



7
**Weep with those
who weep**



16
**TK2 helps Gringo
make the grade**

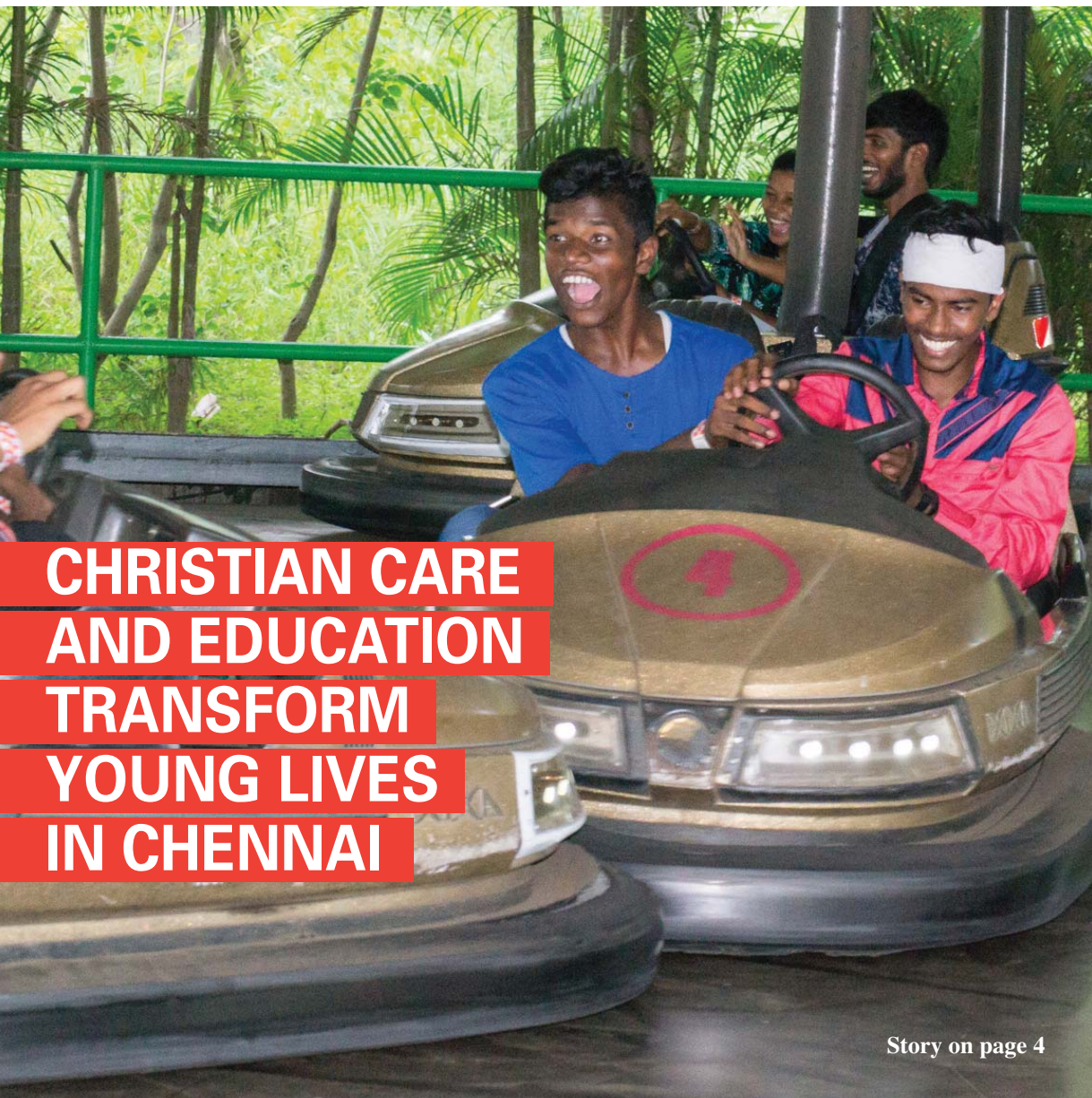


22
**Good shepherds
never give up**



BLYTHSWOODNEWS

Number 68 Winter 2018



**CHRISTIAN CARE
AND EDUCATION
TRANSFORM
YOUNG LIVES
IN CHENNAI**

Story on page 4

TALITA KUM HELPS ROSA TO ENJOY SCHOOL

Rosa has caring parents who want the best for their eight-year-old daughter. They keep her clean and make sure she goes to school.

But with the best will in the world they are unable to give her all the support she needs. Dad earns very little: in the summer he sells water melon and does odd jobs, working with his horse and cart. Mum has serious health problems and a baby to look after. Home is a single room which the family of four shares with a grandparent.

Mum can neither read nor write. Dad can, but not to the extent of being able to help his daughter with homework. He completed just four years of primary school.

Rosa's big needs are educational support and nutritious cooked food. Talita Kum, Blythswood

Care's after-school programme in Jimbolia, Romania, provides her with both.

Carmen Popa has observed the little girl's progress over a year. "Rosa used to be too shy to say anything in front of the class," she says. "Now she has confidence to answer a question in front of the other children. She's starting to really enjoy school."

Opened in 2001, Talita Kum offers a cooked meal, extra tuition with school work and access to hot showers to 41 children from low-income families. The full programme includes Bible stories, art, music and drama and is designed to build the confidence and discover the talents of children who would otherwise be seriously disadvantaged at school.

