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God says believe in me  
and I will always  
be with you



# BLYTHSWOODNEWS

Number 72 Spring 2020

## YOUR GIFT IS DANI'S OPPORTUNITY



*See story on page 2*



## Cover story

*Your support for Talita Kum gives children like Dani opportunities they otherwise would never get*

## YOUR GIFTS GIVE OPPORTUNITIES TO CHILDREN FROM POOR HOMES

**Learning for life – Romania Gift code R2**

**Imagine this. Your mum can neither read nor write. Your dad you see only occasionally. Neither appreciates the importance of education. And when you are at home you are expected to look after your older sister's children.**



*Dani has learnt to work independently and finish his homework*

That's the situation facing 12-year-old Dani. It's only through your support for Blythswood's afterschool programme that he receives the encouragement he needs to persevere at school.

"Dani's attendance is very good," says Carmen Popa who teaches at Talita Kum, in Jimbolia, western Romania. "He's been with us four years and has now joined TK2, the programme for junior secondary pupils.

"He does okay at school but still needs the extra tuition we can give. He prefers maths to Romanian. Once he grasps an idea he insists on working independently and finishes all his homework.

"He enjoys everything the programme has to offer – food, games, activities. He loves acrobatics and is always trying to improve his front and back flips. "In February he joined us on a skiing trip. It was his second time. His skiing is improving nicely and it gives him so much confidence. Without your support for Talita Kum, children like Dani would never get this opportunity."





*Your gifts for sewing skills training have enabled Yeukai to support her children*

Yeukai has been educationally disadvantaged since she was a child. Her father who was polygamous struggled to pay for her schooling. Although she got as far as sitting O levels, she could never collect the results as her school fees remained unpaid.

Pressured into marriage before she was ready for it, Yeukai found herself alone with two children when her husband abandoned her and went to South Africa.

She went to stay with an uncle in Harare while her parents-in-law took custody of the children. It was there that she learned of the sewing skills programme run by Streams of Hope and supported by Blythswood Care.

"Yeukai is truly a hard worker whom we all admire," says Streams of Hope director Stephen Damuputirai. "She raised capital from the garments she made while training in 2018 and managed to buy an industrial sewing machine.

"Now she is able to pay her rent and support her family." "I want to thank Blythswood for changing my life," Yeukai says. "I no longer need to beg for help for my children."

## Sewing skills enable abandoned mum to support her children

**Sewing skills – Zimbabwe Gift code DA4**

**A 36-year-old mother in Harare, Zimbabwe, is able once more to support her two children thanks to training in sewing skills, supported through Blythswood's gift catalogue.**

## ISTVAN GETS A SECOND CHANCE AT BLYTHSWOOD'S DANIEL CENTRE

**Believing in young people – Romania Gift code R1**

**A young man who dropped out of Blythswood Care's Daniel Centre programme after just six months decided to come back in January. And now he is learning to hold down his first proper job.**

"I came back because I wanted to work," Istvan says. To do that, he recognised that he needed the support which the Daniel Centre offers to young people leaving Romania's care system.

Daniel Centre social worker Dani Ciupe had kept in touch with Istvan through Facebook after he left. "I accepted him as a friend," Dani says. "I told him he could come back." Dani explains how young people in the care of the state have money put aside for them, to which they are given access after they turn 18. "Istvan thought that because he had €2,000 he didn't need to work. It happens with everyone in his situation. They don't realise how hard it is to make money."



*Istvan (right) with Dani Ciupe: your gifts provide young men like him with the support that others receive from family relationships*

When Istvan returned in January, Dani helped him to get a job in a supermarket. "I went with him to the interview," he says. "It was hard because the manager had previous experience of young men in his position not staying."

Now Dani takes time each day to talk with Istvan before he goes to work and when he comes back. "He is quite shy," he says. "I encourage him to ask questions and to learn." In his new role, Istvan serves customers face to face, slicing

meat to their requirements. He has received training from his new employer and says he likes his job.

The Daniel Centre programme encourages the young people to maintain contact with family. Istvan never knew his father and his mother died two years ago, but he does keep in touch with his step brothers in his home village, 100km from Cluj.

