



Saint Paraskeva Orthodox Charity

2014 Annual Report



“Feeding the hungry is a greater work than raising the dead” St. John Chrysostom

© Photo2014 Fr. Andrei - The Joy of the Impoverished Establishment, Rasca, Romania

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Table of Contents

Table of contents

A Year in Review 2014

Section I. Fundraising activities and grant donations

Section II. Contributions to programs and individual cases

1. The Joy of the Impoverished Establishment, Rasca
2. The Children of Glodeanu, Buzau
3. The Children with Developmental disabilities, Giugiu
4. The Marcus Orphanage, Covasna
5. The I want a home project, Iasi
6. Funding report on 8 individual cases

Section III. Partnerships and Collaborations

Section IV. Future Plans and looking forward at 2015

Section V. Operational improvements and developments

Section VI. Appendix –SPOC 4 year growth

Disclaimer: The 2014 Annual Report has been prepared by the Saint Paraskeva Orthodox Charity Board of Directors. For additional information on our program activities and financial reports please refer to our website www.spcharity.org.

A Year in Review 2014

The Year in Review is a summary of the activities and achievements of the Saint Paraskeva Orthodox Charity in Romania for the calendar year 2014 and also a summary of prospective projects in progress.

2014 was a rewarding year full of hope that delivered many smiles on hundreds and thousands of faces of our beloved beneficiaries and volunteers in Romania. We would like to sincerely thank our admirable and dedicated volunteer staff in Chicago and Romania who have volunteered thousands of hours to ensure that funds were collected to support the much needed activities and in-kind donations made over a dozen projects supported this years by our charitable work abroad throughout Romania.

At St. Paraskeva Orthodox Charity (also referred to as SPOC, in this document) we started the year with a thorough analysis of our past activities over the first three years in order to streamline and improve future operations and the effectiveness of our activities. As a result, we successfully revised our by-laws to include a more flexible operating structure of the board of directors to better meet the needs of the organization. Thus our mission was revised to better encompass and articulate the focus of our programs and efforts.

The new mission of Saint Paraskeva Orthodox Charity reads:

“The mission of Saint Paraskeva Orthodox Charity is to identify those children of Romania that are most vulnerable and deprived of their basic existential means, to bring back hope and faith in their life, to help them grow in harmony, to fulfill their needs, to overcome their social difficulties, and by God's grace, to help them pursue their life potential.”

This enabled us to be more focused and selective in responding to the multiple requests received throughout the year for financial or in-kind support. Thus, in 2014 we focused mainly on interventions related to children who were the primary beneficiaries.

We are happy to share with you these images of our grateful beneficiaries from our funded programs in Romania during 2014.



Section I. Fundraising Activities and Grant Donations

During the financial year of 2014, we are happy to report that, with God's Almighty guidance and help, we were able to fundraise a total amount of **\$136,838** which represents a **439.3%** increase over the previous year.

Our expenses for the year totaled **\$73,144** of which **\$66,673 (91.1%)** were grants distributed to our active programs and individual cases in Romania.

We are proud to highlight that we remained true to our commitment of conducting our activities through 100% volunteer work, and therefore were able to maintain our administrative costs at **7.3 %** of the total amount raised this year.

SPOC fundraising activities for 2014 are listed below:

Source of Funding	Funds raised in USD \$
Cash donations from donors	\$126,634
Summer Soccer Tournament	\$5,706
Annual Tennis Tournament	\$3,468
Membership Fees	\$1,030
Total funds raised	\$136,838

Section II. Contributions to programs and individual cases

Our grants have been carefully directed to support several "hand-picked programs" with a successful track record. These programs are usually run and led by local Romanian monastic or priests as well organizations or individuals with a strong reputation and dedication to help the most vulnerable and needy children of Romania.

Our contributions range from financial support targeted to impactful projects, to operations scale up efforts, to in-kind donations that included shipments of goods, and individual case by case support to cover medical costs or medical treatments as needed.

We successfully collaborated with established organizations such as orphanages located in the immediate vicinity of the monasteries, state orphanages, and social settings coordinated by priests. As stated in our mission we work to identify families with children in critical need of social and medical support that have remained unreached by other charities or local authorities.

Our dedicated volunteers conduct thorough assessments and design unique interventions to improve these crisis situations. Over the past 4 years we have been providing ongoing financial support for medical procedures, medication, dietary supplements, rehabilitation equipment, wheel chairs, and other medical supplies to numerous children with complex medical conditions.

Over the course of the year 2014, we successfully and effectively supported a number of 5 programs and 8 individual cases. Short summary descriptions of each of these activities and our contributions are listed below.

1. “The Joy of the Impoverished” Establishment - Rasca

Our charity has contributed this year to the ongoing Rasca shelter construction and development in addition to the aid operation activities supported by Father Andrei, a total amount of **\$35,277**.

Rasca is already home to a new shelter where the construction is now in the final stages. This new establishment will offer housing support for many in need such as the elderly, the medically challenged and orphaned children. This settlement will serve as the base for the ministry’s founder, Father Andrei.

