



WHO WE ARE

Save the Orphans (STO) is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of orphans and destitute families in Moldova, Europe's poorest country.

Our Mission

We provide food, clothing, school supplies, firewood, and other necessities to orphans, foster families, and destitute families through our network of volunteers in Moldova and partner organizations providing services to orphans and at-risk children. We make presentations and provide information to Moldovan children about the importance of education, self-esteem, and the dangers of human trafficking and abuse. By providing food, clothing, training and educational opportunities along with stable living conditions to protect orphans and at-risk children from human trafficking, Save the Orphans enables orphans and destitute children in Moldova to pursue their education and life ambitions in a safe and nurturing environment

This summer, Save the Orphans Founder, Sylvia Mader, returned to Moldova for her first visit since 2019. She met with our volunteers in Chisinau, Soldanesti and Cricova, planned summer and fall activities with Local Director Diana Todica, discussed future projects with our partner, Oak House transitional home, and forged a new partnership with Beginning of Life, a Moldova-based child and family welfare group.

Through your generosity, Save the Orphans transformed the Summer 2022 Robotics camp for orphans and poor children into a weekly Computer Workshop taught by our volunteer Ion Gardarencu. The instruction teaches coding, programming, robotics, and electronics. Save the Orphans also expanded our funding for orphan-focused charities in Moldova. These activities reflect our mission to reach more orphans and deliver our message of hope for their futures through education, and the acquisition of life skills and technical knowledge, while making them aware of the dangers of human trafficking.



COMPUTER PROGRAMING, CODING AND ELECTRONICS



These sessions began in March and were an outgrowth of the Save the Orphans sponsored Introduction to Robotics camp that Ion Gardarencu conducted in Summer 2022. The computer training for 8-10 children every Saturday teaches the students basic computer skills including programming, coding, website development, robotics and electronics. They develop their skills by working in teams on progressively challenging projects, requiring ingenuity and teamwork. Ion was raised at the Strasen Orphanage, and his goal is to pass on the skills that have allowed him to break the cycle of poverty and abuse, enabling the students to build their futures through the opportunities made possible by 21st Century skills.

Grant received for Computer Training Program

We are very pleased to announce that our Computer Programming, Coding and Electronics program received a grant from the Rotary Club of Palo Alto, California. This grant was generously matched dollar-for-dollar by an anonymous donor. The grant and match will allow the program to continue through 2024.



Fostering self-reliance

While visiting Elena and her family of 13 children (sponsored through your donations to Save the Orphans) outside Cricova in June, Sylvia was inspired to help them become more self-reliant through the creation of a vegetable garden at their home. This will enable the family to grow and preserve vegetables. This will also help the children acquire skills, develop a sense of purpose and responsibility for the garden's success, and a sense of accomplishment in watching something they have planted flourish. Arrangements for tilling the soil before winter have been completed. Come spring, the planting will take place, and Elena and her family will do the rest. Save the Orphans will use this program as a model for other families under similar circumstances.



2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In addition to initiating the weekly computer training sessions, in 2023 Save the Orphans expanded these ongoing programs:

Food bag Distributions

With food prices soaring worldwide, food bag deliveries for foster and impoverished families are more important than ever. Your donations have allowed us to increase funding to Pastor Vasile Surdu in Soldanesti for his food deliveries to the growing number of families in that region requiring food assistance. In Cricova, increased funding has allowed our volunteers to expand the number of families receiving food bags this year.

Sponsorships Elenas's family

Your generosity has allowed us to provide Elena and her 13 children (including her late sister's five orphaned children) with monthly food bag deliveries, shoes, school clothing, backpacks and school supplies for the new school year. In addition to the self-sustaining garden initiative described above, we provided shelving and a wardrobe for their home, which has no closets, to increase their usable indoor space.



Summer Activities

Your donations allowed Save the Orphans to fund, for the 12th year, Pastor Vasile Surdu's summer programs for orphans and poor children in the Soldanesti area. Over 120 children aged 14-17 participated in a program in July. A second program in August was attended by over 30 girls aged 8-12. The programs featured outdoor sports and team events, as well as group discussions about life choices and consequences. A portion of each program was devoted to the dangers of human sex trafficking. The children received two meals daily at the week-long programs.



HOW IT ALL BEGAN

All meaningful human endeavors begin with an inspirational moment. For Save the Orphans, that moment came when Sylvia Mader, our Founder and Director, had a chance encounter in the early 2000s with a Moldovan woman and her American husband while they were purchasing a new home with Sylvia in the Washington, DC suburbs. As the woman was sharing pictures of their young children taken in Moldova, Sylvia noticed a young girl in the background. When Sylvia inquired, she learned this was Mihaela, one of Moldova's many social orphans (children left in state run orphanages by parents either unfit or unable to care for them). Discovering further that these orphanages operated on approximately 5 dollars per day per child, Sylvia chose sight unseen to become Mihaela's 'American aunt'.

Initially, through Moldovan friends, and eventually through annual visits, Sylvia provided Mihaela warm clothes and other personal care necessities lacking in the underfunded orphanage. Recognizing that the orphanage was not a healthy environment and that bringing Mihaela to the United States was impossible, Sylvia moved Mihaela, now in her early teens, into private family settings, sponsoring her room and board.