The Daniel Centre is currently home to seven young men who lack the support that people at

their stage of life normally receive from birth families.

A further seven who have achieved independence are helped with low-rent tenancies and know they are welcome to drop in for encouragement and advice.







## Foodbank helps worker on zero-hours contract

**Feed a family – UK Gift code UK2**

**Your gifts to Blythwood's Highland Foodbank enabled a retail worker on a zero-hours contract to survive a post-Christmas collapse in her wages.**

"Up until Christmas Wilma\* was working 40 hours a week," says Highland Foodbank manager Lorna Dempster. "But she had very few shifts in January and had to apply for Universal Credit.

"The week in which she was referred to us by Citizens' Advice Bureau she had worked

only four hours and had no prospect of more.

"She had spent her savings on rent and bills and would have to wait another two weeks for her first payment of Universal Credit. She was so grateful for the help Foodbank gave her and told one of our volunteers that she didn't know what she would have done without it.

"Wilma is single and has no family living in the area. Friends had invited her to pop round for meals but she

felt there were only so many times she could do that."

In 2019 your gifts helped Highland Foodbank to provide a three-day food supply to 7,724 people, preventing them from going hungry during personal financial crises.

\*Not her real name



*File image*

## MOSQUITO NET IMPROVES HEALTH OF MUM-TO-BE

**Mosquito net – Africa & Asia Gift code OH5**



*Your gifts provide mosquito nets, making a rapid difference to the health of people like Marthaline*

**The wife of a poor rice farmer in rural Liberia is expecting their first child. And she believes the improvement in her health which made her pregnancy possible is due to sleeping under a mosquito net provided by Blythwood Care.**

"This could not have happened while I was having malaria seizures," Marthaline says. "I used to have fevers twice a month and was very anaemic. "My husband James used to walk with me a long way into the remote forest to visit the witch doctor. The doctor boiled bitter roots and herbs in creek

water but I never felt any better. James paid a lot of money for my treatment but I was frightened because many people going through this treatment died.

"My neighbour suggested we come down to Monrovia for treatment. We stayed with her sister who is an evangelist with the Watch & Pray Mission in Gardnersville. There James and I slept in a bed with a brand new treated mosquito net. It was the first time we had seen one.

"The community clinic confirmed we were suffering from malaria and began

treatment. On the third week, when we returned to our home in Gbarnga the Mission gave us two sets of long-life insecticide-treated mosquito nets and taught us how we must use them.

"Now we all sleep under nets and my family life has changed for the better as I am now pregnant."

And that wasn't the only change the couple experienced as a result of their time at the Mission. "We heard the call of Christ and responded," Marthaline says. "We are now living in the joy of Christian faith in Gbarnga."



# FUN, FRIENDS AND FEELING SECURE AT SUMMER CAMP



*Your gifts meant that Ana could enjoy camp again last summer*

## Children's camp – Eastern Europe and Pakistan Gift code SC2

**Summer camp for Ana is a week full of fun, friends and feeling secure. And your gifts for children's camps meant that the 10-year-old was able to return for the second time last summer.**

Ana lives with her grandmother in Marghita, northwest Romania – an arrangement made to ensure that she actually attends school. It's in Ana's best interests as her parents seem unaware of the importance of education. But it means that during the school term she is separated from her younger sisters.

"Ana said her sisters would love to be at camp too, but they are too small," says Lidia Micula, a teacher with Blythswood's partner organisation Fundatia Crestina Elim. "She had a great time playing and enjoying herself with no worries or anxieties."

Activities at Ana's camp included swimming, team

games, arts and crafts, and Bible stories.

In 2019, nearly 4,000 young people attended Christian summer camps in Eastern Europe, supported by Blythswood Care. Blythswood's partner organisations in Pakistan provided activities and special events for thousands more.



