



Dear friends and prayer partners

Looking back over the year of 2023, our hearts are moved with thankfulness in the way that the Lord has blessed and extended HCI's ministry. Our vision has always been to serve orphans and needy children through their formative years and to help them grow in their personal relationship with the Lord Jesus.

In addition, we have been privileged to serve over 200 traumatized Ukrainian refugees during this past year and a half. Our last Ukrainian family found a permanent residence in Dorohoi this September.

“Because you did it to the least of these my brothers, you did it to me (Christ Jesus).”

Matthäus, 25,40



Leading children and teenagers to the Lord Jesus and discipling them for period of years help to establish them in their personal relationship with Christ. When we arrived in Romania in 1991, we served in two Dorohoi state orphanages for six years and led many children to the Lord, taught them God's Word as well as how to read the Bible and to pray for themselves. During these years, we carried their sufferings, comforted them and encouraged them to trust the Lord Jesus to lead them into a new life. Some became a part of our HCI families. Our labor and prayers were not in vain. Many of these orphans are walking today with the Lord, have established families of their own, and are serving the Lord. Petronel's testimony below shows how the grace and power of God changed her life and set her to be a blessing for many needy children and teenagers.



Petronela's testimony

My name is Petronela, and immediately after my birth in 1978, my mother abandoned me. The state placed me first in an orphanage for babies and then later in one for preschoolers. I spent my childhood in a Dorohoi orphanage with 250 girls. Our large, crowded dormitory rooms were shared with about 50 girls with two sleeping in one small bed. My earliest memories were plagued with fear and loneliness. There was a strict pecking order to obey and serve the older girls, and I was often beaten by them. I remember that the winter nights were cold with little or no heating and not very much food. I often had a deep longing for a family and a mother who would love me. In 1991, a group of American and German missionaries came to our orphanage and spent two weeks with us. They slept in the orphanage with us, ate our food, played with us, and told us about Jesus. This was very strange for me, and I couldn't really believe that they could feel my pain. For the coming years, these missionaries came about three times a year spending 1 to 2 weeks playing with us and teaching us about Jesus. Each Christmas they would bring us food, clothes, shoes, and toys. We were so excited when we received these presents, but after they left, the women who supervised us stole everything and gave these things to their own children or sold them.



In 1995, the first HCI family for girls from the state orphanage was established in Dorohoi, and my dream for a family finally came true. Shortly after this, I prayed and gave my life to Jesus. During the coming years, the HCI Children's Village was constructed and abandoned babies were received into our HCI families. This made me especially happy that these children would not have to grow up in an orphanage like I did. These orphans and other poor children also receive special attention and care at the Cornerstone Kindergarten and School that I didn't have growing up.

When I was 23 years old, I attended a Bible school in Germany. Afterwards I received professional training to work with troubled teenagers, and later I completed my university studies and became a social worker. The HCI missionaries have made such a profound impact on my life in the way that they loved and cared for me for many years. I now seek to do the same for other troubled children. As I reach out to wounded children and teenagers, I seek to care for them, to befriend and counsel them, and to tell them about the love of Jesus. This past summer I was in Dorohoi and could support the new HCI ministry serving teenager girls who are living under the supervision of the Child Protection Agency. These girls were eager to hear my testimony, and I was also able to speak privately with different ones. I am so thankful that God saw me and provided me with a family at HCI. He lifted me out of despair, gave me a new life in Christ, and called me to serve other hurting children and young people.

HCI's New Ministry



The Child Protection Agency provides supervised apartments in Dorohoi and for teenagers who have been removed from abusive families. Particularly the girls have been devastated by the abuse that they have suffered. After reaching the age of eighteen, these girls are especially vulnerable for human trafficking that is also present in Dorohoi.

We invite these needy girls to spend afternoons with us. Some make pizza or an ice cream dessert for everyone, and others play basketball or volleyball or prepare hand-craft projects. A Gospel message is presented, and individual prayer is offered. In this way, relationships of trust can grow between the girls and us. A growing number of these teenagers are participating in a daily Bible reading group. Please pray for these girls that they will receive a new life in Christ and healing for their souls.

Cornerstone Kindergarten and School

During the many years of serving orphans in the state orphanages, we learned that poor children are often neglected by their teachers and marginalized by their classmates in state schools. Many drop out of school with no job training or higher education. For this reason, the poverty cycle continues from one generation to another. After much prayer, we felt compelled in 2002 to start a private kindergarten and school in order to provide needy children with a quality education including dedicated teachers, homework assistance, After-School courses, individual tutoring for weaker students, and a warm, nutritious lunch. Our humble beginnings with one small kindergarten group and a first grade class with 8 children has grown into a kindergarten with 60 children, a Day Care Center with 37 children and a school with 200 children. During the past twenty years, we have graduated eight generations of children from our Cornerstone School. In all of these years, not one child has abandoned his schooling. They have received a solid educational foundation that when they enter a state high school, they belong to the best students in their classes. Most have continued their education after high school with scholarships for university or technical training. Their preferred areas of study are computer science, medicine, nursing, and foreign languages (English and German).

Private schools are very expensive in Romania, and only wealthy families have the financial capacity to send their children to them. However, our goal is to serve poor children without financial means, to see their lives changed by the Gospel, and to give them a bright future through a good education.

We are happy to announce that our dedicated efforts that begin in the first grade showed again great success in June 2023. Our Cornerstone students scored high on their eighth grade national standardized exam, and our school took the 4th place among the 167 schools in our county. Poor and disadvantaged children can also excel when given the opportunity!

It is also a joy to hear reports that our Cornerstone students are serving the Lord during their high school and university years. They are working in children's summer camps in unreached villages, serving in pioneer teams for church planting, helping the poor, and even receiving missionary training and going on outreach to reach Muslims in southern Romania.



Prayer Requests

Please pray with us that we can continue serving needy children through our Cornerstone Kindergarten and School. The Romanian government has raised the required salaries for teachers and all administrative and support staff in schools and kindergartens. However, the government has not provided state funds to help private schools for these new salary costs. Because we are serving poor children who cannot pay tuition, we are dependent on donations. Please pray with us that we will be able to continue our Cornerstone School and Kindergarten in order to give needy children an opportunity to overcome the barriers that hinder them one day to make a decent living for their families.

Christmas Greetings from our HCI family

As Christmas approaches, we are reminded that our Savior humbled Himself to be born as a helpless infant. He came to earth to lift us out of the ash heap, to forgive our sins, and to give us eternal life.

We cherish His words in Mark 9:35-37. „If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all. Taking a child, He set him in their midst and taking him in His arms, He said to them, Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me.”





*We wish you and your family a blessed
and peaceful Christmas. May God's presence
be near you and all your loved ones.*

Cindy McCarver and our HCI family in Dorohoi



www.hci-online.de

✉ mccarver1508@gmail.com



HCI

Hope for the Children
International e.V.

HCI - Hope for the Children International
P.O. Box 163
Gary, Texas 75643
U.S.A.