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Hello everyone and welcome to the 35th edition of the Projects Abroad Romania Newsletter. Hope everything is well in your lives. We come to you now with the happenings of this month and what Romania has to offer in terms of information, articles, news, updates, projects and last but not least, culture.

We begin by presenting one article that was published in the Village Magazine, issue 7, written by our former journalism volunteer, Victoria Richman. Thank you to Victoria for writing this amazing article and presenting the portrait of one of Romania's most traditional villages - Marcus.

To continue, we chose to present to you a more nonconformist article, Sarah's Slaunwhite description of 'Breaking your Limits'. In this piece she presents her experience with paragliding in Poiana Brasov. Please check it out, it's a very cheerful and breathtaking article.

Moving to serious stuff, we'll give you some details on the Journalism Project that Mircea Samoila, Romania's country director, created as a global initiative of Projects Abroad; 'Voices of the World'. For those of you who are interested in reading it please check it out, and for those of you who are interested in participating please visit <http://www.voices-of-the-world.org/>

Furthermore, for the Upcoming events section I wrote an article explaining the Projects Abroad Drama Show that we are about to organise in the following two weeks. Alongside the presentation of the show you can also find out or be reminded of some information on two of our former drama volunteers who were a first for our drama project, Danielle Convery and Natalie Taylor. A big thanks goes to all drama volunteers that sustained this project in Romania, for contributing to the drama project so well and making it so lovely and interesting.

Last but not least we have volunteers' stories. This is one of the most interesting parts of the newsletter because here you can find out news about everything that is happening at the moment in their lives as volunteers. In this edition you can read about Rachael, Isao and Kohei's first impressions of the country.

Do you feel like I left something behind? Maybe the cookery corner. This issue we present one of our most delicious deserts, 'Lapte de pasare', which doesn't have any appropriate translation, just needs to be read and cooked in order to figure it out, so please try it out! It's delicious.

I really hope I gave you a bit of the insight into this newsletter. In order to find out more, please read the whole issue and enjoy it at the same time because it's created with loads of good thoughts and love for you all!

By Alexandra Ichim

Drama, Dance, Journalism Supervisor; Social Manager

The Beautiful Life

By Victoria Richman – Journalism Volunteer, UK, August –September 2010
(Article published in The Village Magazine, Issue no 7)

Marcus is a sprinkling of houses situated in the countryside just outside of Brasov. It is overlooked by a small monastery perched on top of a hill accessible by a winding track road. The monastery is the embodiment of peace and tranquillity; it is a small white building and the walls inside are blue with ornate portraits of saints. There is a tiny gift shop selling religious literature and jewellery. There is also an orphanage, which is run by the nuns who maintain the monastery. We met the children, all girls except one little boy, and nearly all dressed in bright pink Hannah Montana T-shirts. They are sweet children, shy but curious of us. Although their plight as orphans is sad they at least have an idyllic place to grow up in; the orphanage sits on top of the hill covered in wild flowers with views of the surrounding countryside unfolding beneath it.



From the monastery the centre of Marcus is only a few minutes away by car. The village is a tiny knot of houses, mostly brightly coloured bungalows or crooked wooden cottages. There is a primary school and a church in the centre of the village and a small local store and a pub. That is all in the way of local amenities; most people grow their own food and work the land as agriculture is the main form of employment here. Most of the work is done in the traditional way and to the western eyes it is like going back in time; the fields are ploughed by horses, the hay stacked with pitchforks, animals are milked by hand.