*Mahender (centre, foreground) surrounded by his friends at Dayspring: your gifts restore health and opportunity to children in need*

## Balanced diet restores health to fatherless boy

### Feed forty children India Gift code OH4

**Mahender is a chubby, healthy twelve-year-old lad whose favourite game is kabaddi, the vigorous contact sport popular throughout the Indian subcontinent.**

But two years ago his situation was very different. His father had died, following years of alcohol abuse, leaving his young family in extreme poverty.

It was an uncle who approached Dayspring House, near Hyderabad, seeking admission for the malnourished boy, who was dressed in rags.

"Since coming to Dayspring, his health has improved," says Pastor Samuel Babu who oversees the welfare and education of 35 children with support from Blythswood Care.

Meals at Dayspring are based on a traditional Indian diet of rice, pulses and vegetables with milk, eggs, chicken and fruit to make sure the children receive the protein and vitamins they need.

"Mahender is gaining weight and doing well at school," Samuel Babu says. "His ambition is to become a doctor."



# SUNDAY SCHOOL FUNDS TWO WELLS

Fauldhouse St Andrews Parish Church Sunday School aimed high in 2019 – they decided to raise £1,500 to fund a water well. And they surpassed themselves! With afternoon teas, a sponsored silence, pooled birthday money and much more, they raised no less than £3,000.

Blythwood's volunteer manager Michelle Livingstone visited Fauldhouse to say a big thank you. "This Sunday School's big effort in 2019 is going to make a difference that lasts," she says. "It will provide a fresh water supply to thousands."



## CLEAN WATER TRANSFORMS LIVES IN LIBERIA

Care with clean water –  
Africa Gift code OH6



In March 2018, Ophelia lost two of her grandchildren. They died of cholera and diarrhoea as a result of drinking dirty water.

January to May is the dry season in Liberia and clean water is a scarcity in Monrovia, the nation's capital with a population of 1.5 million people.

Ophelia had filled her empty plastic containers at a well five miles from home. She saw there were dead rats in the water but still believed it to be less dangerous than the St Paul River which is full of untreated sewage.

"It was the saddest time in my life," she remembers. "We were all suffering from stomach cramps and illness and many people died."

Ophelia was still mourning the loss of the children when she was persuaded by a relative to move to Blackie Island Community. There she had access to a water well in the neighbouring district of Iron Factory, funded by donations to Blythwood's gift catalogue.

Newly constructed in 2018, the well has a closed top and a large hand pump, ensuring that the water is kept clean.

Thanks to gifts from Blythwood supporters like you, the water is free of charge to residents of three

districts with a total population of 21,000 people. Ophelia says: "Life is much easier now for me and my family."

*The well provides clean water free of charge to thousands of people in Monrovia*





## GOD SAYS 'BELIEVE IN ME AND I WILL ALWAYS BE WITH YOU'

Literature for life –  
worldwide Gift code CL8

My name is Raza. I am 11  
years old. I live in a village in  
Punjab province, Pakistan.

One day at Sunday School I  
was given a beautiful book  
called Jeremiah: A Man With A  
Message. I was so happy to  
read it in Urdu, the language  
we use at school. It tells me  
about the Old Testament  
prophet. God said to him:  
"Believe in me and I will  
always be with you."

I shared the message with my  
family and it has changed the  
way we live. We were  
Christians before but now we  
want to spend time with  
God every day.

Your gifts provide Bible-based books for children, teaching and  
blessing families from Pakistan's Christian minority



Jackson Nkeshimana: 'My dream was to  
evangelise as many people as possible'



Lewis Niyokwizera: 'Jackson's message  
put me on the right road'

## Christian radio helps young listeners make good life choices.

**Broadcast the Bible – Burundii, Congo,  
Rwanda and Tanzania Gift code CL7**

**When Jackson Nkeshimana  
was a law student in  
Bujumbura, he used to carry  
a radio with him wherever  
he went. The reason? He  
loved listening to the Radio  
Ivyizigiro, a Christian radio  
station supported by  
Blythswood Care.**

"I liked it so much that I applied  
to volunteer as a presenter and  
journalist," he says. "After two  
years they offered me a full  
time contract."

The offer from the radio station  
came at the same time as a

job offer from the government  
in Burundi, who were taking on  
newly qualified law graduates.

