

Saving **ONE CHILD** at a Time

Paul Havsgaard's encounter with Marian, below, in 1998 was the impetus to starting his ministry helping the street children.



Upon his return months later, Paul sought out Marian. He became the first of many children Paul would rescue from the streets as he established Harvest Romania. Now Marian is thriving under Paul's guidance, and growing in his relationship with the Lord.

Story and photos by Tom Price

Harvest Romania

Under the Communist regime in Romania, women were ordered to produce five offspring. Families, unable to care for their children, placed them in state-run orphanages. Today, babies continue to be abandoned in overrun hospitals or discarded at orphanages. Many children flee these harsh conditions to live on the streets, eventually succumbing to drugs.



Desensitized to the extreme temperature amidst the underground heating ducts, two teenage boys use 'punga' to get high. Many Bucharest street children use this dangerous and addictive mixture of silver paint to escape the reality of their circumstances.



Paul Havsgaard, the director of *Harvest Romania*, is surprised to find 9-year-old Magdalena high on 'punga', the silver paint mixture abused by the street children.

“God led the Israelites out of Egypt in one day but it took forty years to get Egypt out of the Israelites. In the same way, we can take these children off the street. But it takes a work of the Holy Spirit to take the street out of the children.”Paul Havsgaard, Director and Founder-Harvest Romania

Her brown hair was matted and damp with perspiration; her blue eyes glazed as she sat stoned on an abandoned car seat in a dangerous section of Bucharest, Romania. Magdalena strained to focus on the man calling

Nine-year-old Magdalena wanted desperately to join the other Romanian children Paul had taken in. Her family would not agree. She was their only reliable source of income. Magdalena approaches stopped cars during rush hour, begging.

Months before she had miraculously survived being hit by a vehicle as she plied her trade. While in a coma, Paul and Kathy prayed for Magdalena by her hospital bed. The doctors said she would die, but the Lord healed her.



The joy of seeing Paul again seemed to awaken Magdalena from her paint-induced stupor. Her mother and grandmother, pictured behind, count on Magdalena as their only source of income - begging money from passing motorists.

the least of these

Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.
Matthew 25:40

her name. She smiled as missionary Paul Havsgaard, the director and founder of Harvest Romania, swept her up into his arms.

Her mother and grandmother, sleeping close by, were also high on the cheap paint called punga, which they sniffed from a bag.

Over the past four years, Paul has escorted many youngsters off the streets and into one of his children's homes. There he introduces them to a relationship with Jesus Christ. Some run away and go back to the streets. Paul and Kathy go after them. When they find them, they remind them that they are loved and ask them to come

back "home." Most return, sorrowful, and asking for forgiveness.

"How can I not forgive them when my heavenly Father has forgiven me of so many sins?" Paul asks. "But these street-smart kids soon learn that we have heard every lie and excuse, and it won't get them very far."

Paul first came to Romania on an outreach in 1998 as an assistant to Greg Laurie, who is a nationally known Calvary Chapel evangelist and pastor. On the last night of that trip, Paul met Marian, an eight-year-old boy who was cold and hungry. As he tried to communicate the love that God had for this youngster, Paul sensed the Lord's leading that he must come back to help these needy children.

Paul returned to Romania, this time with his wife Kathy. He discovered that a bag of McDonald's hamburgers, inexpensive by American standards, went a long way in opening doors to share the love of Jesus.

In his four years in Romania, he has battled the government, fighting to open homes for children that provide a solid Christian environment. No more than 15 children are assigned to each home. The children attend Bible study daily, in addition to their regular classes.

Paul routinely travels the streets, ministering to this lost generation. He crawls into the underground sewage lines and heating ducts where the youngsters escape the freezing chill and eyes of the police. In the ducts, two 12-year-olds lie in darkness, 'huffing' the cheap paint. Paul lures them out of their hideout with a bag of hamburgers.

"Isus te iubeste." Paul gently tells the boys that Jesus loves them in spite of the shame they feel. Paul is concerned about pedophiles that travel throughout Europe to engage abandoned children in their perverted practices. They find Romania's street children easy prey.

Paul and Kathy's vision for Harvest Romania is to increase the number of homes for children. Their goal is that each home has a mother and father that live in the residence. They also desire to establish a halfway house for street kids. "If we can emulate the love that Jesus shows for each of us, then there is hope," said Paul. ☺

ROCK

Reaching Out to Christ's Kids

"The babies didn't even cry."