This was a particularly critical time, as the early teen years are the period when young, undirected children are most vulnerable to the deceptive lures of sex traffickers. As the relationship evolved over the years and regular contact became possible through video calls, Sylvia grew from being the distant American aunt to the American mom (both as good cop and bad cop to a sometimes rebellious teen) in the heart of Mihaela. Mihaela is now a married mother of two living in the Moldovan capital of Chişinău. Sylvia most recently visited them in June of this year.

While Sylvia and Mihaela's utterly improbable coming together led to a heartwarming outcome, Moldova's challenges are much greater than a single child. This led to the formation of Save the Orphans and our mission of improving the lives of orphans, foster families, and at-risk children in Moldova.



FALL & WINTER PROGRAMS

CHISINAU ORPHANAGE

In December, our Local Director Diana Todica will join with volunteers from Oak House Women's Transitional Home for a Holiday program at Internat Number 3, the large orphanage/school in the capital city of Chisinau. Diana will discuss the importance of education and self-esteem with the children, while relating the dangers of human sex trafficking. Anti-trafficking cards and literature will be provided to the children, along with Christmas gifts, treats, food and clothing. The women from Oak House, orphans of high school and college age, will perform skits and sing songs with the children.

PASTOR VASILE'S SOLDANESTI PROGRAMS

Together, we will fund Pastor Vasile Surdu's programs to assist orphans and poor families in Soldanesti. During December, the Pastor's volunteers distribute clothing, food, winter coats, and boots to foster families and destitute households in the region. The need for these items has grown markedly since Russia's invasion of neighboring Ukraine.

In addition, we will support Pastor Vasile's Christmas program for orphans and poor children, where gifts and food are distributed, and the children get to celebrate the season.

OAK HOUSE CHRISTMAS CARAVAN

Save the Orphans has been a proud partner of Oak House Women's Transitional Home for several years, and each year we support the Oak House Christmas Caravan visits to orphanages, schools, group homes and other locations so that orphans and poor children can experience the joy of Christmas. With your help, we will expand the number of Christmas Caravan stops, where these young women distribute new winter clothes and Christmas gifts, along with playing games with the children, performing skits, and singing songs.



Lifesaving Firewood

Last winter, your generosity enabled Save the Orphans to provide firewood to dozens of homes in the Cricova and Soldanesti regions. This effort provided these homes with heat throughout the long winter when there was no alternative due to the high cost and dramatically reduced supply of natural gas from Russia. With Russian gas supplies to Moldova reduced by half, and the price doubled, your donations made the difference for hundreds of Moldovan children and orphans, their families and caregivers. With your continued help, we will deliver lifesaving firewood to more families this year as we anticipate the need to be even greater. The Cricova firewood deliveries will again be managed by Local Director Diana Todica, and the Soldanesti deliveries by Pastor Vasile Surdu.



Sponsorships

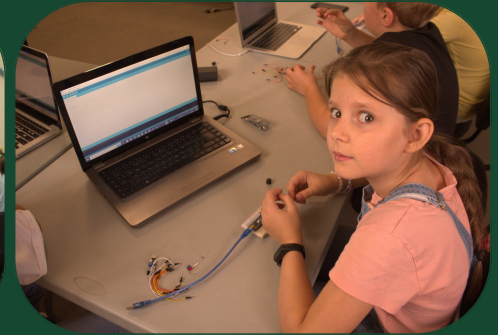
Save the Orphans has sponsored Elena's family in Cricova for several years. As described above, Elena is raising 13 children (ages 3-16). With the older children now in their teens, and inflation driving up the costs of necessities worldwide, greater support is needed to meet the family's evolving needs. By designating your gift to Elena's family, you provide a direct and regular stream of support.



2024 PROGRAMS

COMPUTER PROGRAMMING, CODING, AND ELECTRONICS

Save the Orphans is committed to expanding this program in 2024 to reach more orphans and poor children, as these skills are vital to their future. Your generosity will help us identify new venues and instructors to grow the program's reach.



Trafficking of Orphans – Partnership with Beginning of Life

Moldova is targeted by human traffickers due to its poverty and high numbers of children without parental supervision. Our partnership with Beginning of Life (BOL) helps Save the Orphans grow its mission to reach as many at-risk Moldovan children as possible and empower them to better lives through education and development of life skills. Equally important is familiarizing children at an early age to identify the deceptions employed by traffickers.

We are partnering with BOL because their holistic approach begins with vulnerable children and families, striving to address the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social needs of children who, for various reasons and circumstances, are being deprived of the opportunity to live and develop into a stable adulthood. BOL provides safe places to live, play, be educated, and learn life skills for these orphans and at-risk children.

Your generosity will enable us to expand our partnership with BOL, reaching more Moldovan orphans and helping them to mature and flourish in an environment shielded from the threat of trafficking.





THANK YOU!

Your continuing support means everything to Save the Orphans and our volunteers. Building a connection with Moldovan orphans and empowering them to break the cycle of neglect and exploitation through education and empowerment is all made possible by you. With your help, we can reach out to more orphans and destitute families. Your continued support will allow us to further expand our anti-trafficking awareness and educational programs. The Save the Orphans staff and network of associates in Moldova are all volunteers. 100% of your donations goes directly to our mission. Thank you in advance for your support, participation, and most importantly, your generosity.

With appreciation, THE SAVE THE ORPHANS TEAM

To Donate

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moldovasorphans@gmail.com

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