Father Andrei is on the road tirelessly, responding to the endless needs across Romania in his effort to alleviating suffering of those in need and bring help to the poor. His travels reveal a world of forgotten people, one of pain, poverty and suffering. Along the way, he meets thousands of families, including mothers unable to eat because there is not enough food for their children, and children that often go to bed hungry. Fr. Andrei also makes time to visit the elderly and the sick, encouraging them through prayer to see hope despite all their suffering.

Here are just a few examples of Father Andrei passionate mission for the suffering across the country:

1. Various funds provided to build 5 new homes for families with 8 children (Targu Mures), 5 children (Neamt), 7 children (Gulia), 9 children and 10 children.
2. Currently in construction is the consolidation of a house for a family with 7 children.
3. Purchased a washing machine for a family with 8 children.

4. Purchased a cow for a family with 5 children.
5. Purchased multiple stoves for poor families with multiple kids.
6. Purchased several beds for a family with 9 children, as their house is currently in construction.
7. Purchased beds and furniture for a family with 6 kids.
8. Provided medical aid, clothing, food and school supplies for other thousands of children.

2. The Children of Glodeanu

In 2014, SPOC contributed with the amount of **\$2,150** for food served to children in the day care center as well as clothing and school supplies.

Starvation, illness, and extreme poverty are daily challenges for over 50 children and their families living in few small villages around Glodeanu, Romania. Sick and without employment opportunities, these parents struggle to meet the most basic of needs, sometimes enduring multiple days passing without the hope of a meal.

The local priest, Father Marian Tudor, took on a mission to make a difference and bring some light in their gloomy lives. Driven by compassion, he put his heart into restoring an old village hall and turning it into a day care center where children can eat one hot meal per day, receive daily help with schoolwork, and have a place to play and socialize with others.

3. The Children with Developmental Disabilities – Giurgiu.

In 2014, SPOC, made the following financial contributions allocated for two major program activities:

- **\$8,647** for the acquisition of a complex physical therapy equipment that is already in use since September 2014. The center is now able to accommodate the needs of the children and we have been informed that the equipment is benefiting on a daily bases at least 10 patients. The center has been contracting a physical therapist that is supervising the therapy of these children.
- **\$2,790** for vitamins and nutritional supplements of critical importance due to special children's nutritional needs recommended by their physicians given their special conditions.

In Giurgiu, the parents of over 50 children who suffer from severe physical and cognitive disabilities have joined efforts. These parents have an extremely difficult time holding regular jobs, as their children's disabilities require permanent assistance, such as special nutrition, diaper-changing and extensive treatment

programs. These families have been working together to raise money by selling handmade crafts such as cards, candle stands, decorations, but this is far from enough to cover their needs.

Physical therapy is a critical component of treatment for these children, as it can make a tremendous difference in their quality of life. However, the expertise and equipment required are not available in the center. Saint Paraskeva Charity has committed to help implement a rehabilitation program to address this critical need, as well as to support the overall activity of the group.

4. The Marcus Orphanage

In 2014, SPOC has contributed with **\$3,000** to cover for the needs of firewood, their only source of heat over the winter.

In a sacred place, where angels could be heard singing, 11 abandoned children found shelter under the protective wings of Mother Serafima. Embracing them with love, Abbess Serafima has tended to their every need, from providing them with a thorough education to encouraging them and ensuring their social development into adulthood. As the years pass, and the children are growing their need for basic survival and care have also become greater and greater.

To cope with the increasing demands, "Saint Justina Charity" was founded. Our organization has been dedicated to the continued support of this orphanage, helping with operating expenses, such as utilities, and daily needs.

5. "I Want Home" Project- Iasi

In 2014, SPOC has contributed with the amount of **\$2,686** for food and baby supplies.

The "I Want Home" project is a one-year-old initiative of the Romanian organization "I Love Children" aiming to reduce the high abandonment rate of newborn children in Romania. Working in collaboration with the local Department of Child Protection, volunteers identify cases with risk of abandon and offer material and emotional support to mothers and families in distress in an attempt to increase the odds that the newly born child remains with the parent(s).

The approach has proven initial successful in Iasi, Romania, however the number of successful interventions is small due to limited financial resources. Saint Paraskeva Charity has decided to help scale up the effort and stepped in to support the children targeted by the "I Want Home" project with food, clothing and baby supplies for the first 6 months of life.

We have identify this project as a very impactful initiative due to the life-long lasting benefits of abandon prevention and we would like to significantly increase our effort and scale-up our activities.

6. Funding report on 8 individual cases

In addition to the five long-term programs running, as mentioned above that address various groups of children, during the year of 2014 we have promptly responded to multiple individual requests, helping families in crisis, and children in desperate situations. The table report lists the individuals supported on a case by case basis.