Nannette Gonzalez recalls how it broke her heart when she first saw the abandoned little ones in a Romanian hospital four years ago. She had come to hold those that were deprived of human touch and attention.

"The infants had learned how useless crying was since no one responded," said Nannette. "They just stared, lying in their waste, as overworked nurses came by just three times a day to prop bottles in their mouths and change their diapers. Some never left their cribs." She felt God begin to move in her heart.

When the Communist regime ended in 1989, 200,000 children were living in orphanages nearly as cruel as concentration camps. Every woman of childbearing age had been required to give birth to five babies or be heavily taxed. The regime's goal had been to dramatically increase its army for the Communist cause. Most parents could not afford to care for the children, so infants were routinely abandoned to the care of state-run hospitals.

Nannette founded Romania Outreach to Christ's Kids (ROCK) in 1997. Located in a hospital in downtown Bucharest, they care for discarded newborns and toddlers. Rusting cribs with peeling paint line the walls of each crowded room.

The staff of ROCK spends as much time with each of the 35 babies as their responsibilities allow. Susie Franks is Nann's assistant; Alison Gutterud is a neo-natal nurse; and Rebecca Hampshire and Sara Arbuckle are ROCK missionaries. Toddlers that have been under the care of the ROCK ministry as babies have made astounding improvements. Six-month-old Maria was deaf when she came to the hospital. Many volunteers prayed for her. Her hearing miraculously returned.



"There is a peace when you hold one of God's children, knowing you are making a difference," said you pray, and the songs you sing are being planted deep in that baby's heart. That is something that

Susie Franks, ROCK's family assistance coordinator. "The prayers that the Lord will harvest.



Alison Gutterud, a neo-natal nurse, cared for Alexandra who had brain damage from built-up fluid. The Romanian doctors had concluded she was beyond help and instructed the nurses to feed her and wait for her to die. The ROCK staff pleaded with the doctors to reevaluate, but Alexandra went to be with the Lord this past fall.

Romania



Rebecca Hampshire, longtime ROCK missionary, attends to one of the many physically and emotionally handicapped children in the hospital.

one little child

"Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me"

Matthew 18:5

Government restrictions make it hard to place children with families, and overseas adoptions are presently banned. Romanian mothers willingly leave babies in the care of the state, but are reluctant to give them up for adoption or to foster homes.

Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See I have engraved you on the palms of my hands...Isaiah 49:15-16a

"ROCK's goal is to prevent abandonment and restore the family unit under the foun-

dation of Jesus Christ," states Nannette. "Reuniting children with their families is a great blessing for us." She traveled throughout the United States for several months, educating the churches to ministry possibilities and needs.

"We are now able to assist mothers with a small stipend that allows them to survive and keep their children." Besides the financial aid, ROCK provides cribs, beds, clothing, diapers, developmental toys, food, and milk. Romanians that have assisted with the ministry are hired as social workers and visit these families once a week. Susie Franks oversees this ministry.

Romanian families have begun to see ROCK as a place of hope for their children. Five-month-old Marinela was ill, weighing only 7 pounds. Her father worked 6 days a week, 12 hours a day, and still could not pay for housing and food. They shared a two-room

"In Romania, baby abandonment is not only legal, it's state supported."

house with a relative. Dampness permeated their home. Dingy carpeting covered a dirt floor. When Marinela's condition worsened, her parents decided their only alternative was

to give her to the hospital. They could not pay for medication.

The ROCK staff looked after Marinela, and over a period of four months, she made a remarkable recovery. ROCK saw the family's needs and provided assistance. Susie visits once a week to check on her progress.

Besides the regular programs, sometimes individuals feel God's leading to take a special interest in a particular infant. In the past year, ROCK has been able to obtain medical visas for crucial surgeries in America. Doctors volunteer to do the operations free of charge.

Seven-month-old Claudiu was abandoned at the Bucharest hospital. He was born without a radius bone in either arm. Mandi Carlsen, a student from the Bible College in Austria, was a volunteer last summer. Upon her return to America, she began writing hospitals and sharing Claudiu's plight. An American doctor offered to perform surgery that would give him some use of his arms. Mandi has been granted custody of Claudiu while he is in America. Her family and home church, CC Spring Valley in Las Vegas, Nevada, are assisting her. American doctors travel to Romania to perform operations as well.



