



NEWSLETTER WINTER 2014/15

Mission Accomplished

Our second Mission trip to Romania took place at the end of October last year. The team comprised of fifteen young people (including one of our volunteers and two of our drop-in visitors) headed up by six leaders.

There was a whole mix of bubbles, music, fun, craft, tears, painting, talks, games, food, friendship, sadness and joy as the team shared with children and adults across orphanages, care homes, prisons, homeless folk and community groups. As last year they worked under the ministry of Pater Noster, a small church-based organisation who have built up a network of opportunities that covers a wide spectrum of the local community

Youth leaders Anthony and Selina plus Sam and (our own) Hannah led the teams with a great deal of pastoral care and sensitivity. The week saw some really life-changing moments for a number of the team. These are just a few of the comments from some of the young people who came with us...

...I learnt a lot whilst being in Romania...like to always have faith in people to hold you up when you need them most! I got to spend an incredible week, learning so much about myself and why I was there, about the people around me and about the power that God has over everybody. Laughing with people I never thought would like me...

...it was a truly life-changing experience, in terms of making new friends and working as part of a great team, but also in terms of experiencing first hand just how much God can do for everyone, even those who are in the most dire of circumstances...

We believe that young people have much to offer to others less fortunate than themselves but that they can also learn so much about themselves as they do that offering. This is the reason we undertake Mission Romania.



showing the lurve...

It's has been a very long time since we at the gap* have been able to get all our friends, supporters and volunteers together to celebrate the achievements of its work and to also allow us to show our appreciation to all who allow this work to happen. In February (a month associated with love!), we thought we would put this right and are now in the process of organising an Evening of Food and Fun on Friday 20th February. Our kind friends at the Sutton Coldfield United Reformed Church have let us use their church hall as the venue. Places are limited to 100 and we have already sent out invitations by email or post to those on our database of supporters. If you are reading this and have not yet booked your place, then may we encourage you to do so.

The evening aims to start at 6.30pm for eating by 7pm and will consist of a buffet-style meal, desert, followed by tea/coffee, some live music and maybe a special guest. There will also be brief presentations from Trustees, staff and volunteers about the work of the gap* past, present and future. We are really excited about holding this event and really look forward to meeting many of the people we only know as names on our database! This is also an opportunity to encourage and invite those who know little or nothing about the gap* so as to give them an insight into the work we do in a relaxed and informal environment...book your place now ! Email gap.hub.office@gmail.com.

To contact us call David on 07565 542976. You can also contact us if you would like to be a prayer partner for the gap*
The gap*, Our Place Community Hub, Farthing Lane, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham B72 1RN



where are they now?

*A reflection from Vanessa Henderson who worked for some time as a volunteer for gap**

After leaving the gap* I got myself a job working at a florist in Mere Green and was there for just under two years before it closed down. Shortly after that I started working for Halls Garden Centre as a florist, where I am now. I'm not really sure if floristry is a long-term plan at the moment but, as we've been recently exploring in my Young Adults group at church, there is such a lot of value in being a Christian in your everyday workplace or wherever you spend most of your time and I find that really exciting!

All I know is I love working with people and God's given me a heart for people who are suffering in different ways. I see many opportunities to get alongside people at work and be positive in a predominantly negative environment and I'm excited to see what God will do there!

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENTS

Work on schools is going well and we are really enjoying getting stuck into the school community. We are mentoring several young people in Arthur Terry and are excited about the developing links with the work in schools and that which we do at the Venue drop-in. We have also arranged meetings to discuss the prospect of starting work in other local schools. Watch this space!

Getting by with a little help...

Following on from our Autumn Newsletter, we have had success with another two young people (one male, one female) having been recently placed on paid apprenticeship schemes with The Jericho Foundation. Another young lady is waiting to hear from Birmingham Metropolitan College as to her placement on an engineering course. We are so pleased with one of our drop-in visitors who came out to Romania with us and has begun to make some major changes to her life style as a direct result of her experiences. We have been supporting two young lads through court procedures following their involvement in a criminal offence. We have also been visiting an ex-Venue user who is currently serving a prison sentence.

THE VENUE NEWS...

Some hilarious goings on when the gap* had their first ever volunteer's Christmas get together. The volunteers were treated to a full roast dinner and cake deserts as a way of acknowledging their dedication and commitment to the gap* . They were thanked by the Trustees and the Project Manager and then encouraged to don silly hats and masks for a Photo-Booth session!!



We must learn to regard people less in the light of what they do or omit to do, and more in the light of what they suffer.
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Meet Selina.... our latest recruit to the ranks of volunteers. Selina hails from Cannock and is currently studying on a Christian Youth Ministry Course at St John's Nottingham. She is working with the gap* for the next year as her 'alternative' placement. Selina works part-time as a youth worker for Wade Street Church in Lichfield and supports herself via an evening job with a well-known pizza outlet...oh and she also recently turned 21! ...we say welcome and happy birthday!



...One of our volunteers, Mim, has decided to step down from her role as she feels the time is right for her to be doing other things... we want to say a big thank you and wish her the very best in her future plans...gapsville will miss her face!

...new plans are being made for the gap* Studio facility. Following our big refurb last Summer, the Studio got a bit sidelined, however plans are afoot to reboot it! We are planning to work with an ex-gap* sound engineer in providing workshop courses to train others to learn the ropes...funding is currently being sought.