

BLYTHSWOOD NEWS



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Bristol teacher takes Blythswood back to school



EDUCATION PREVENTS EXPLOITATION OF VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Cooking outside is not easy for Alice's grandmother as the wind can blow dust into the food

Eight-year-old Alice dreams of becoming a nurse and she is working hard at school to make her dream come true.

Her school is the Sargy Education Centre on Rusinga Island, Lake Victoria, Kenya, which is supported by Blythswood Romania to give educational opportunities to more than 270 children from very-low-income families.

Alice's situation is not unusual in her community.

When she was born, her mother was still a schoolgirl. Now she lives with her grandmother who also cares for two other children. Their only income is from the sale of firewood: in a good month they can make £12 or £13 which is barely enough for food.

Alice was malnourished when she first enrolled at Sargy. But two cooked meals every school day have made her strong. Now she is able to concentrate on her lessons. Luo is her

mother tongue but at school she is learning both Kiswahili and English, as well as maths, science and religious knowledge.

And she has energy to play netball and swim in the lake when she has finished her chores at home – cooking,

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What will you give this Christmas? 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



Alice gets good marks at science and would like to be a nurse

gathering firewood and fetching water.

“Without a place at Sargy school, children such as Alice would remain malnourished and illiterate,” says Balazs Halmen who visits the project on behalf of Blythswood Romania. “And as they get older, girls especially are in danger of exploitation unless they are in school.

“Since joining Sargy, Alice has become a much happier and healthier child.”



Bread for Migrants passing through Serbia

Having received bread at Presevo, a young migrant continues his journey on foot

Ahmed is asleep, wrapped in a blanket, under a tree in Presevo. He is fevered and has a bad cold and his parents are worried about him and his sister. Fortunately the weather is warm and dry, unusually so for late September. Since fleeing their home in north-eastern Syria they have travelled for weeks on foot and by train. Turkey, Greece, Macedonia and now Serbia.

Stopped for a short time, just for a few hours, the family receive bread and cheese provided by Blythswood Serbia in partnership with the local Red Cross. What do



Just a few months old, Ahmed is oblivious to his status as part of Europe's largest migration of people since the Second World War

they want most? Seats on a bus. Like the thousands of others passing through this border town every day, they are intent on reaching northern Europe, preferably Germany or Sweden.

At the time of writing, Blythswood is not transporting clothes or other aid from the United Kingdom to Serbia. Finlay Mackenzie, Blythswood's head of projects, says: “Buying food in Serbia is the most efficient way to help right now. The situation there is changing from day to day. Our challenge is to help the Serbian people to provide for the huge number of migrants who are passing through.”



With appropriate help, Florinela has the ability to finish high school

Helping rural teens to persevere at school

Children in village schools in Romania suffer a double disadvantage in their education. The low income of many rural families produces a home environment less conducive to study. And at school the teachers tend to be less well-qualified than those who work in urban areas.

TK2, Blythswood's after-school programme for children at junior secondary level, is giving young people from rural homes the support they need to be successful at school.

Florinela is 15 years old and faces a big challenge: can she pass the national exam that will gain her entry to high school? Carmen Popa, a member of Blythswood's team in Banat region, believes she can.

“Florinela has the ability to succeed,” Carmen says. “Before she

joined TK2, she had fallen behind by a year but over the past 18 months she has done well in school.”

Blythswood's minibus collects Florinela from school each day. At home they have no bathroom and the family of six depend on her father's wage as a tractor driver. At TK2, 15 kilometres from home, she enjoys a cooked meal, has access to hot showers, and benefits from one-to-one tuition in her school work.

“We encourage girls to think beyond their immediate situation where they sometimes see early marriage as the only way out,” Carmen says. “Her older siblings didn't even complete primary education but as long as Florinela stays focussed, she should be able to finish high school, get a job and become financially independent.”



Young people from Moldova and Scotland gained new perspectives on life during a week-long summer camp at Larga, supported by Blythwood Care

BRINGING A MESSAGE OF HOPE AT SUMMER CAMP

On the last day of a week-long summer camp in the forests of southern Moldova, the young people were invited to choose a free gift from the camp shop.

“It was revealing to see what they chose,” says Angus Macrae, minister of Dingwall Free Church, who led a team of volunteers from the Scottish Highlands to assist in running the camp. “Even

young children chose practical items such as candles, soap and clothing rather than toys.

“One of the hardest things for our team to deal with was the obvious poverty and lack of opportunity affecting the campers and the leaders. Almost every young person we spoke to wanted to look for a better life in the USA, the EU or Russia.”

During the camp Angus saw several young people come to faith in Jesus Christ, including a 16-year-old lad from the local village who joined in the morning Bible studies.