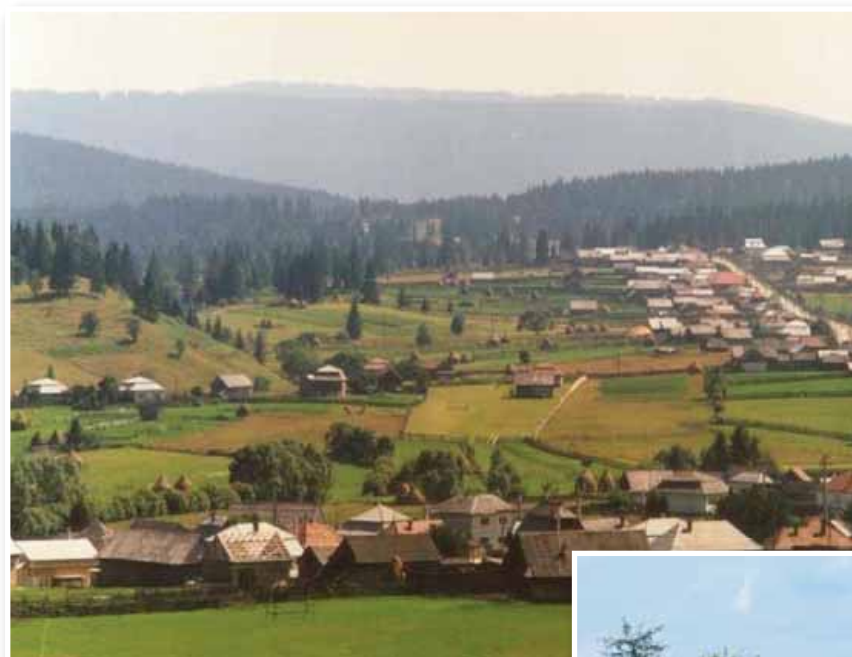
We met Adriana Nichita who owns a small farm. She keeps sheep, chickens, cows and a foal which would be able to pull the cart in a few years. She describes life in Marcus as 'beautiful,' even though it is sometimes hard as they start work at five in the morning and end at midnight; they stop only for a few hours during the day when the sun is hottest. They don't use modern equipment and they don't have a car, they farm in the traditional way.

We were also welcomed into the home of Christina and her family who own a small farm and are currently building a new house. We sat on a swing seat under the shade of a tree and drank strong sweetened coffee and ate cheeses freshly made that morning from their sheep's milk. Their house backed on to a beautiful view of long grass fields lined by apple trees and woodlands rising in the distance. Around us the family chatted and worked, Christina's eighty two year old grandfather, Serban Gheorghe, was picking apples from the trees; they don't have much idea of retirement in Marcus.

It seems that everyone in Marcus is leading the 'beautiful life'. However this way of life is slowly dying out in modern times; most people live off the land but it is becoming hard to survive on this, some people can't afford to and have to pay others to work the land for them. There has also been 'crazy weather' in the last few years according to an elderly woman who has lived in Marcus for fifty years. The unpredictable weather damages the crops and if the crops survive they are also in danger of wild animals such as wild boar. There is also the problem of there not being a lot of jobs for young people in the area; a lot have left for other countries like Italy and Spain in search of jobs.

Also, even though the old ways of farming still exist, a lot of the old traditions have died out. There used to be a lot of dances both within the village and with other nearby villages; it was a way of socialising but now these traditional dances have been replaced by discos. Similarly ceremonies and celebrations used to be a lot more intricate and the traditions for these were important. For example, weddings used to last three days and, according to Serban Gheorghe, used to be a lot more beautiful.

Despite these traditions dying out, Marcus is still a pocket of resistance against the passing of time. It is a refreshing change to visit the village and truly get away from the pace of modern life. Its position in the green countryside of Transylvania, towering mountains in the distance, enhance its charm and peaceful nature. It is a small but very strong example of traditional Romanian life.



Breaking your limits

By Sarah Ann Slaunwhite – Current Drama Volunteer, Canada

‘An idea that is not dangerous is unworthy of being called an idea at all’ – Oscar Wilde



I woke up too early on a Saturday morning, and remembered that two of the other volunteers, Sally and Leanne, were going to Poiana Brasov to walk around the ski resort. With my injured ankle I was sad that I would not be snow boarding, but I decided to go along for the ride. So I got up and ran out the door to meet the others.

We spent an hour or so strolling around and looking at the shops - which seemed to all contain the same tourist trinkets, the children with their parents tobogganing, and the skiers drinking hot cocoa at the bottom of the hill. But

my mind sparked a fire when we looked to the sky and saw paragliders. They looked so small way up high above the mountains. They were like eagles to me. And I suddenly began itching to be up there as well.

Someone once told me that if you can survive the preparation, the mission will be fine. My preparation to paraglide involved me saying “I want to go next!” while some man named George hurried me towards the lift up the mountain. He told me his friend was working the turnstiles and forced me to jump the line and the turnstile which made me anxious and uneasy, especially because George’s so called friend was yelling something at us in Romanian that I did not understand. About halfway up the mountain I realised I had not prepared at all. I had simply said ‘pick me’ and they did. I began to wonder what the hell I was doing. Would the mission be fine without preparation? Was not preparing considered surviving the preparation?