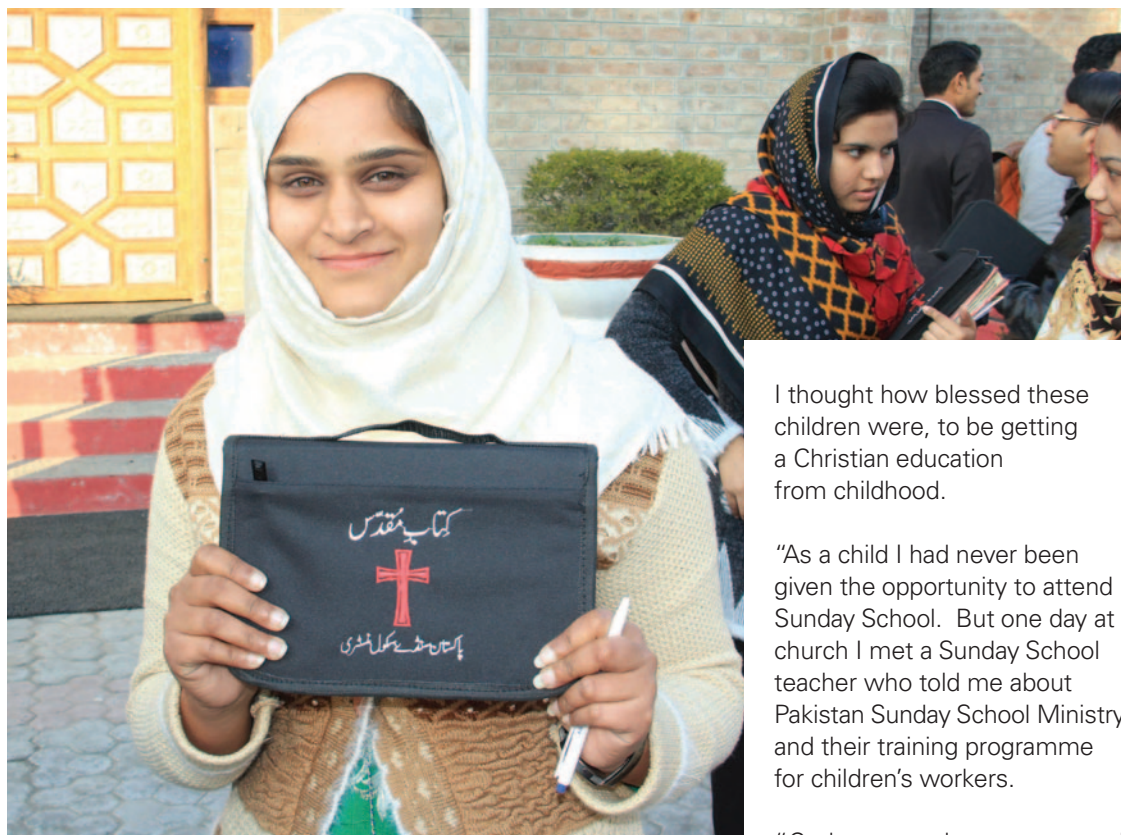
Despite a much lower salary,  
Jackson saw this opportunity  
in Christian radio as an answer  
to his prayers and took it gladly.  
"My dream was to evangelise  
as many people as possible,"  
he says. At Radio Ivyizigiro he  
has been able to preach from  
the Bible in his native Kiswahili  
language, reaching hundreds  
of thousands of listeners  
throughout Burundi and  
neighbouring countries in  
Africa's Great Lakes region.

Jackson has now worked as a  
full time presenter for 13 years,  
and also pastors a congregation  
of 300 people in Bujumbura.  
His radio messages for young  
people have led to him  
being invited to speak at youth  
conferences.

Lewis Niyokwizera was a  
listener to Jackson's  
programmes and says they  
changed his life. The young  
film producer was tempted to  
adopt a sexually promiscuous  
lifestyle, although he knew this  
was not right for a Christian.  
"One day Jackson's broadcast  
was on how to choose the one  
to marry," he says. "His  
message put me on the right  
road and now I am about to  
get married."