Talita Kum has given Rosa the confidence she needs to participate at school

Give regularly and transform a life

People like you are joining our regular giving programme. You become a Life Transformer for one year. After then, you can continue or you can stop – the choice is yours.

Over 12 months you journey with someone, seeing their joys and difficulties. You get letters and photos throughout your shared journey.

To make a regular gift go to blythswood.org/life-transformer or phone 01349 830777 Mon to Fri 9am – 5pm **Will you transform a life?**

Cover story



CHRISTIAN CARE AND EDUCATION TRANSFORM YOUNG LIVES IN CHENNAI

Agathian (left) with a friend at the dodgems: he has worked hard at school and made good use of the life-changing opportunities given to him by Blythswood supporters like you

After eight years in a children's home supported by Blythswood Care, a young man from a severely disadvantaged background is studying commerce and accountancy in his senior year at high school.

At the point at which he was given a place at SYCAM home in Chennai, India, Agathian was a vulnerable nine-year-old at risk of malnutrition and of growing up illiterate. His father suffered mental illness and his mother was unable to take care of the children as she undertook low-paid labouring

jobs in order to be able to provide food for the family.

At Sycam, the rapidly growing boy benefited from regular meals, social interaction with the other children and encouragement to work hard at school.

"Agathian has done well in his studies," says Pastor Emmanuel Milton who runs the home and its associated Carmel school. "He has a good, helpful nature and is caring towards the younger children."

Now 17, Agathian enjoys

volleyball and dancing and says he wants to become a pastor. Pastor Milton is not going to discourage him. "He is a responsible youth," he says.

Agathian was a vulnerable nine-year-old at risk of malnutrition and of growing up illiterate.



The accident scene: in May 2018 firefighters and emergency professionals from Scotland delivered five fire engines and a trailer load of firefighting equipment to Moldova

RESCUE EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING SAVE LIVES IN MOLDOVA

Equipment and training provided by Blythswood Care and SERA played a vital role in the rescue of three occupants of a car struck by a train in eastern Moldova in August.

Using donated extraction equipment and spine boards the fire crew from Causeni recovered two men aged 47 and 85, and an 81-year-old woman, and ensured their swift transport to hospital.

The Causeni fire engine is one of 62 emergency vehicles which Blythswood has sent to Moldova, Romania and Serbia since 2007, in partnership with a group of volunteers now known as Scottish Emergency Rescue Association.

"Only a small number of fire stations in Moldova used to have cutting gear," explains Daniela Ceri. "But because every fire engine from Scotland



Time-critical: cutting equipment and spine boards are crucial to the rescue of victims from road traffic accidents

came equipped with these tools, our firemen are able to perform safe rescues in the critical time required."

Relating how nine people including five children were rescued recently from a fire in a block of flats in Causeni, Daniela says that the breathing apparatus systems donated by SERA are highly valued by the fire fighters. "The old ones they had before were much heavier and with shorter air

duration," she says. "A basic run up the stairs used to be a challenge in itself."



62 emergency vehicles sent since 2007 valued at £9,550,000



Camp lectures on Contemporary Christianity helped Jelena to see the gospel in a new light

Bible teaching at summer camp opens the soul

This experience of community at camp helped her to understand the word of God in a new way."

When Jelena got involved in musical events at the UMMUS Centre, a Christian cultural project in Kragujevac, Serbia, she had no idea how much it would change her outlook on life. Through her contacts there she was invited to attend a summer camp for young adults, held at a rural location, near the Bulgarian border.

It was her first time at a Christian camp so everything was new to her – especially the type of Christianity outlined in lectures by Jovica Gecan, who studied theology at Novi Sad.

"We studied the gospels and especially the work of the apostles and saw how the Holy Spirit works through God's people," explains David Armus, one of the camp organisers. "Jelena was a Christian before but in a formal and traditional way.

"This camp opened her soul. She felt able to express her feelings freely for the first time. Everyone was so friendly. This experience of community at camp helped her to understand the word of God in a new way."

Blythswood supported summer camps for children and young people in Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and Pakistan.

Weep with those who weep



Naresh with his sister and grandmother

Blythswood Care supports the work of Dayspring House and School, which provides care and education for 35 children near Hyderabad, India. Pastor Samuel Babu thanks you for your support:

Yesterday, Naresh walked in front of his father's coffin. In the villages here it is their tradition that the elder son walks before the dead body and sets it ablaze in front of the people. Naresh's heart was broken in pieces. He was weeping and crying and refusing

to be comforted, for losing his dad. The trauma that this nine-year-old boy was going through – I cannot describe it.

Yesterday, it was a sad day in our orphanage. Naresh's father died due to HIV. The sad thing is that the little boy had also lost his beloved, loving mother due to the same illness. His mother six months ago, his father yesterday. The only person left to Naresh is his little sister, six years old, and she too is infected and struggling and fighting HIV.

Only Naresh is well. Free from HIV, he has good health, and is good at sports and at his studies. After he joined our orphan care centre, his health improved and he became good at all extracurricular activities. But yesterday we were all broken – all the children, the staff, the villagers – broken to see this boy weeping and crying and refusing to be comforted.

Just a few hours before he died, Naresh's father asked us to pray. We prayed for him and he confessed his sins and prayed for salvation.

