

Gypsy children receive more than education at Ruth School_120604

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Students at the Ruth School receive textbooks, school supplies, a daily meal and hygiene care free of charge.

Gypsy children receive more than education at Ruth School

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Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

BUCHAREST, Romania -On any given freezing winter day in southern

Bucharest, Romania, children gleefully bound around the Ruth School's playground. These Roma (Gypsy) children might come from difficult circumstances, but while they are at the Ruth School, they are happy.

“Not every child (elsewhere) is happy to be in school. ... That's a testimony to the work that's going on here,” said Andy Brockbank, executive director of Project Ruth, which oversees the Ruth School.

In addition to education, the school provides meals and hygiene programs through financial support from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's Offering for Global Missions and a substantial volunteer force. Based on 1 Corinthians 3:9, this year's offering theme is “Together ... Being the Presence of Christ.”

The offering goal is \$6.1 million with a challenge goal of \$6.3 million.

Among a citizenry that suffered greatly in Romania during the Cold War, the Roma usually got the worst of the worst. Their children were denied education, slandered as too unintelligent to be worth the effort.

The Ruth School began in 1994, with a dozen Romany children learning to read.

Ten years later, the school juggles fitting more than 160 children in seven grades into four classrooms. Grades one through four operate in the morning, and grades five through seven are held in the afternoon.

The Ruth School was aptly named by a child. “A girl from the church suggested that we should call it Ruth because Ruth was a foreigner, and she was welcomed by the people of God,” said Oti Binacui, pastor of the Romanian church that organized the school.

The Ruth School is a true partnership. The Romanian church of 400 members and an \$800 per month budget could never fund the school.

Likewise, it would have been difficult for Americans to start the school without Romanian help.

“Together, it's a wonderful example of both partnership and sharing the vision of reaching out for the lost and for the needy in this community,” Binacui said.

CBF Global Missions field personnel assist Project Ruth by ministering to the Roma's many physical, relational and spiritual needs.

Binacui emphasized: “I say to churches, it's not good just preaching to people. ... You need to roll up sleeves and do something. This is what Jesus does.”

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