We got to the top of the mountain and I was breath taken, firstly by the amazing view and secondly by how high up I was. I read afterwards that is was over a 2000 meter elevation. George was running partway down a steep slope, and although I had told him I had a bad ankle and couldn’t really walk, I don’t think he truly understood. So I stood there like a manikin while he moved my arms and lifted my feet to get my backpack strapped on. Suddenly I realised I had no clue what I was doing so I asked. “You run until you’re not on ground Sarah, you run as fast as you can. Don’t stop. Run fast, you understand? Run FAST!”



“We must walk consciously only part way toward our goal and then leap in the dark to our success.”
~ Henry David Thoreau



This is pretty much exactly what I did. Except instead of walking I ran, and instead of leaping, I took flight. It was the most exhilarating thing I have ever experienced. The moment of transition between your feet firmly planted on the snow, to running lifelessly in the air... well, until he told me to stop running in the air that is. George and I flew higher and higher, right then left, and he took my camera to document it. I asked George to do some tricks, but he told me to wait. So I continued to admire the birds-eye-view and breathe in the freezing cold air deep into my lungs. When we got to the landing area, which was populated by many people, he began swinging us back and

forth, reaching past parallel with the ground. We then started spinning, which looked to bystanders like we were going out of control and coming down at a staggering rate, but when we got close to the trees we levelled out and swooped in for landing. Safe and sound.

Leonardo da Vinci once said that "Once you have tasted flight, you will forever walk the earth with your eyes turned skyward, for there you have been, and there you will always long to return." And from experience of being higher than I have ever been besides when in an airplane, I can say this is definitely



Voices of the world

What is Voices of the World?

Voices of the World is an online global initiative developed by Projects Abroad, the leading global organiser



of overseas volunteer work placements. It is a platform (in the shape of an online newspaper and magazine) for young people all over the world to freely express their opinions, desires and aspirations while exploring the vast and fascinating domain of journalism. Through the website young aspiring journalists from Mongolia or Romania, South Africa, England, France or Senegal (to name only a very few) will have the opportunity to meet and exchange views with one another to enable them to understand the world and to express their views on it better and with more empathy.

The project will also have a distinct educational dimension as it will contain a section of 'Hints and Tips'. Here aspiring journalists will find easy-to-understand guides on journalism, creative writing, video, photography etc. We are planning to attract established journalists from all over the world to contribute to this section.

How will it work?

In the countries where we have media placements, we will create free-of-charge Journalism Clubs for young locals interested in contributing to Voices of the World and in getting a portfolio of published articles. Under the supervision of a member of staff with experience in media, the club members will participate in workshops on writing, photography, video and so on, will be given journalistic assignments and will be published on this website. In addition, wherever possible, the club members will be paired up for different assignments with our journalism volunteers to facilitate cultural exchange and transfer of experience and language skills.

How can I get involved?

Please visit <http://www.voices-of-the-world.org/>

You don't necessarily have to be a Projects Abroad volunteer or live in one of our destination countries in order to contribute to the website. All you need to do – if you're younger than 26 and want to share your views, problems and news – is to write an article, take some photos that will illustrate your topic and fill the form you can find by clicking on 'Become a Contributor!' If your text is well written and interesting, it will be published on the website.

If you're above 26 and you would still like to get involved with the project, you can contribute by sending your ideas and opinions through the 'Message to the Editor' section. As this is a unique initiative we are more than open to suggestions that will help us improve. If you have experience in journalism we would love to receive articles from you that we can publish in the 'Hints and Tips' section. If you become a consistent contributor, we will list you as a 'Partner' of the project.

Lapte de pasare

By Sabrina Reidinger – Dance and Journalism volunteer, Austria, August – December 2010

(Article published in The Village Magazine, Issue no 7)

Lapte de pasare, is a typical Romanian dessert, which is very tasty and sweet. It is a simple dessert and you don't need a lot of time to prepare it, but still it is something I liked a lot.

It is served cold and it's the perfect end to a nice meal.

Ingredients (for 4 persons):

1 litre of milk

3 eggs

4 spoons of sugar

1 vanilla bean

1 tbl spoon of lemon peel

1 dash of salt

Preparation:

First of all bring the milk to boil together with the lemon peel, the vanilla bean and the salt. While it is boiling, whisk the egg white until it is stiff and put it in to the boiling milk with a spoon, so that you have balls of egg white floating in the milk.

After one minute turn the balls over and after another 30 seconds take them out of the milk very carefully and put them in to a glass bowl.

Next mix the egg yolks with the sugar until the mixture becomes really creamy. On the stove, add it to the milk, stirring constantly.