Please pray for Naresh, for his future and for his career. There are more children in our care like him. Some are partly orphaned, some are fully orphaned. With your kind and continuous and sacrificial support, these little children are finding new hope, love and care.

Tears roll from my eyes when I see these children. They are God-given children. Every day I strive to give them the best comfort I can and to meet their needs, to see them grow up in God with good, spiritual, Christian, biblical values. It is my humble prayer and request to our Lord Almighty – and to you – please remember us. "He will listen to the prayers of those in poverty. He will not ignore them." (Psalm 102:17)

Thanking you.
Your obedient servant in Christ,
Pastor Samuel Babu



Clever works in a clothing factory and has ambitions to start his own business

TRAINING HAS LED TO PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT FOR CLEVER

When Clever was orphaned in his teens, he went to Harare. An uncle there had promised to look after him and pay his fees so that he could complete his time at school.

But once he arrived in Zimbabwe's capital city he found he was expected to sell firewood for a living.

In the poor and densely-populated suburb of Epworth he heard of the sewing project which is run by Harare Shelter with support from Blythswood Care.

In November 2016, Clever graduated from the eight-month training programme and as a result has permanent employment with a clothing manufacturer.

"Clever is very appreciative of the help he received from us and from Blythswood Care," says Stephen Damuputirai, director of Harare Shelter. "He says he wants to open his own shop and is working towards this in his spare time."

Clever's brother is among the 42 trainees due to complete the current programme in November this year.



YOUNG LIVES TRANSFORMED AT SUMMER CAMPS IN EASTERN EUROPE

Your gifts to the summer appeal enabled Blythswood to support children's camps in four countries in Eastern Europe.

Darius' mum was getting worried about him. He used to sing in the village church choir but now the 12-year-old was getting into the wrong company and had started smoking.

When she heard about the summer camps for young people, run by Children for Christ, Romania, she was determined to send her boy.

"She warned us he might want to go home and would cry often and for the first two days that was what happened," says Vio Jorza, who has decades of experience of running children's camps. "Darius complained he didn't know the songs, so different from what he knew. It was really difficult to comfort him.

"Our leaders kept praying for him, that the Lord would speak to his heart. God answered our prayers. The third night during the memory verse time something wonderful happened. He was touched by God's word and the change was plain for everyone to see. A great joy came into his life and his face was shining.

"He said, 'I don't want to go home anymore, I will stay to the end of camp.

"After the Bible lesson he stayed behind for counselling and he trusted the Lord. He knew God's call in his life and had a new desire for change and renewal.

"It was wonderful to see a new Darius. From that time he enjoyed every song and game

and Bible lesson. We were all encouraged to see how God can work in a child's life. It was a long summer with nine weeks of camps and almost 500 children. We needed this encouragement."



95,000 children and young people given a much-needed-break away from home at camps (since 1992) valued at £1,950,000



HOT FOOD IMPORTANT PART OF AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMME IN MOLDOVA

Without the after-school programme, Vova and Lena would be unsupervised while their mother's factory shift continues into the evening

An after-school programme in Gagauzia, Moldova, is transforming the lives of two children left vulnerable by the breakup of their parents' marriage.

And hot food provided by a kitchen installed by Blythswood Care is a vital part of that care.

"Vova is eight and Lena is eleven," explains Stepan

Anghelcev who manages the church-based project in the town of Vulcanesti. "Their father moved away and does not help the family. Their mother works a twelve-hour shift in the local factory and the children were left alone and were being influenced by the bad behaviour of others.

"Here they receive a cooked meal and help with homework. Their mother is very grateful

for the support which we give her children and mentioned that she has seen changes for good in their behaviour since they started to attend.

"We are able to continue this ministry with the help of proFilius which provides monthly support, and with your help as Blythswood helped us to build the kitchen. Thank you!"



Elizabeth is passionate about playing cricket

Elizabeth discovers new life at Athletes' Camp

A sportswoman in Pakistan who suffered discrimination because of her minority status as a Christian has had her career and outlook transformed at an athletes' camp supported by Blythswood Care.

Elizabeth Barkat is passionate about playing cricket but was dropped repeatedly from the national team without having played a game. While facing opposition from team mates and management, she also experienced the loss of both of

her parents and ended up using drugs.

"Last year we encouraged her to come to our high profile athletes' camp," says Stephen John who runs Life Through Sport. "She heard stories from other Christian players who had faced similar challenges. She confessed that she had lost hope but this camp had instilled new life in her. She accepted Jesus Christ as her personal saviour and resolved to work hard to achieve her goals."

Elizabeth now has a contract to play for the State Bank of Pakistan and also played as an overseas professional player in Nottingham UK this summer.

"We are in contact with her continually to help her in her discipleship journey," Stephen says. "In turn she is encouraging emerging young players where she lives in Lahore, inspiring them through her sports skills and Christian example."



Gene with her daughter Blessing: your gifts funded the purchase of 400 mosquito nets for free distribution to low-income households in Liberia this summer

BLESSING FOR BLESSING: MOSQUITO NETS SAVE LIVES IN WATER-LOGGED LIBERIA

Gene suffered two bouts of malaria during her pregnancy, nine years ago – the first in the early stages and the second just before she gave birth to premature twins. “The doctor said they were so small because of the malaria,” she remembers. “The boy was weak and died after three days in the hospital.

