

Transforming lives through Christian care for body and soul

How your valued donations make a difference...

BLYTHSWOODNEWS



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Ricsi and Marko with their dad

CLOTHING FAMILIES FOR WINTER IN EASTERN EUROPE

Keep twelve families warm through winter – Gift code RA1

The gift of warm clothes – especially jackets – from Blythswood Care has made a difference to the everyday lives of Marko and his younger brother Ricsi. They have to walk to school in all weathers, half an hour each way, even when the snow is falling.

Like many other Roma families in this part of Hungary's Great Plain, their parents Matyas and Monika

have to choose between buying food or warm clothes to help their children survive the winter.

The boys experienced changes in their family life when their mum and dad became Christians. Having been together for many years Matyas and Monika decided to ask God's blessing on their relationship and get married.

Matyas who spent 20 years in prison for various violent crimes stopped drinking and gave up his cigarettes. The

couple also decided they should replace their illegal connection to the electricity supply with an official account. But that means they must pay, placing a further strain on the family budget.

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Blythswood's Gift Catalogue is full of ideas that let you share the joy of helping someone in need. Go to blythswood.org or call 01349 830777



Monika with the youngest addition to their family: previously they suffered the tragic loss of a two-year-old daughter when she was electrocuted by an illegal connection to the mains

Continued from front page

The boys' father now has a low-paid job while their mother keeps their home clean and tidy despite having neither kitchen nor bathroom. For families like these in some of the poorest communities in Europe, the gift of winter clothing from Blythswood Care makes a real difference, keeping them warm and enabling their children to go to school without feeling ashamed.



Margaret* walked four miles in the rain to reach Highland Foodbank in Inverness. And when she arrived she sat down and wept.

She and her husband had been paying high rent for a rural property in a bad state of repair. For them, the attraction had been that they were able to keep livestock. With both working, they could just about manage.

But when their landlord decided he wanted to renovate the house, they had only a month to find somewhere else and to rehoming the animals.

Their changed circumstances meant that Margaret could no longer work, making it more difficult to raise the deposit and rent for a new tenancy. When Highland Council's housing department referred the family to Highland Foodbank they were

in temporary accommodation for homeless people and finding it very stressful.

Nervous, upset and not sure what to expect, this was her first time at Foodbank. She was there only because she was desperate. But it was a relief to be able to sit and talk.

"Margaret was overwhelmed with the food she received," says Highland Foodbank coordinator Lorna Dempster. "She said the breakfast cereal was her daughter's favourite and it was clear that she really appreciated the kindness of the volunteers."

Last year Highland Foodbank – run by Blythswood Care – provided a three-day food supply to more than 5,700 people across the north of Scotland.

*not her real name



The gift of a piglet is ideal for young families in poor villages and eventually provides food that can keep them in meat for several months

The gift of chickens or even a piglet can provide vital protein for young families in poor villages

BRINGING HOME THE BACON FOR UNEMPLOYED FAMILY IN BULGARIA

Provide regular food for a family –
Gift code DA7 (pig) DA2 (chickens)

The gift of a piglet a year ago from Blythswood's gift catalogue has provided several months' supply of meat for a young family in Sliven province, Bulgaria.

Dochka and her husband Gospodin live in one room in his mother's house. Unemployment remains high in Bulgaria, especially in villages like theirs, and neither can find a job. Their income is 45 lev (about £18) a month, plus some government vouchers for baby food for their little boy.

For a family in this situation, being able to slaughter their own pig before Christmas is a huge benefit, providing them with protein-rich food for the next five months.

They also received a gift of chickens which after a few months are now laying well. Zhani Slavcheva says: "These gifts gave them hope for their future and an awareness of God's amazing love for them."

SIMPLE KINDNESS CHANGED HEARTS OF HOMELESS COUPLE IN INDIA



Four hundred rupees a month equates to just a daily bowl of rice but is a significant contribution to Christian workers like Saramma, freeing them to spend a little more of their time in evangelism

Enable an evangelist to do her work – Gift code CL4

As recently as five years ago Saramma and her husband were devout Hindus. She assisted him in temples where he instructed worshippers in the stories about their gods.