Name of Project	Type of Request	Amount in USD (\$)
Georgiana Haineala	Chronic Medical Condition Medication	\$3,000
Holy Trinity Cathedral Ladies, BM Baia Mare	Food and Clothes	\$2,635
Maria Buftea (BM project)	Student tuition	\$1,430
Tudor Stanculescu	Wheelchair	\$810
Vaslui Orfanage	Bicycles for children	\$700
Iustina Emanuela	Food and Clothes	\$500
Alina Vasile	School Fees	\$600
Fr. Vasile (BM project)	Medication	\$172
Total amount funded:		\$9,847

Section III. Partnerships and collaborations

Our operating model to help the needy children of Romania is based on partnership with proven ethical and moral local organizations either by monasteries or by the church or that have implemented successful programs aligned with our mission and help them improve or scale up their operations.

Our current partners include:

1. The Romanian Archdiocese of Americas- His Eminence IPS Nicolae Condrea, Chicago, USA
2. The “Constantin and Elena” Orthodox Church – Chicago, USA
3. The Association for Support of Children with Physical Disabilities of Romania- the Giurgiu Chapter

4. Abbess Serafima and The Charitable Association “St. Iustina” – Marcus, Covasna, Romania
5. Father Nicolae Tanase and The Association “Pro Vita”- Valea Screzii, Romania
6. Father Tudor Marian and the parish Glodeanu Carlig , Romania
7. The Association “I Love Children”- Timisoara and Iasi, Romania
8. Father Andrei Aioanei “The Joy of the Impoverished” establishment located at Rasca, Suceava
9. Holy Trinity Cathedral Ladies from Baia Mare (Romania)
10. The Charitable Organization “Saint Onufrie Orphanage”- Floresti Monastery, Cluj
11. WBEZ – 91.5 FM National Public Radio, Chicago, USA ([Interview given by Mariana Cuceu, President on December 23, 2014](#))
12. Motorola Matching Gift Program, Chicago, USA
13. All Saints Antiochian Church, Chicago, USA
14. Saint Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church, Niles, USA
15. Romanian Tribune, local Romanian Newspaper, Chicago
16. Radio Transilvania from Turda (Romania)

Section IV. Future plans and looking forward at 2015

While actively working with our partners on the current programs, we continued to explore new initiatives and opportunities for our organization to expand the reach and impact of our activities.

In 2015, in addition to increasing our support to the existing programs, we plan to launch two new programs:

1. A “sponsor a child” program that aims to enroll US families and individuals into a commitment to support with food and supplies a child that is at risk of being abandoned at birth or shortly after by the parent(s) due to poverty and substandard living conditions. In collaboration with the “I Love Children” Association and the Romanian Authority for the Protection of Children, we will identify cases with risk of child abandonment and we will match them with our sponsors to provide the child support for a period of 6 months in an attempt to maintain a united family. We set an initial target of preventing 10 abandonments in Iasi, Romania, with the hope that we will greatly surpass this objective in 2015. The cost could be approximately \$10,000.
2. The Social Settlement *Saint Onuphrius* consists of 4 family-style houses, organized in such a way as to shelter a maximum number of 10 to 20 children each, according to current regulations regarding promotion and protection of the rights of children and a multifunctional building. Within this project, the services will be provided by the employees of the association, qualified personnel with empathy and communication abilities, according to legislation in force (psychotherapist, psycho-pedagogue).

The orphanage is now in construction and two building are almost ready to open to receive the children. To finalize construction there is a need of \$18,000 for final work on floors, kitchen appliances and doors and for the children furniture. We would like to see this work done as soon as possible in the first trimester of 2015. We also have plans to help with the costs related to bring in the first 12 children in the first building. That goal is set to tentatively happen in June 2015. The costs related to those 12 children are approximately \$11,149/month

Section V. Operational improvements and developments

- 1) **Marketing** – although the donations received this year where quadrupled compared to 2013 those figures have been accomplished as a result of cash donations mainly through personal networking of a few board members. SPOC needs as a first priority in 2015 a marketing strategy to help the publicity and the growth of charity operations and revenues.
- 2) **Management-** the charity operations and its communications with donors, board members and volunteers were hindered through the year 2014 due to the absence of an active in duty secretary and an active in duty Director of Operations. These two persons for the above mentioned posts will need to be identified and installed in functions in the first quarter of 2015.
- 3) **Training and development-** there is an imminent need for training and further development within the operational group: board members, volunteers and project coordinators so as to be able to improve efficiency of operations and to achieve a diversity of activities that will attract more donors or volunteers within our charity.

We are grateful to God for the accomplishments achieved this year and we are not humble enough to realize that we are just tools in this genuine process of many lives that have been touched. We are very grateful to our donors and their generous support through the entire year. We continue to pray to God, to our patron, Saint Paraskeva to strengthen our efforts and to give us wisdom in caring on our future goals.

To learn more about our programs in Romania and make a donation please visit us online at www.spcharity.org or email us at contact@spcharity.org

Thank you and may God's grace continue to bless us all in 2015!

Section VI. Appendix – SPOC 4 year growth

	TOTAL REVENUES	TOTAL EXPENSES AND CONTRIBUTIONS	CONTRIBUTIONS PAID OUT IN CASH
2011	19,769.00	14,453.00	13,351.00
2012	26,091.55	17,833.56	13,851.11
2013	31,147.11	31,587.95	26,239.58
2014	136,838.29	73,144.19	66,672.78