“I called his sister Blessing because she survived.” Gene lost other babies too due to the same recurring problem and yet it was not until June of this year that her family were able to obtain the protection they required.

The West African state of Liberia is one of the wettest corners of the planet, and Gene defied rain, thunder and flooding in June this year to obtain mosquito nets provided free of charge by Blythswood Care.

“My daughter has had malaria ten times now since she was born,” Gene says. “The last attack, in May, almost killed her.”

At the mission run by Watch & Pray Ministries, in Gardnerville, Monrovia, it was explained to her that the nets need to be aired in the shade for 24 hours before use. After the first night, the anxious mother was well-pleased with the result. “I’m so happy. My children slept peacefully throughout the night. There were no traces of any mosquito buzz.”

Valentina Feodorova volunteers to distribute aid provided by Blythswood Care and gives particular attention to the needs of homeless people.

CLOTHES, FOOD AND FRIENDSHIP FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE IN CHISINAU

Maria is reckoned to be the oldest user of the Hosting Centre, a night shelter for homeless people run by the municipality of Chisinau, Moldova. She is 89 years old.

She used to have her own flat in the city but made the mistake of signing it over to her granddaughter three years ago. The granddaughter then took the old lady to a remote village in Transnistria and abandoned her there in an empty house.

For three months the villagers took care of the stranger in their midst, making sure that

she had something to eat every day. Learning her story, they arranged for someone to take her back to Chisinau.

But when Maria reached her own apartment block, she discovered that her granddaughter had sold the flat. For several days she waited around outside, becoming weak and ill. Eventually an ambulance took her to hospital.

Maria was discharged after three months in a ward and now depends on the Hosting Centre as the only roof over her head.



Maria Masenco, 89 years old and homeless on the streets of Chisinau

Valentina Feodorova volunteers to distribute aid provided by Blythswood Care and gives particular attention to the needs of homeless people. “The Hosting Centre simply provides bed and breakfast,” she explains. “We visit the place once a week, bringing clothes and hot food, and listening to the stories of people like Maria.

“She really appreciates the food and care shown towards her. She is thankful that there are people for whom she is a person.”



Ivyizigiro means hope: the Christian radio station broadcasts gospel messages and health advice in Kirundi, French, Swahili and English, transforming the lives of listeners throughout Africa's Great Lakes Region.

GOSPEL BROADCASTS REACH ALL SORTS OF PEOPLE IN BURUNDI

Delphine Ndayikeza leads the work of World Outreach Initiatives, Blythswood's partner organisation in Burundi, Africa. Here she gives examples of two very different young men transformed through

listening to WOI's Christian radio station which is supported by Blythswood Care.

"Eric comes from Gitega province, a rural area in central Burundi. For years he wasted

his life in getting drunk and in promiscuous sexual affairs that brought him no lasting satisfaction. One day he listened to preaching on Radio Ivyizigiro. It was a message about repentance and it really touched him.

"Convinced that his own behaviour was wrong, he phoned us and said that he wanted to give his life to the Lord. We counselled him and prayed for him and today he is a transformed man. He thanks the Lord for the radio station which HE used to save him. Glory be to God.

"Saidi comes from Bujumbura, Burundi's capital city. He was born and brought up in a Muslim family and had a life-long thirst that remained unfulfilled to meet with the true God. Just this summer he set his receiver on Radio Ivyizigiro and began listening to different programmes.

"One day after listening to a gospel message he phoned us for help. He accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour and Lord and today he is following a course of basic Bible training at a church in the city."

He thanks the Lord for the radio station which HE used to save him.

DANIEL CENTRE TEACHES YOUNG ADULTS TO MANAGE NEW LIBERTIES

The kitchen – that's what Marian remembers about his first week at the Daniel Centre, in January 2015. Not that there was anything special about it, but it is memorable to Marian because for the first time in his life he was actually allowed to enter a kitchen.

He grew up in a well-run independent children's home, and for him this liberty was something new. "Now I had a lot more freedom," Marian remembers. "I was expected to organise my free time."

Learning how to manage new freedoms is a big part of the training offered by Blythswood Care's Daniel Centre to young people who have been deprived of normal family relationships.

Marian identifies learning to budget and to save money as one of the most important lessons he has learned in the past three years. He also

appreciates learning to cook. And he acknowledges the important role played by his mentor at the Daniel Centre in encouraging him to persevere at the same job.

Even after working as a tyre fitter for nearly three years, he still values the opportunity to meet with social worker Daniel Ciupe once a week.

"Marian is an independent kind of guy who works long hours," says Balazs Csiszer, executive director of Blythswood Romania. "He has a positive attitude and good self-discipline.

"He is on a waiting list for social housing and as soon as he is offered a flat he will move on. But he knows he will always be welcome to

keep in touch with us. Our door is open and we have an after-care meeting on a Friday night."

During the summer of 2018 the accommodation at the Daniel Centre has been converted to provide self-contained studio flats, giving young men who lack family support the opportunity to learn essential life skills in a safe environment. The renovation carried out by Go Relief, a team of volunteers from Northern Ireland, equips Blythswood's project in Cluj, Romania, to adjust its programme to meet the needs of young people today.



