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Dan & Marta Lewis

I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, and I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, as a *light to the nations*... Isaiah 42:6

## September 2022

### *Hosea 4:6 (NKJV)*

*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.*

When we first started visiting Roma villages in Romania and Hungary years ago, it was very discouraging for us to learn that parents gave little (if any) encouragement to their children to attend school or increase in any kind of knowledge - secular or spiritual. In fact, it seemed that most parents preferred their children not be in school when they could be out helping the family survive by begging or taking things that were not fastened down. The scripture above was being fulfilled right before our eyes. This sad situation was a major factor in starting an elementary school for Roma children over 20 years ago.

In our last newsletter we briefly mentioned Csaba Boszormenyi from Székelyhíd, Romania who "grew up" being in every church meeting as well as Bible teaching during our visits and when Light to the Nations would bring teams for Summer "Vacation Bible Schools". Csaba was always there on the front row. Our goal then, as now, was to "train up the children in the way they should go" according to Proverbs 22:6 so when they were older, they would remember what they were taught.

Recently we received a very encouraging message from another person who right now is remembering where they came from and how they got where they are now.

September, 2001 was the beginning of the first year of the Light to the Nations elementary school for Roma children in Székelyhíd. By Romanian law, a child who has missed too much school by the time they are 11 years old, is not allowed to continue. Our school was for those children.

That first year was very successful with 50 children ages 11 to 21 completing the course, and with the Romanian government granting official status to our school so that we could offer official certificates of completion.

Year two had a very interesting first day. Now with 80 students in an overcrowded room, our teacher, Daniela Tutos began roll call when an amazing thing happened: A new first year student, 30 year old Julianna was shocked to hear the last name of second year student, 13 year old Erzsike, because it was the same as her name! Julianna met with Erzsike after class because the family name was not a common one in the area. They quickly found out they were half sisters! A "reunion" of sisters who had never met!

Fast forward 20 years, and this is that encouraging message we received from Julianna:

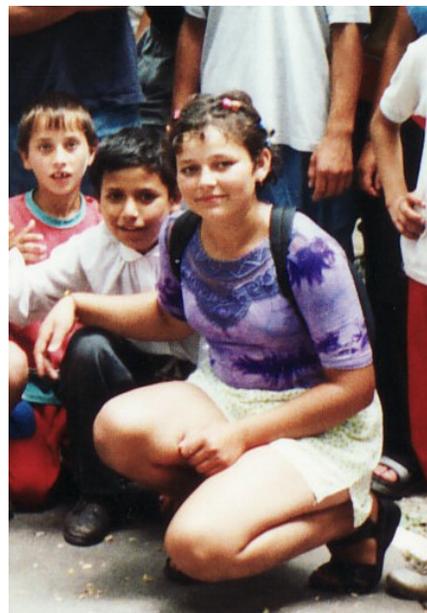
Dear Marta, I would like to say thank you again that you and your husband are still helping and supporting the Roma people. God bless you for this.

What I am today all started with you helping me and supporting me. I am thinking of you with love forever. Your example planted in me the desire to help my people also.

We were able to learn more about what Julianna is doing today, through a link she sent us to an interview she did with the Székelyhíd newspaper (not a Roma newspaper). In the interview, she told about the challenges she had growing up as a Roma in Székelyhíd. Her parents divorced when she was 3 yrs old, and she and her little brother were raised by grandma. Her mother remarried and started a new family, and her father never kept any relationship.

Julianna had dreams of being a teacher, but always thought that gypsy kids could never be anybody. She always felt she had no value as a gypsy, because of the way people talked about and treated gypsies. She was told, "Just stay here and have two or three gypsy kids." But Julianna wanted to be different - she wanted more out of life.

Julianna was taken out of school at 13 because grandfather was ill and she had to earn money for the family. She tried to make it in Budapest, but eventually came home to Székelyhíd where she heard about a new evening school called *Masodik esély* "second chance". (Note: That was our Light to the Nations school for Roma children.)



**Above left**, here is Julianna in her salon in Székelyhíd, The frame on the wall behind her is displaying Isaiah 41:10. The picture **second from left** shows Julianna's half-sister Erzsike at 13 years old on an outing with other students from the first year of the Light to the Nations Roma school.

The two pictures **at right** show cousins József and Rozika Vágó at the end of school this spring In Ózd, Hungary. József is moving on to 8th grade and Rozika will be entering 9th grade when school starts again. Thank you for your prayers for them and all the other students who will be returning to school.

The interviewer asked Julianna how she felt about starting over in school at her age (she was 30 at the time). She said she looked around to make sure nobody saw her go in, but she said that the decision to go in that day changed her life forever. In the interview, she told how on that first day, she met her half-sister from her fathers side, whom she had never seen before.

**Daniela Tutos**, the teacher supported by Light to the Nations partners, became a “mentor” for Julianna and even helped her after graduation to get into and finish high school and help her get started with her first real job. After graduation and working for a time, Julianna asked herself: “*What does Székelyhíd need, and what can I do about it?*” Her answer was that Székelyhíd needed a salon where Roma women can go. In 2019, she opened her very own manicure/ pedicure salon!

**Julianna credits her** faith in God for being able to

rise above circumstances that hold so many Romas back. In her salon she has a framed scripture highlighting **Isaiah 41:10**: *Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'*

It was very encouraging for us to renew contact with Julianna and to know that seeds that were planted years ago are still bearing fruit. It is also gratifying to know that she recognizes that her help comes from the Lord.

**Thank you to** everyone who supports Light to the Nations with prayer and finances. Your connection to this ministry over the years has been such a great blessing to many people.

Love and blessings,

*Dan & Martha Lewis*

## Back to School

Summer is passing by and it is time to start thinking about kids going back to school. It is a real breakthrough for Roma parents to even consider sending their children to school, so we want to help them go back fully prepared to succeed. Books are provided by the school, but parents are responsible for other materials the students will need. A gift of \$50 will buy a backpack, theme books, notebook, paper, pencils, colored pencils and crayons, pencil box, pencil sharpener, eraser, scissors, glue, a watercolor set with brushes. And P.E. clothes. Everything is on sale now, so any gift you may give will be greatly appreciated.

**Thank you!**