As soon as the milk has thickened it is ready and once it has cooled slightly pour it over the egg balls.

Then wait until everything is really cold and enjoy!!!



Projects Abroad Drama Show – 4th Edition, March 2011

By Alexandra Ichim – Drama, Dance, Journalism Supervisor; Social Manager

A year has passed by very fast and we have had many accomplishments within the drama project. Since the third edition of the Projects Abroad Drama Show in February 2010, we had many successful activities on the drama placements.

The first volunteer to change the daily drama routine within the project was Miss Danielle Convery, who tried something new with her Drama Therapy sessions. She was amazing and did a great job as a drama therapist in three of the day care centres with which we collaborate. We created shows within these drama placements, which were different to the former ones, but very successful.

Moreover, we continued the idea of Drama Therapy with Natalie Taylor, who did an amazing job working with the children in the foster homes. She also created a show for and together with them at Christmas which was very successful.

From January 2011 we started having drama volunteers that wanted to take the former system of drama teaching, which means giving drama classes to several groups in high schools and primary schools in and outside Brasov. All three of them, Sarah Slaunwhite, Greg Walker and Rachael Morrison knew from the beginning of their placements that the final result of their stay here would be creating a show – the Forth Edition of the Projects Abroad Drama Show.

First, we put the bases of ten drama groups in high schools and primary schools in Brasov, and then the three named volunteers started working with them on creating different performances for the final show. They have been working for over one month now, choosing appropriate scripts for all the groups, directing them and teaching them how to perform. They are almost ready with their groups performing and furthermore, they are very proud of their work.

The 4th Edition of the Projects Abroad Drama Show will present 6 plays from our Drama Groups and two or three theatrical moments presented by our drama volunteers.

Alongside the drama moments we will also have special guests who are going to delight the audience with songs and dances presented by local famous singers and Dance Schools.





Like every year the show will be hosted by Alexandra Ichim and one of our drama volunteers and will be designed for both foreigners and locals. It will make a great impact and involve local television stations and other advertising outlets.

Following the pattern of last year's edition, we thought of transforming this event into a Charity Show, this time raising money for a Special Needs School which we collaborate with, a different placement from last year. The money we raise will be donated to Bradet School for Special Needs to use for anything they need, be those products or construction tools and materials.

We hope the show has a great impact among the locals and foreigners and that, through our drama project and relations that we have with local artists, we succeed in raising enough money and at the same time give our drama volunteers and children within the groups the opportunity to appear on stage, perform and direct. We just need to keep up the good work and pay attention to all details; organising is fun when



Volunteers ' Moments



My First Impressions of Romania

By Rachael Morrison - Current Drama Volunteer, UK

When I left to come to Romania I was worried about how I would find the teaching; would people like me and how I would adjust to the culture? As soon as I got here all these worries were put to rest. The staff at Projects Abroad, the other volunteers and all the wonderful people I have met since I have been here, have been so helpful in making my time here enjoyable and stress-free.

Another concern I had was would I like the food, it all sounded very different from what I was used to. However I have been pleasantly surprised to find that not only do I like the food but I love it! My house mum, Rodica, is a great cook and all the food I have had so far has been delicious.

I have also been exploring the city at every opportunity. Brasov is a lovely city and so far, amongst other things, I have climbed up Mt. Tampa. It is described by locals as more of a hill than a mountain, but the view from the top is breath taking; you can see all of Brasov and beyond. There are also many bars and restaurants here, so there is plenty to do in the evenings and at the weekend.

As well as this I have been using my weekends to go to places beyond the city such as visiting Bran Castle. Although it is a bit more difficult to travel here, the Projects Abroad staff members have been more than happy to offer advice on the easiest ways to travel from place to place.

And now onto the main reason I came here, to teach drama. I was initially nervous about teaching drama to people in their second language, but have found the kids and teenagers I work with very eager to speak English and learn drama skills. Their enthusiasm and approach to learning is making my work here really enjoyable.

Another benefit of the drama project is that it's varied so I am working with different groups every day. I am doing short plays with some groups, drama therapy with others and I am even rehearsing to perform a pantomime with the other volunteers.

So far I am having a wonderful time here in Romania. It has been a new challenge for me, but I have already met many lovely people and will leave with many great memories.



The Different Faces of a Country: Romania through Japanese Eyes

By Isao Oshima – current Journalism Volunteer, Japan



In my opinion, Romania is not different from Japan, the country I live. Of course I know its food, buildings, weather, people, and culture are different from Japan. But the diversity is not important. Certainly about 20 million people walk, eat, laugh, cry, and live there.