Now Saramma tells the story of Jesus Christ. She tells it to anyone who will listen. Her husband too has become a Christian.

The revolution in the lives of this middle-aged couple began when he suffered an accident, breaking his leg, his hand and some ribs. In hospital his condition grew worse, leaving him unable to walk.

Saramma borrowed money from neighbours so that she could obtain better treatment for her husband. By the time he came home, immobile and unable to work, they were seriously in debt. Their four grown-up children, all married, did not help. Nor did the Hindu gods. Their creditors claimed the house, leaving

them homeless.

Only the Christians in their village took pity on them, feeding them and praying for them. Through their kindness, the destitute couple began to understand the gospel.

"Eventually Saramma began to attend our meetings," says Mary Kumari who witnessed the change taking place in their lives. "Previously this entire family was very much against Christianity but now their hearts were changed. We prayed for her husband and he started to get better."

Having experienced this answer to prayer, Saramma was baptised and now four years later is one of a group of evangelists who receive modest support from Blythswood Care so that they can dedicate more of their time to sharing their faith with others.

Provide food for a family in crisis –
Gift code UK2

Food aid for working family that lost tenancy

MOSQUITO NETS PROTECT FAMILIES AND SAVE LIVES

Mosquito net – Gift code OH5

Mary has always been scared of malaria. Before she and her family moved from rural Liberia into the capital city, she used to cover the windows of their village home with cypress branches, shut the door before sunset and burn dried orange peel inside.

Even with those precautions, the family of two parents and four children could experience three episodes of the insect-borne disease in a month.

When they moved to Monrovia in 2013 they were given two mosquito nets funded by Blythswood Care. “Since we started sleeping under them we have not had a case of malaria,” Mary says. “These nets save our lives.”

In Liberia, an individual mosquito nets can cost as much as £8. As vegetable growers and street traders, Mary and her husband earn between them about £20 a month. Without your gifts through Blythswood’s gift catalogue, Mary’s family would remain without protection.

Mary’s family have not shown symptoms of malaria in more than two years

RESTORING SIGHT IN THAILAND AND BURMA

Help someone to see clearly by providing for a cataract operation – Gift code OH9

Among the many patients treated at the Mae Tao Clinic in January, Kyaw Khu Poe stood out. He was completely blind.

With advanced cataracts in both eyes, the 60-year-old farm labourer was able only to perceive light. For the past year, his condition had made it impossible for him to work, requiring his wife to labour in his place as well as look after him.

It was someone in their village in Eastern Burma who told him about the clinic – someone who had already had cataract surgery there. His nephew accompanied him on the journey by minibus over the border to Thailand.

At Mae Tao Clinic Kyaw Khu Poe underwent a successful operation on his left eye and regained excellent vision, enabling him to return home to work and to do all that he used to do. His right eye will be treated on another occasion.

With the expertise of volunteer surgeons from the United Kingdom, your gifts through Blythswood’s gift catalogue help fund this life-changing surgery, restoring sight to patients who would be quite unable to pay for this treatment themselves.

Kyaw Khu Poe before his operation: the removal of the cataract on his left eye restored excellent vision and allowed him to return to work

Varied diet improves health of orphanage children

Give an orphan breakfast for a month – Gift code DA5

Ovidiu, now 16, has been living in Ilisua orphanage since 2013, as has his stepsister. They are not orphans but were taken into care because of their exposure to tuberculosis at home.

A nutritious diet supported by Blythswood Care is essential to the success of the preventive medical supervision required by these young people. Ovidiu and his stepsister are far from being the only ones in this category among the 67 children at Ilisua.

“Our aim is not just to feed these children but to give them a healthier diet,” says Teodora Morar, who works for Blythswood’s partner

organisation Elpis Foundation.