TK2 helps Gringo make the grade

Gringo at TK2: in Romania children do not progress from one grade to the next unless they make the grade

Blythswood's after-school programme gives vital support to young people of junior secondary school age in Jimbolia, western Romania.

Gringo aged 15 has faced just about every disadvantage you can imagine, affecting his education and other aspects of his life.

He was kept from going to school as his parents were travelling through other countries and didn't enrol him or his siblings.

His father has been to prison for minor offences and now works odd jobs when he can find them.

His mother lost her factory job with a steady wage when their landlord evicted them from their home.

And finding another place to stay is proving to be very difficult: a gypsy family with six children can expect to encounter negative attitudes wherever they go.

With these problems at home, no-one can blame Gringo for being three years behind other children of his age at school. Despite missing many days at school last year, he did make the grade – thanks to the support he received at TK2.

"TK2 offers Gringo help with homework, notebooks and the facility to have a shower and wash his clothes," explains Carmen Popa. "Right now he's not on the programme because he feels a responsibility to earn some money and help his family and he is chopping wood when he should be in class."

"But he does aspire to complete at least eight years of school. He sees from his parents' struggles that getting a job depends a lot on how much education you have."

AID FOR FLOOD-HIT FAMILIES IN KERALA



Akhil and his wife Linda received a Bucket of Love at their emergency shelter

Baby Aditya made his arrival at the height of the flood

This summer the state of Kerala suffered its worst monsoon flooding for nearly a century, killing about 500 people and destroying the homes of thousands more.

Sam Vadavana, Blythswood's representative in India, returned to his native state on the country's southwest tip to help distribute essential items that would enable families to

re-establish some semblance of home life.

Mattresses, pillows, mosquito nets, buckets, metal plates, drinking glasses, clothes, nappies, soap, toothbrushes and paste were distributed to 131 households. All items were purchased in the country.

"We met one young man whose wife had given birth during the peak of the flood," Sam reports. "Their home was washed away completely. Akhil and his father are freshwater fisherman and cannot afford to rebuild right now but they had put together a makeshift shed to protect Akhil's wife and new-born son."

"We feared for this little baby especially and the day before I left Kerala we went back to hand over some more supplies and to present them with a second 'Bucket of Love'. That same evening Akhil went out to fish and brought me some prawns to fry."

"I truly believed and learned from him that this was love in action, just as Christ taught us. In all this destruction, what really touched me was the way people were dealing with their loss. It was obvious that they were picking themselves up quickly and with grace."

"Please let the donors know that their help is highly appreciated."

BIBLE STORY BOOKS FOR CHILDREN REACH THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES IN PAKISTAN

My name is Nazia and I am nine years old. I live in Qila Didar Singh. My brother's name is David. He is seven. He is a very skinny and shy kid and has hardly any friends. One day I was given a beautiful book at Sunday School. The title was David.

I showed the book to my brother and read the story to him. He was encouraged and said, "My name is also David. Like David in the Bible one day I will become strong and work for my nation. God had a great plan for David in the Bible and he has a great plan for me, too."

Over the past ten years, Blythswood has sponsored the production of 312,000 Bible story books for children in Urdu, for distribution amongst Pakistan's Christian minority.



Ildiko's story is a litany of ill health and broken relationships. She was only 16 when her father died. Growing up during Romania's communist era, her skill in maths and science landed her a job in a chemical factory and then in a factory making photography paper.

Her first marriage resulted in the birth of a daughter but did not last. Following her second marriage she suffered several miscarriages and the loss of a child at only two weeks old.

Years later, when her own daughter wanted to terminate a pregnancy, Ildiko persuaded her to carry the child, promising that she would bring it up. And this was despite her own illness with cancer and her dependence on strong painkillers to get through each day.

This summer, her granddaughter spent a month abroad with her mother for the first time but Ildiko was advised that cancer has spread to her stomach.

Food, clothes and friendship encourage struggling grandmother

The first time that Ildiko received help from Blythswood's Basis project she and her granddaughter were at risk of homelessness.

Seeking refuge from a husband with a severe drink problem she was staying in rented flats in Cluj but found

the tenancies to be insecure and too expensive.

The provision of a monthly food grant of basic food items and help with clothing and furniture was a godsend for her as she juggled part-time work, high bills and the care of a growing child.

"Ildiko is totally committed to bringing up her granddaughter," says Basis project worker Agnes Csiszer who visits the family every month. "The 12-year-old has suffered bullying from classmates but Ildiko is determined to see her complete high school.

"Your support for this family helps to give Ildiko the courage she needs to face the challenges of each new day."



CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP TRANSFORMS LIFE OF BLIND LADY

The life of Eszter (right) has been transformed through friendship shown to her by Christian friends

Christians from the Roma community in southern Hungary have changed the life of a partially-sighted lady through offering her friendship.

Eszter used to work in a shoe factory and reckons that the glue they used there was the cause of her almost complete loss of eyesight. "Another elderly lady invited Eszter to the church we are planting in

Izsak," reports Lilla Kiralyne. "Kori and Szilvi, the pastor and his wife, are helping her in different ways. They have given her lifts to church and made sure that there is someone to accompany her as she cannot walk alone.

"They have also taken her to visit her son who is physically and mentally handicapped and who lives in a home some distance away.

"Through this continual support she has felt the love of God and committed herself to the Lord. She is a devoted Christian now. She attends every meeting and is involved in church life, enjoying fellowship with new friends."