*Your support for Sunday school teacher training has given Sumaira the opportunity to fulfil her calling*

## PROVIDING TRAINING FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN PAKISTAN

**Train a Teacher – Pakistan Gift code CL5**

**Sumaira knows the value of education as only someone who missed out can. Coming from a poor family she was not allowed to proceed beyond grade five in the primary school. Her family needed her to work at home.**

Even attendance at church was a rare treat. But when she did get there, maybe once a month, she really enjoyed it. "I felt calm and joyous," she says. "It was indescribable."

"Whenever I was able to attend youth programmes at church,

I thought how blessed these children were, to be getting a Christian education from childhood.

"As a child I had never been given the opportunity to attend Sunday School. But one day at church I met a Sunday School teacher who told me about Pakistan Sunday School Ministry and their training programme for children's workers.

"God answered my prayers and I was able to complete two days of training in Gujranwala. Now by God's grace I am able to run a Sunday School in a village nearby. As many as 85 children from several villages gather in the church and I teach them Bible stories, helped by the materials provided by PSSM.

"I thank God for giving me this opportunity to fulfil my calling."



*Evangelism at a bean festival: 'We are well known for our 100 litre cauldron and for preaching about the Lord'*

## Supporting Evangelism in Serbia

**Maintain a ministry – Eastern Europe Gift code PS1**

**A pastor supported by Blythswood Care has returned to his native northern Serbia to minister to a congregation of just seven members.**

But he goes with a mission to share the gospel with the whole community in what is one of the least evangelised corners of Europe.

Jovica Gecan was 16 years old before he held a copy of the New Testament in his hands for the first time. "I went to a home bible study with a cousin," he says. "Some time after that I went to an evangelistic meeting in Novi Sad. Billy Graham was on the big screen and his message hit me. When he

called for people to come forward, I crossed the theatre in front of everybody and prayed for the first time in my life."

Jovica's conversion seemed to be short-lived. "When I was left alone I went back to my old life," he admits. "But the Lord found me again as a married man in 2001. My wife Katherine and I agreed it's the Lord's way or no way.

"We were baptised in 2003 and went to Bible College a year later."

For the last six years Jovica has been attending a bean festival in Kraljevo, seeing it as an opportunity to distribute Christian books and to engage with people.

"When the beans are cooked, we prepare tables and invite people to come and have lunch with us. This gives the opportunity for one-to-one conversation. We are well known for our 100 litre cauldron but people ask why we are doing this. We turn everything round to the subject of the Lord and His grace."

The small church in Ruski Krstur is planning to renovate newly-acquired premises to create a meeting room and catering facilities, allowing them to help the poorest in the community. Jovica also attends bikers' rallies, speaking to people about the gospel. He says: "Our vision is for people to know and turn to God."



# Your gifts help change lives for good

**Why do you buy someone a gift? To say thank you? To mark an occasion? To say I love you? A gift from Blythswood's gift catalogue can do all these – and something more, too. It enables you and your friend or family member to share the joy that comes from helping someone in need. This issue of Blythswood News shows how your gifts really are transforming lives.**

In Zimbabwe, Yeukai has learned to sew and now can pay her rent and feed her family (see page 4).

In Romania, Dani is receiving the extra tuition he needs to complete his homework and to keep up with better privileged classmates at school (page 2).

In Liberia, Ophelia has access to a clean and safe water supply, sparing her family from the grief of water-borne disease (page 11).

And in Pakistan, Sumaira has been trained to teach Sunday School, and now shares Bible stories with as many as 85 children in her weekly class (page 14).

Don't forget that Blythswood's gift catalogue is always available online. It's your opportunity to show that you care. Thank you for purchasing gifts that help change lives for good.



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

**James Campbell**  
Chief Executive



*Carry each other's burdens,  
and in this way you will fulfil  
the law of Christ.*  
**Galatians 6:2**

*A bean festival, Kraljevo, Serbia gives Jovica Gecan an opportunity to distribute Christian books and talk to people about Jesus (see page 15)*

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