The intervention has worked for Ovidiu. A recent medical evaluation is encouraging and he is thriving in his new environment, even winning prizes in regional chess competitions in the last two years.

“The cost of looking after a child is more than the orphanage receives from the government,” says Teodora. “It has to cover heating and staff wages as well as clothes, shoes, food and personal hygiene items for the children.

“The support they receive from Blythswood helps them to offer the children a varied diet and makes an important contribution to their health and development.”

It’s your move: by choosing to supplement orphanage meals through Blythswood’s gift catalogue you can give young people like Ovidiu a more nutritious diet

Thirty five families – both Christian and Hindu – are enjoying safe drinking water thanks to the installation of a water well paid for by gifts through Blythswood’s gift catalogue.

It was installed in the village of Navara in Andhra Pradesh in March 2015 and has had a particular impact on the lives of women there.

“In our area it is mainly women who have to go for water and carry it home on their shoulders,” says Mary Kumari, president of Alpha Educational & Welfare Society which is Blythswood’s partner organisation in that part of India.

At the other end of the village there is a government supply but, as well as being a long way to carry water, it is perceived as restricted to use by the land-owning class and the poorer families know they are not welcome there.

The result is that poorer families draw water from the lake which is also for washing and is dirtied by cattle and buffalo.

“The people who use the new well are mainly labourers who depend on seasonal work in the paddy fields,” Mary says. “Just a very few work in the factories which are 20 kilometres away.

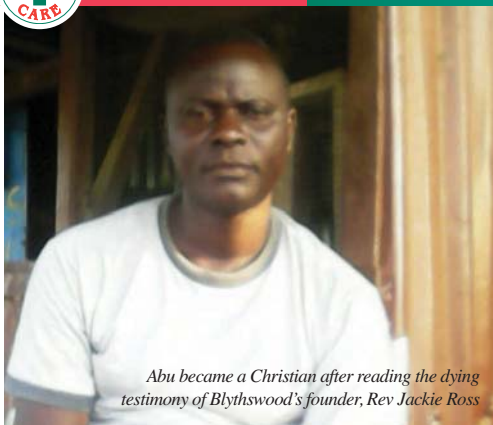
“Previously they struggled a lot for drinking water but now they are happy. The new well is a great help to them, especially to the women.”



In India, women still carry water long distances

Help provide clean water – Gift code OH6

NEW WATER SUPPLY EASES BURDEN OF VILLAGE WOMEN IN INDIA



Abu became a Christian after reading the dying testimony of Blythswood's founder, Rev Jackie Ross

Planting the seed of the gospel

Enable 5,000 people to read about Jesus – Gift code CL2

“You’re a liar!”

Abu Kamara was furious. He snatched the leaflets from the pastor’s hands and ripped them to pieces.

“ALLAH has no son. Stop deceiving the people or you will perish in hell fire.”

Since the previous year, Rev Charles Johnson had been praying that God would show ten Muslim neighbours the truth about Jesus Christ. Now, as he watched them pour petrol on his tracts and set them alight, he knew he must not respond in anger. “I simply went home, knelt down, lifted up my eyes to heaven and began to pray,” he remembers.

Two years later, in August 2014, Charles suffered a sore loss. His daughter Barbara, who was a doctor, died. His neighbours came to show their sympathy. “Abu has chronic hypertension and Barbara used to check his blood pressure regularly,” Charles says. “He wept bitterly over Barbara’s death and apologised for burning the tracts. “But I was astonished when he came to me later and requested some more. I gladly gave him *Jackie’s Last Letter*. He is an inquisitive person and I knew he would read it.”

Sure enough, in April of last year, Abu accosted Charles on the street. “I do good works, give offerings to the poor, visit the sick, and have gone to Mecca twice,” he said. “I’m reconciled with ALLAH but Jackie says I am not.”

Abu proceeded to point out to Charles where the tract was wrong. “But try as he might, he had to face the reality about Jesus being the Son of God,” Charles says. “He recognised his prejudice. *Jackie’s Last Letter* had planted the seed of the gospel in his heart.