Lilla volunteers for Good News Foundation, a charity in Hungary which distributes aid received from Blythswood Care.

"Through this continual support she has felt the love of God and committed herself to the Lord

In 2018, Blythswood has been channelling sponsorship for 60 children to attend a variety of primary and secondary schools in Zimbabwe.



Tapiwa has reached the sixth form and is determined to go to university.

HELP WITH FEES ENABLES ORPHANED TWINS TO COMPLETE HIGH SCHOOL

Tapiwa and his twin brother Komberero were still in primary school when their parents died. Without the support of Blythswood Care their schooling would almost certainly have stopped then as their grandfather who has brought them up has a monthly pension income equivalent to just £50.

But with the cost of fees, exams and uniforms met by Blythswood, they have both been able to reach the sixth form at high school. "Tapiwa has been performing very well in English, maths and history," says Stephen Damuputirai, director of Harare Shelter. "He was at the same school as his brother but decided to change to one which could offer him commerce at A level.

His heart is in business."

Stephen says that Tapiwa is determined to go to university. "His grandfather is confident that the boys will succeed."

In 2018, Blythswood has been channelling sponsorship for 60 children to attend a variety of primary and secondary schools in Zimbabwe.



GOOD SHEPHERDS NEVER GIVE UP

Zsolt giving his testimony: 'The most difficult thing for me was to be honest and to face up to what I had done.'

Blythwood Care supports the work of Bonus Pastor Foundation in Romania, which offers therapy to people with harmful addictions.

The fourth of October 1995 is a date etched in Zolt's memory. That was the day his mother died of alcohol poisoning. She was 35. He was 15. "Things happened so quickly," he says. "I could not believe it, even although I had seen her being taken away in a blanket. "Our grandmother clothed us, fed us and sent us to school but after my mother's death I did not want to study any more. I threw my school bag into the river. At school they scolded me and threatened me but it was in vain. I repeated the eighth grade three times but failed because I did not want to learn.

"At 16 I started to drink. I was always quite an inhibited person. In the disco I did not dare to ask a girl to dance but beer made me brave. Alcohol became my friend.

"My behaviour became

insupportable. I drank, I stole, I cheated, I lied. At 19 I was convicted of murder and sentenced to 16 years.

"I wouldn't like to go into details, nor describe prison life in Aiud. When I was released in 2010 there was so much rage, anger and frustration in me that I could not go on without alcohol and I started to drink again.

"Rev Irma Molnar ran a home for the elderly and I was working there. She told me about the Bonus Pastor Foundation and their therapy centre at Ozd.

"The most important element of the help Bonus Pastor gave me was that they never

gave up. And this was not just in my case. They never give up on anyone. I started their programme four times and they always treated me as if it had been my first.

"The most difficult thing for me was to be honest and to face up to what I had done. The result was that I came to Christ and put my life in God's hands. I put all my problems under the cross and I do so every day.

"I would still not have found my place in life if I had not experienced the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. I've been praising him ever since. He has made me whole."



Bonus Pastor Foundation's therapy centre at Ozd

BIBLE AND FELLOWSHIP FOR YOUNG SEAFARER FAR FROM HOME

A young woman entered the Seafarers' Centre in Invergordon. She had been at sea for 15 days. Tentatively she picked up an English Bible and asked how much it was.

"We told her it was free and that it was hers if she wanted it," says Drew Anderson, Sailors' Society chaplain at the Highland port. "She was jumping and down with excitement and said it was all she ever wanted."

Along with tea and biscuits, internet access is one of the attractions that draws ships' crews into the Seafarers'

Centre during their precious few hours of shore leave.

"Minutes later this girl was on Face Time to her pastor at home in the Philippines," Drew says. "He asked her had she found a fellowship yet and she said she hadn't but that she had just been given a Bible.

"We were able to tell her there was a fellowship on board her ship, and showed her a photo of some of the crew who attended. She said she recognised one and would speak to him."

Her brief shore visit provided both Bible and fellowship for

Seafarers from every part of the world find tea, friendship and the very best of books at the Seafarers' Centre hosted by Invergordon Parish Church



this young Christian so far from home. All types of vessel call at the Cromarty Firth but it is cruise ships especially that swell visitor numbers with crews of up to 1,500 men and women. They include people from Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe and Blythwood Care provides Bibles, New Testaments and Christian literature in appropriate languages.

Your gifts enable men and women at sea to grow in their faith and to share it with others during their long times away from home.



Cruise ships can have as many as 1,500 crew members and several Christian fellowship groups

Looking up on a night out – Street Pastors bring new perspective to city streets



Street Pastors offer assistance and advice in the city centre

Blythswood Care supports the work of Street Pastors in Inverness

Sue Hadfield was on patrol with Street Pastors in Inverness city centre one night when she was approached by a young woman. "The night was young and she was sober," Sue says. "She had simply come to say thank you."

"The previous month she had enjoyed a night out until she became incapacitated with drink. Recognising that she was vulnerable, she had found her way to our Safe Zone van

where our team had wrapped her in a blanket and let her sleep for several hours before phoning her mum to collect her.

"This time her mum was with her and she too was full of gratitude that Street Pastors were in town to care, listen and help.

"The girl asked me why we volunteer to spend our nights in town looking after people like herself. She saw herself as useless and a waste of our time. We corrected her, telling her that she's special to God and therefore special to us too.

