child Protection. Young Vali now lives independently also and has a job in a factory. Viorel keeps in contact with both of them and helps them when needed.



Adrianna is still happily married and working in the pizzeria with her husband where we took all the young people in Harman for a pizza.

She is still very happy at her work and makes plenty of time for her Sunshine family.

The volunteer visits

The children and young adults were delighted to spend time with the volunteers from Hands on Brasov from Belgium when they visited before the summer and the Beragh group in September. They were also heartened to spend time with the young volunteers from School Aid Romania, from Belfast and Maghera, in January as well as An Dumon from Belgium later in the year.

Hands on Brasov spent great time with our young adults in Harman, pictured below. An Dumon visits every year, pictured below enjoying the beginning of the Christmas celebrations.



Pictured above: In January, Methodist College, Belfast and St Patrick's College, Maghera came as the School Aid Romania Group

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 St Patrick enjoying a meal out and presents for everyone from The Eileen Moreland Foundation.

Pictured below: Casa St Maria enjoy an Easter outing and 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. His dedication to the children and young people in the Sunshine homes is very much appreciated by the Trustees of SFR. 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: Viorel bringing bread for the hungry volunteers and left with CSM giving presents.

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

We were able to benefit from the following fundraising events in this year:

Belfast City Marathon

Past and present staff from NICVA got together to enter a relay team in the 2023 Belfast city marathon and raised an amazing £2,267 from sponsorship. A special thanks to all the runners and to everyone who donated to them, we are so grateful for your continued support!



Pictured at their relay change over points: Caroline McCoubrey with Sandra Bailie; Denise Copeland with Roisin Kelly; Sandra at starting line; Louise Foster with Denise; Caroline and Roisin.

Beragh Jumble Sale

The Beragh Support Group held a jumble sale and raised £2,213 from sales and donations on the day. Thank you to everyone who donated goods and money, to all the volunteers who baked, sorted and sold and to those who packed up. A special word of thanks to Beragh Care and Development Association for the use of their lovely centre.



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.

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 £11,654 (2022: £14,471)
Expenditure was £22,713 (2022: £18,969).

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 14 May 2024 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

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 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 or email 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)