“That day Abu prayed the sinner’s prayer with me and gave up his life to Christ. A few days later he publicly proclaimed his faith in Christ and was baptised.”

Since then seven of Abu’s friends have become Christians. Charles says: “Abu is dedicated to proclaiming the good news of forgiveness and eternal life.”

PASTORAL SUPPORT FOR A NEW GENERATION OF TEENS

Help support a pastor in Eastern Europe – Gift code CL3



Summer camps are part of the Philothea Club's varied programme



Gabriella Belenyese

Gabriella Belenyese is supported by Blythswood Care to give leadership and guidance to children and teenagers in the city of Targu Mures, Romania.

The Philothea Club, of which she is director, organises weekly activities for 200 young people, including many

from disadvantaged or dysfunctional families.

The club’s objectives are to make teenagers feel at home, to familiarise them with the life of Jesus Christ, to provide moral and spiritual support and to help them become a part of the community.

Gabriella says that although youth activities get little help from the state the community is supportive. “The schools ask us to teach the pupils about the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse,” she says. “Since the beginning we have relied on the help of volunteers but each day it becomes more difficult to get people to help us in their spare time.”

The club has been running for 20 years and in that time Gabriella has seen changes in the outlook of the city’s youngsters. She says, “It’s harder to engage young people nowadays. A lot of the teenagers turn away from Christ and we are trying to bring them back into the fold. It is encouraging when adults who used to attend our programmes as children come back to help us as volunteers.

“The biggest joy I have is to see the positive change we bring in the kids.”

Daniel Centre helps young men achieve independence

Enable an ex-orphanage boy to learn skills – Gift code R1

Just five months into a two-year programme at Blythswood’s Daniel Centre in Cluj, Romania, a young man has already acquired skills and experience that will stand him in good stead in the world of work.

Although he was 21 when he joined the programme, Andrei was emotionally immature and lacking in confidence. His insecurity reflected his difficult upbringing. At birth he was abandoned in the hospital in Cluj and was later transferred to an orphanage. At the age of 12 he was adopted by a woman in another city.

Eventually he completed high school but was not ready to hold down a job or live independently.

“Andrei tends to be wary of people and is afraid of being taken advantage of by others,” says Elvira Szasz-Jakab, project director at the Daniel Centre. “Here he has learned to communicate more efficiently and is becoming more independent every day.

“He likes to keep things in order and is very responsible when entrusted with tasks.”

With the security of being part of the



Blythswood’s Daniel Centre helps young men like Andrei to get over difficult childhood experiences

Daniel Centre community, Andrei has now embarked on his first real job, working part-time for an industrial cleaning company. Elvira says: “With Blythswood’s help, Andrei shows great promise of achieving independence.”



Blythswood funds the rental of masts and frequencies for Christian radio in Burundi

GOSPEL BROADCASTS BANISH FEAR IN BURUNDI

Take the Christian message to thousands – Gift code CL7

A young man in Burundi had the fear of a curse lifted from his mind by the message that he heard from a Christian radio station supported by Blythswood Care.

Claude is from the Gihosha district of Bujumbura, Burundi’s capital city. For whatever reason he had fallen out with members of his family who had pronounced a curse on him that he would not have success in his studies.

“For years I had the fear that I would not succeed at school,” he says. “But one day I was listening to Radio Ivyizigiro when the presenter spoke to listeners who knew they were cursed and who were in fear of the consequences. I prayed with the presenter and I believed that God could heal me and take away my fear.

“Now I have graduated. I thank God for Radio Ivyizigiro and its staff and especially for my healing.”

With your gifts Blythswood funds the rental of masts and frequencies, bringing gospel broadcasts, health advice and a message of peace and reconciliation to many thousands of listeners in Burundi and the neighbouring states of DRC, Rwanda and Tanzania.

Blythswood’s chief executive James Campbell says: “Burundi is a troubled place right now. Ivyizigiro means hope and I believe that this station’s message of reconciliation is more important than ever.”