"She and her mum asked lots of questions, giving us the opportunity to share about God's character – his love, acceptance, patience and desire to have a relationship with us, his children. We spoke about the wonder of God's creation in the night sky above us. We spoke about her life having a purpose and her having free will to choose what she did with it.

"She gave us a big hug and thanked us again, saying that talking to us had been the highlight of her night."



**Over 55,000
people fed
through our
Foodbanks
since starting
in 2005**



Volunteers Alison Revil and Susan Miller gathering items of food and toiletries for a foodbank client. Blythswood's new premises on Glebe Street, Inverness, have enabled Highland Foodbank to bring its operation under one roof with space to receive, sort and store donated food. The foodbank has its own entrance and meeting room, separate from the adjoining charity shop, ensuring the privacy of clients

HIGHLAND FOODBANK RESCUES FAMILY HIT BY UNEXPECTED BILL

For low-income families in rural areas, a car can be a necessity rather than a luxury. And as every motorist knows it can be financial drain.

An unexpected garage bill left Ann* in a quandary. She needed the car every day to get the kids to school and herself to work. Without transport her job was at risk. But she and her three children also needed to eat.

"The crisis facing Ann is not that unusual," explains Lorna Dempster who manages Highland Foodbank in Inverness and Nairn. "Her monthly income is very low and she is also in receipt of benefits.

"For families like hers, one unexpected bill is all it takes to leave the cupboard bare. Her housing support worker referred Ann to Highland Foodbank after she had spent her food budget on keeping

the car on the road. It was a choice she had to make if she was to hold on to her job." "Thanks to everyone who supports Highland Foodbank, Ann and her family did not go hungry."

Blythswood Care has been running Highland Foodbank since 2005. In 2017 it distributed 52.9 tonnes of food to 6,284 recipients.

*not her real name



The fully renovated granary

A legacy of lasting hope

Levente Horvath, founder of an addiction rehabilitation centre in Romania, shares how a gift in a will left a legacy of lasting hope.

"I was called to be a Pastor while our country was still under communist rule. I knew it would most likely mean I'd end up in prison.

"It was in the 1980s that I first met Jackie Ross [founder of Blythswood Care]. Our meetings were brief, as we were being watched by secret police. It was illegal to mix with foreigners. I was put out of the city for preaching to students and given a little house in a small village. But I believe this saved my life, as many pastors were shot for their faith and beliefs in the beginning of the Romanian revolution.

"I shared with Blythswood my prayer to turn a very old granary into a Christian rehabilitation centre to have a programme for addicts and their families to be cared for. Legacies allowed Blythswood to offer the financial support at the right time to renovate the granary.

"Today Bonus Pastor runs a successful Christian rehabilitation centre, the only one of its kind in Transylvania. It frees many addicts from the grip that alcohol, drugs or gambling has on their lives. Many also receive freedom from their sins, getting lasting hope for their eternal future."



£1,340,900
received from
gifts in wills
from supporters in
the last 10 years.

A legacy is a wonderful way to support the things you care about most. Will you join Blythswood Care supporters and leave a gift in your will? To get information on how to leave a legacy of care to Blythswood Care, phone 01349 830777 or email legacy@blythswood.org

Why not buy a Life Transforming gift from our new catalogue?

A variety of gifts on offer

Bring them breakfast	£5	Sewing skills	£20
Train a teacher	£5	Move to mobility	£25
Mosquito net	£11	Literature for life	£27
Care for a widow	£15	Children's camp	£30
Deal with disaster	£17	Fund a family	£30
See that smile	£20	Maintain a ministry	£30
Feed a family	£20	Believing in young people	£50
Aid with an animal	£20	Learning for life	£50
Feed forty children	£20	Care with clean water	£1,500
Broadcast the Bible	£20		

Go to www.blythswood.org/gift-catalogue





ON TOP OF THE WORLD

Balazs Csiszer, director of Blythswood Romania, with David McFarland and brothers Philip and Samuel Morrison at the summit of Moldoveanu, 2544 metres, Romania's highest peak.

The three Blythswood supporters from Northern Ireland joined Balazs for a six-day hike in the Carpathian Mountains in September, raising over £2,000 for Blythswood's Daniel Centre.

"It was very challenging," Balazs says. "We were sleeping in tents and had to carry everything and the temperature at night was below zero."

Last year a group of Blythswood supporters raised £16,000 for the Daniel Centre and TK2, taking part in a hike through the Peruvian Andes and reaching the ancient Inca ruined city at Machu Picchu.

If you would like to do a challenge to raise funds for us please email jamie.mcintosh@blythswood.org to let him know your plans and be advised on setting up an online fundraising page.

MICHELLE IS BLYTHSWOOD'S VOLUNTEER MANAGER

Since joining Blythswood Care as volunteer manager in July, Michelle Livingstone's main focus has been on recruiting new helpers, and on getting to know the organisation by visiting the shops and foodbanks where help is needed.

"I can remember taking clothes to Blythswood's Round Scotland collection lorry when I was still in school," says Michelle who grew up in Perth. "I also knew about the Shoe Box Appeal although I hadn't made the link to Blythswood."

