

## January 2011-01-21

Happy New Year...even although we are coming to the close of January already!!

The Christmas and New Year celebrations were a very special time for the people here in Poiana and they send their thanks to you all.

### Children and Teenagers

The week before Christmas we were able to have our first shop where the children could spend the 'dollars' that they had earned over the last few months. It was such a special time and the children loved it! It is probably the first time that they have ever had money that they could spend on themselves. We had collected items all through the year and we had been able to buy some extra items with money that was sent from a Junior Church in Ripley. At the beginning we had asked the children what they wanted in the shop, and they were saying things like remote control cars!!! We were thinking, 'OK Lord, how?' We were able to buy remote control cars as well as some dolls and DVD's in Romanian and much more.



Some of the children at the shop!

One of things that really touched us was the way the children bought presents for their family, often before buying for themselves!

During the week before Christmas we were invited to go into the school again for their Christmas celebration. It was a lovely morning and it is also a good time to meet the parents of the children and continue the links with them. We were able to give out some of the

shoeboxes that we received for Christmas for the children.

We also had 3 Christmas parties, all on the one day...phew!! Although it is a long day, we have found that this is the better way to have the parties as we can split them into age groups and plan a programme specifically for them. We had lots of fun, games, hot dogs, chocolate and of course the very important shoe box present. This year we had approx 80 children and teenagers come to the parties.

This year we were able to visit more children in the village and give them the shoe boxes, and because of this we were able to meet more families in the village



The youngest group with their presents 😊

We cannot explain in words what it means to these children, and their families, to receive these presents as for most of them, this is the only present that they will receive for Christmas!

One of the new families we met live in extreme poverty. One of their sons, Maxum has been to the club a few times and this year we found out that he had other brothers and sisters. We went to visit them and were really touched by what we saw. There were 2 adults and 6 children, ages 5 months-14years old, living in one room. Every one of the children have special needs, and two of the children could not leave the house as they had no shoes! On the stove there was a big pot of snow, which was not the cleanest, and they were melting it

as they had no water. It was heartbreaking. The children opened their boxes there and then and their little faces just 'lit up'. They were asking, 'what is this for?' and 'what do I do with this for?'

Later on in the day we were able to take them some shoes and water and this week we have been able to take some clothes for them.



Four of the children from this family.

Also we went Carol singing round the village, which the children love. We give out sweets to the homes we visit and for people we meet on the street. Since that day we have had loads of people ask us why we didn't go to them so we could have been out ALL day. It really is a special time!



Just before going carol singing and we met another 10 children on the street!

**Thank you to everyone for your giving towards the shoe boxes, finances and prayers to make this a special time for the children, and families, here in Poiana!**

## Church and Families

We had a Special Christmas Service on the Sunday before Christmas where the children had prepared a short programme, the highlight being Silent Night on the recorders. I think our ears are still recovering 😊 All joking aside, it will be the first time any of them have ever learned how to play a musical instrument, so this year we are planning to take it a bit further and have lessons.

This year we were able to have our Christmas meal together and we had 48 people attend. Also we were able to give food parcels to 16 families, with money that was sent by a couple of churches specifically for this purpose. We had a lovely time together, and a time of looking back at what God had done during 2010 and also looking forward to the plans for 2011.



Some of the people at the church Christmas meal.

This year, 2011, is a Year of Action for Poiana! A year when the church are going to go out into the community and befriend and visit people and hopefully invite them to church through time. There are many elderly people here in Poiana who never have anyone visit them, people who are ill and many, many lonely people who need Jesus. We are making a list of people who we think would want some company, and in fact we already have people who have asked for a visit, and then we will assign one of the church members to visit them on a regular basis, to build a relationship with them. The long term plan is that they will come

to church, but also for those who cannot, to have a meal together from time to time towards the end of the year.

**We are really excited by this project and we ask that you pray for us and the people in the church as we embrace this new project. This is something very new for the people in the church, but we know that it will be a real blessing for those involved.**

This brings us to the next plan of action for this year. The church building is far too small now and we need to look at extending the building. We have been praying about this for over a year, but now the need is greater. At the moment, every Sunday, the room is full and in order for the church to grow, we need a bigger room. This has been the experience of the church to date. We used to meet in the small room, which is now the Sunday school room, and then we moved into the bigger room, which we have outgrown. We want to build an extension on the back where it will allow for growth in the church, and also we will be able to open it up more to the community and the teenagers, with a games hall, etc. The possibilities are amazing! We are hoping to get an appointment to speak to the mayor within the next 2 weeks to explain what we would like to do and hopefully he will be able to speed things up regarding the paperwork, etc.

**Please pray with us for this project as it is huge...but exciting. We have a great God and we know that He will supply for all of this. Please also pray for our meeting with the mayor that it will happen and that the favour of God will go before us.**

### Family News

We are so thankful that things have gone so well and in fact this Sunday marks our 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary working in Poiana! It has been a very quick 5 years and we are so thankful to God for everything that he has done and how he has used us.

For us, as a family, January has been a very difficult month and we would appreciate your

prayers as we approach the end of this month and look to the rest of 2011. In the 5 years we have been here we have never had so many problems, from all different directions! They have been as varied as, the projector bulb blowing, which means that we can't use it in church, where we use it for the songs and for films for the children, and a replacement costs nearly as much as a new projector, to bigger things eg. trouble with some of the neighbours, which involved false allegations being made to the police regarding our dogs. The police were very sympathetic but said we had to pay costs to save any further trouble with neighbours. Not all our neighbours are like this, we hasten to add, as the boiler also broke down and when it was repaired the pressure of the water caused the water pump to break, leaving us without water or heating. Our next door neighbour is a plumber and he came in that evening and repaired it, free of charge!! We have also had some major church issues to deal with, but we are seeing light at the end of the tunnel.

Usually we don't like to give you all the 'negative' side of things, but there are times when we need that bit extra prayer, encouragement and support. We know that as we take steps for God the enemy does not like it, and he will try to discourage us, distract us and steal from us. **We are all fine but ask you to continue to pray for us as a family as we continue to seek God's will in this place. Please continue to pray for the people in the church, particularly Iten, as she is really struggling at the moment, and we also have 2 pregnant ladies in the fellowship!**

### UK Trip

From the 2<sup>nd</sup> March-6<sup>th</sup> April we will be in the UK to raise more awareness, and funding, for the work that we do here in Poiana. If you would like us to come and share in any of your churches, groups, schools or in fact anywhere then please let us know and we will try to get there. Please pray for us as we prepare for the trip and for the church here as we are away.

**One major need for the trip is transport**

**whilst we are in the UK. If you, or know anyone, who can lend us a car for our time in the UK please can you get in touch with us as soon as possible.**

We already have teams booked for this year, but if you feel you would like to come and be part of a team this year then let us know. There is plenty to do in all aspects of the work...no one is too young or too old.

Thank you for taking time to read this newsletter and we hope that you will be encouraged by the things you have read. Thank you for your support, prayers and encouragement. It means so much to us and makes it all possible.

Please keep in touch as we love to hear from you as it can sometimes be a bit lonely here and an e-mail, letter or phone call just makes all the difference!

Love and Blessings,

*Alex, Heather, Ali and Andrew*

Follow the link below to see more pictures:

<http://www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=311657&id=756288627&l=cb8e4e202e>

<http://www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=320309&id=756288627&l=f2a827d2bd>

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**Thank You!!!**