Seven-month-old Claudiu will hopefully be able to have some use of his arms, thanks to the intervention of Mandi Carlson, Austrian Bible College student, who was doing a summer internship with ROCK. Claudiu, abandoned at a Bucharest Hospital, was born without a radius bone in either arm. Upon returning to America, Mandi petitioned hospitals, sharing Claudiu's plight. An American doctor offered to perform the necessary surgery.



ROCK director and founder, Nannette Gonzalez, finds great joy in spending time with children, such as Carlos, that have been assisted by the program over several years. He arrived malnourished, with scabies and bronchitis and is now healthy. Carlos has been placed with a loving foster family by ROCK.

Some stories are more heart-rendering than others. All the volunteers used to love to spend time with Alexandra, a cherub-faced seven-month old. Fluid was building inside her skull, causing intense pressure on her brain that led to brain damage. The Romanian doctors believed her condition was beyond help. They instructed the nurses to feed Alexandra and wait for her to die. The ROCK staff pleaded with the doctors to reevaluate, but to no avail. She went to be with the Lord this past fall. They mourned her passing, but rested in the knowledge that she was with the Lord.

to love that next baby, even when one dies that needed an operation it couldn't get here that could have saved its life."

While churches support the work of ROCK, Pastor Ray Bentley's Maranatha Chapel in San Diego has had a special relationship.

"I strongly believe in what God is doing in Nannette's ministry. She is a high-profile missionary here," said Pastor Ray. "Many from Maranatha Chapel have become involved."

"We know God has a plan for each child," said Susie. "That is what gives us the strength

"One of the most rewarding aspects of the ministry is to observe healthy babies leaving the hospital, reunited with their parents," said Nannette. "Especially touching are children that came in malnourished with mothers convinced they had no other option than to abandon them. That is a great privilege, especially when we have been able to share the love of Christ with the entire family," she concluded. ☞

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Besides taking care of physical needs, Adrian Silaghi (left), ROCK's field director and assistant pastor of CC Bucharest, and Susie Franks pray over each child.

CC Bucharest Having a **Servant's Heart**



Adrian Caciula, known as Adi, senior pastor of CC Bucharest, and his wife, Ana Maria, worship during the service.

For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong. 1 Corinthians 1:26-27

Children from an orphanage scampered mischievously between Sunday school classes and the Calvary Chapel Bucharest service. CC Huntington Beach missionary Bob Keenan stood in their way.

"Either you stay in your Sunday School class or in the church Sanctuary," Bob said kindly but firmly. On Sundays he positions himself in the doorway, acting with a firm resolve as usher, director, and guide.



A large group of worshippers attend Sunday service at CC Bucharest.

"These kids usually don't have boundaries set for them," said Bob. "As long as you do it fairly and with love, they appreciate knowing the behavior you expect." Bob has had experience with children. He and his wife, Teresa, having four of their own, recently adopted a Romanian boy that they met when they first arrived in Romania as short-term missionaries.

In a tough, Gypsy-dominated part of town, the Keenans are caretakers of the CC Bucharest facility. Senior pastor Bill Welsh, CC



The Keenan family, Bob and Teresa, from CC Huntington Beach, oversee the missionary housing facility, as well as the church in Bucharest. Besides their four children, (l-r) Autumn, Faithlyn, Emberly, and Josiab, they adopted Costin, (top right).

Huntington Beach, felt that the Lord led their church to construct a center that could house short-term teams, as well as serve the church and be a home for the Keenan family.

The Keenans originally wanted to become missionaries to Muslims. Pastor Bill Welsh felt God was calling them to Romania and encouraged them to trust the Lord to work out the details. When the church sponsored a short-term trip, finances for the family came together miraculously.

"God put such a love in our heart for the Romanian children that there was no other place we could have possibly served," said Teresa. "We had a home and our possessions to sell. The house sold the first day it was officially on the market." They moved in January of 2000 and concentrated on learning the language and understanding the culture.



A Romanian farmer extends a greeting with flowers to Alice, wife of Pastor Steve Quarles. They are missionaries in Romania from CC Lake Elsinore, CA, along with their six children. Steve teaches at two different Calvary Chapels to predominantly Gypsy congregations.

Others Led to Serve

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-12

Adi Caciula began pastoring CC Bucharest in January 1999. Years before, he had been hired as a translator for Bill Welsh and Paul Havs-gaard. Now he desires to be a pastor who models servanthood.