Now Michelle has a vital role to play at the heart of the Appeal, encouraging volunteers to get involved in the process of checking and dispatching boxes around the UK. She has also been busy managing volunteers who facilitated the recent move of Highland Foodbank and Blythswood's city centre charity shop to new premises in Inverness's Glebe Street.

"There's an incredible array of tasks that we need people to do," she says. "Everything from desk-bound admin roles to heavy lifting and van driving to public speaking to serving the public in shops and foodbanks."

Michelle has come to Blythswood from Vine Trust where she served for nine years as education coordinator, organising teams of senior pupils from years 5 and 6 to volunteer in building projects in Peru and Tanzania. She has also worked with SU Scotland and so has years of experience in Christian youth work, as well as a degree in town planning from Heriot Watt University.

"One of my objectives is to bring in young people, to make new links and to get them fired up to volunteer for Blythswood."



Would-be volunteers of all ages can contact Michelle on 07880 196 903 or email volunteer@blythswood.org. She says, "Whether it's for two hours or two days a week, we would really value your time for Blythswood."



David Laing joins Blythswood's board of trustees

The most recent addition to Blythswood's board of trustees has an unusually long acquaintance with the organisation. David Laing's experience of what was then the Blythswood Tract Society dates back to the mid-1970s when he attended the Free Presbyterian Church in Aberdeen.

In his professional capacity as a solicitor he was involved with Rev Jackie Ross (Blythswood's late founder and president) and Roderick MacKenzie (for many years chairman of Blythswood's board of trustees) in a review of the charity's property portfolio, leading to the formation in 1982 of Blythswood Property Holdings, a public company formed to buy over Blythswood's bookshops and to lease them back to the charity at a nominal rent. Having given the charity that financial boost 28 years previously, the shareholders gifted their shares back to Blythswood in 2010.

"I'm very pleased to have joined the board this year" David says. "Blythswood Care has developed a fascinating range of projects targeted on different needs in different locations. For me its distinctive feature is the gospel purpose which undergirds both the educational and community objectives."

David was for 10 years chairman of The Scottish Bible Society. "That appointment gave me valuable experience of charity governance and accounting," he says. "I hope that I can bring these skills to Blythswood along with the experience of a professional adviser."



**'Prayer
doesn't change
God but it
changes us'**

**Promoting prayer is
an unusual objective
in any job description.**

But it's top priority for Mairi Ferrier in her role as fundraising administrator at Blythswood's head office.

Every two months Mairi produces Blythswood's prayer diary, which is used at the daily 9 am prayer time in Blythswood's headquarters. It is designed to encourage staff, volunteers and supporters throughout the organisation to pray every day of the year for lives to be transformed. She also deals with telephone enquiries, responds to letters and emails from supporters and facilitates the smooth running of the fundraising team. "I see our supporters as absolutely central to the team," she says.

Born and brought up in Easter Ross, Mairi had early experience of Blythswood through participating in the Shoe Box Appeal and visiting the car boot sale.

Having trained as an occupational therapist at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, Mairi worked in two hospitals before finding her niche in Blythswood. "I went into OT because I cared for people and wanted to make a difference," she says. "In Blythswood I like the feeling of being a small part of something big."

Does prayer work? "Yes, but not always in the way that we expect or want," Mairi says. "It is always in wisdom and love that God answers and so we can trust him. For me, working life for Blythswood is an answer to prayer. One of my favourite films is Shadowlands, about C S Lewis. There he says prayer doesn't change God but it changes us. I believe that prayer is vital for Blythswood's life-transforming work to continue."

**To receive the prayer diary contact Mairi on 01349 830777
or email mairi.ferrier@blythswood.org.**

Freedom!

“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” (John 8:36)

Freedom is a common thread running through many stories in this issue of Blythswood News. I hope you are as encouraged as I am, reading of people being set free from addiction, poverty and lack of education.

Zolt got out of prison but didn't experience true freedom until he broke the hold that alcohol had on his life. In November, Bonus Pastor Foundation celebrates 25 years of helping addicts and their families in Romania (see page 22).

Gringo's background threatened to trap him in a cycle of low achievement and poverty but Blythswood's TK2 programme is giving him the support he needs to complete junior secondary school (page 16).

It's the story of young Naresh's father that touches me most (page 7). The day he died he asked Pastor Samuel to pray with him and discovered that

even at the eleventh hour the Lord Jesus Christ is willing to save and free us from our sins. At the end of the day this is the freedom that matters most.

Let's pray for Naresh that he would be consoled in his grief. And let's pray for ourselves that we too would know God's forgiveness and peace. Thank you for supporting Blythswood Care in 2018.

Your contribution is vital to our work.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Campbell".

James Campbell
Chief Executive



Rosa used to be too shy to say anything in front of the class but now she has confidence to answer a question in front of other children.
Talita Kum helps Rosa to enjoy school (see page 2)

Blythswood Care, Deephaven, Evanton, Ross-shire IV16 9XJ
Tel. 01349 830777 info@blythswood.org www.blythswood.org

Blythswood Care is registered with and regulated by Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR): SC048001 and a company limited by guarantee: 583493. Registered under Data Protection no. Z7689978. Blythswood Care is a member of the Evangelical Alliance. Printed on paper manufactured from sustainably managed forestry, using vegetable based ink. Please pass it on once you have read it, or recycle it. Blythswood aims for good stewardship of God's earth and reflects this in the selection and disposal of all materials used in the organisation's business.