Romania is dark. I thought so before I decided to visit it. All I knew about it was that the country had been under Communist regime until recently and I also heard about the scary monster, Dracula. Both of these gave me dark

images of it. However, one of my teachers, who has been to Eastern Europe, said that Romanian people are very bright. I felt confused because I didn't know which the truth of the country is; darkness or brightness. Additionally, I didn't have any image of Europe as a whole because I had never been to Europe and I always got my information from television or magazines. I knew only that the European towns themselves are pieces of art and therefore I could not imagine how Romania was, so I decided to find out myself.

At first, when I arrived in Romania I was surprised that it was cold, but it is comfortable cold. Thanks to the clear air and nature untouched by humans I enjoyed this cold weather and wanted to walk outside, though I normally don't like the cold. The next thing that moved my mind are the beautiful structures. I can see artistic and historical castles, churches, and many other structures living together with nature or merging in town. When I see a castle in the forest I strongly think it is exactly the European landscape where nature and structure merge well. Furthermore many local people welcomed me with smiles and warm words. They are very kind and tell me a lot about living here.

In the town there are few traffic lights, so it can be quite an adventure to cross the street. There are parts of the city where you can see graffiti on the walls, which goes in comparison with the beautifully arranged shops from the centre of the city.

They invite you to observe the touristic area combining artistic and modern and making them not feel cheap at first sight.

The city centre is so developed and modern, with shopping malls, mobile phone shops, and fast food shops. Romania has both artistic and historic sides which are combined with the modernity that is noticeable all around.

The roads not being very clean and the frozen streets give me images of darkness; however the people I met here are very bright and nice. Here, the air is clear, the people are bright, but also streets are frozen because of the winter. Brasov represents a historical town, and a modern city in the same time. Here is untouched nature, and also beautiful shops for residents and tourists. All the things I watch, hear, and feel here are similar to what I thought it may be like.

Romania is not different from where I usually live. The country has many sides, dark and bright, beautiful and dirty, historic and modern, just like Japan. Of course I think the town is artistic, but not everything is about art. Romania is not only on television or in magazines, it is real. Certainly people live here, and I could happily live here too.



From Japan to Romania: About Losses and Gains

By Kohei Miura – Current journalism volunteer, Japan

My most important lesson lately has been that a fulfilling life has much to do with how developed a country is. I have been learning that in Romania. I came here a week ago for the first time.

I was excited and I also felt uneasy when, after a 15-hour tiresome flight, I landed at the Bucharest airport to find it silent and seriously cold like an ice block. It made me feel depressed. I was thinking that this country is

covered in a gloomy atmosphere so specific to a socialist state. As I started living in Romania, I was absolutely sure about that.

I walked around the city and I looked at various things and I allowed myself to feel its spirit. There are many old buildings that seemed about to fall and many beggars and not so much plants and no cool air. I have never seen a blue sky since I came here. Brasov seems like a monochrome city. When I walk



around the city I feel as though I am a time traveller in Europe of fifty years ago.



My home city, in Japan, is more colorful. Buildings shine beautifully. Roads are kept in good condition and trees are planted in a central divider and on the sides.

Vending machines are installed every 50m and it is easy to find a convenience store and a supermarket. I was born in such a city and I grew up there. I have never felt inconvenience, and so taken everything for granted.



But, here in Romania, it is different. It is seriously difficult to find a convenience store and supermarket.

When located, these shops don't have a wide assortment of items. And what is amazing is that there is not signal in a crosswalk. But then, I have found another thing; Romanians are gentle.

Maybe you want to ask me "Why did you think so?" It is because when I try to cross

the street, Romanian people stop to make way for me without a signal. Can you imagine that? It is unbelievable. In Japan, it is difficult to cross the street because people don't stop if there are crosswalks without street lights. Japanese people are always in a hurry. They can't afford to be concerned about other people. I really feel Romanian people are gentle.

I think that happiness is difficult to see so we have to feel it; it is the only way to perceive it. However developed or comfortable my Japanese city is, it is unfortunate that people forget to care for other people. Japanese people work hard and they always look tired. They have dismissed humanity.

Today, a lot of countries are developed and people work harder and harder to earn. And then, because of it, they will forget to consider and feel concern for the people around them.

In Romania, this hasn't happened yet. In my short stay in Brasov, I am glad I can feel humanity. People cannot live alone. We should never forget this. And if we all remembered this, the world would be better.