Adi believes it is important that Americans examine their hearts to determine if God is calling them to Romania. There is a tremendous need to place solid, mature Christians in places of ministry since the church there has so many new believers.

Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

Matthew 20:28

Jamie Hogan is a great example," said Adi. "God brought him from the Bible College at the Castle, and he is such a blessing to this ministry. He has taken many of the young men in the church under his wing and disciples them."



Missions Pastor Bob Dye, from CC Modesto, CA, prays for an elderly lady's eye, as curious neighbors look on.

Jamie took a team to Bistrita, eight hours north of Bucharest, where Shawn Hubbs leads a Calvary Chapel. He was sent over from Calvary Chapel Boise, Idaho. There is another Calvary Chapel in Cluj, pastored by Vasi Tomulescu, and there are numerous church plants in progress over the entire country.

"Romania has been greatly blessed by the Americans. It has been so rewarding for the locals to witness these Christians and the love they have. It is a great encouragement for us," concluded Adi.

CC Modesto Team

But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Matthew 9:36

Holly Matson, a short-term missionary from CC Modesto, tried not to cry as she said goodbye to an orphan girl she had befriended. The young Romanian insisted that Holly keep the cross with the name of Jesus on it as a remembrance of their friendship.

"I won't forget you," Carla said in broken English, as tears rolled down her cheeks. The scene repeated itself with other team members and the relationships they had developed with the Romanians. No one wanted this special moment to end.

CC Modesto ministered this past summer in Bucharest. Within a short period of time each missionary had developed a close relationship with a particular girl from a local orphanage. The group ran a day camp for about 50 girls. Mission pastor Bob Dye, who has four children of his own, led the group.



Steve Quarles baptizes a group of Gypsies north of Bucharest.



Paul Tilman (left), missionary from CC Prescott, AZ, pastors a group of new believers in a Romanian village outside of Bucharest.



Women from the village risk condemnation from a Romanian Orthodox priest by attending Pastor Paul Tilman's CC outreach.



Paul Havsgaard (red shirt) ministers to street children in downtown Bucharest. The CC Modesto team looked on in disbelief as two boys sniff paint.



Paul Havsgaard's gregarious nature draws the street children to his side.

"Having your own children, and knowing how much you love them, makes it extremely difficult when you see the conditions of the Romanian children in the orphanages," said Bob. He has been to Russia twice on mission outreaches. This was his second trip to Romania. He was able to observe the work of ROCK ministries in the hospital in Bucharest.

"I was grieved by the hopeless situations of the babies where medical solutions are possible but finances prevent intervention." Bob was burdened when he spent time with Alexandra, a seven-month-old girl, suffering from brain damage. The doctors had given up on her recovery.

They also spent time with Paul Havsgaard, who works with street children. "Seeing children as young as eight-years-old begging on the streets, sniffing paint to get high, and being sold into prostitution by older children really breaks your heart," said Bob. "Then you see a man like

Paul Havsgaard, giving his life to these lost children. You can see the love in his eyes. They are drawn to him like you might imagine children being drawn to Jesus."

The senior pastor of CC Modesto, Damian Kyle, had heard about the work in Romania from Bill Welsh. The Modesto team met

We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.

2 Corinthians 4:8-9

once a week for three months in preparation for the outreach. Modesto plans to have a missionary training course twice a year that would prepare those planning for a mission trip. "The training is important to unite the team, not only in logistics, but in prayer and purpose," said Bob.

The Modesto team had the opportunity to witness in Popesti, a small Romanian village, where a Calvary Chapel outreach has recently begun. Paul Tilman, a missionary from CC Prescott, Arizona, his wife Wendy, and their four children moved there from Hungary. The family felt God's call to teach in Romania. Paul ministers at another Calvary Chapel on the other side of Bucharest as well.

Recently, the outreach in the Romanian village has drawn threats from a local Romanian Orthodox clergyman who sees the Christians as a financial loss.

"Go back to America," yelled the priest as the Modesto team invited locals to the Bible study. "You cannot take all of my money," he screamed in English. Threat of exclusion from the local cemetery frightens the older people. In addition, the priest orchestrated a boycott of the vegetable crops belonging to the host of the Bible study. This has had a serious impact on the new believers. Despite the threats, twelve new people came to the Bible study that day, curious and excited to hear God's Word. ☞

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The Modesto team poses in front of the castle in Sinaia.

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