Angus says: “We pray that gospel churches will transform Moldova and give people hope and a reason to want to stay, to make their beautiful country better.”

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

Blythwood helps one young man to be himself

When Calin was just a toddler, a little girl found him on the street. He had been badly beaten and had a broken arm.

That was as much as he knew about his origins as he grew up in Romania’s orphanage system, progressing through no fewer than five institutions. But at the age of 15 he searched for his family and found an older sister who put him in the picture: he was one of 13 children and it had been his own mother who abandoned him on the street.

With a background story like that, who could blame him for going off the rails? For a while he lived rough, sleeping on the streets of Cluj, the principal city of Transylvania. At 23 he was offered a place in Blythwood’s Daniel Centre, where he stayed for two and a half years. There he learned some basic life-skills: how to cook, how to manage his time, how to budget and look after money. And he began to attend church.

Looking back now he says the most valuable thing he learned at the Centre was how to be himself. His yearning for more freedom caused him to move out before completing the programme. Things didn’t go as planned and soon he found himself in bad company but through it all he managed to hold on to the job he had started before leaving the Daniel Centre.

Now he is employed as a merchandiser, working for a large company to stock their shops. He has a girlfriend, someone he met at work. And he regularly participates in Blythwood’s aftercare programme, a group of about a dozen young adults which meets every Wednesday.

“I’ve learned a lot,” he says. “Being able to share thoughts and feelings within the



Calin when he was resident at the Daniel Centre in 2012: the aftercare programme has helped build his confidence

group is important to me. “I’ve learned how to handle stress and moments of crisis, and how to be more serious.”

Calin continues to attend church and is even learning to play tennis. He proudly remembers the occasion at work when he

was asked several questions by managers in front of 400 people and was able to answer them all with clarity and confidence. He says: “Blythwood’s aftercare programme has given me self-confidence. I can meet people without being nervous.”



Arpad (known as Arpi) and Maria with Basis Project worker Sandel Svitas (right)

IT'S NOT JUST THE FOOD BUT THE VISIT

Blythswood Romania's Basis Project assists 34 low-income households in and around Cluj with food, clothing and a listening ear. Photographer Nandor Pal puts us in his picture.

I visited Arpi and Maria back in April and once again in May. They receive very little money from the local government, and they have to do public service in exchange – sweeping the streets and tending public spaces. In their case this is difficult because they live an hour's walk from town.

They live in such a tiny, cramped hut I had trouble getting pictures. I had to stand outside to get them into a frame. The walls are very thin and blowy. Imagine how cold it can be during winter, there on

top of the hill.

Arpi is a really hard-working guy but has trouble with his bad eyesight. He has tried several times to get a job, but was refused or laid off after failing his medical exam.

Basis is unique. When people receive EU-financed aid they don't have a nice guy called Sandel who personally makes sure that they receive the package, and then asks them how they are, what do they need, what is their biggest issue. Arpi said their biggest joy was not just the food but our visit. I mean, anybody could hand out food, but only guys like Sandel would listen and talk to them.



The youth group from Popesti enjoyed a camp deep in the Transylvanian countryside



Lena* was still a schoolgirl when she became a mother. It wasn't something she had planned. Her own childhood had been less than ideal and she felt ill-equipped for the responsibilities of parenthood.

Occasionally she attended church in Popesti, 15 kilometres from her home in northwest Romania. "I think she felt robbed of the best time of life, of just being a young girl and having fun," observes Lidia Micula, whose husband Dan pastors the congregation. "So she recently joined our youth group even although she is now 23 and older than most of the others."

This year Lena went with the youth group to a summer camp for young adults, supported by Blythswood Care. A gypsy pastor who is a noted musician was invited to lead worship. Afterwards he spoke to the young people about his own experience of becoming a Christian.

Lena was one of 11 who responded to the call to become a Christian that night. "She will be baptised soon," Lidia says. "Her heart is joyful and you can see that on her face. She comes to church each Sunday and is a totally different person.

"She feels accepted and loved by the Lord and by the people from church. This is a new beginning for her."

*not her real name

SUPPORTING STUDENTS FROM CENTRAL ASIA

Odil and Corina plan to live and work in his native Tajikistan

Karim and Ivelina with playmates at school

Odil is 20 and comes from Tajikistan. Six years ago he became a Christian. His parents, too, are believers in Jesus Christ, living in a country which is 98 percent Muslim.

Two years ago, Odil enrolled to study

theology at the Christian University in Chisinau, Moldova, which is supported by Blythswood Care. "I have the desire to share the gospel among our people," he says. "That's why I am at university. Here there are very good teachers who are

also pastors. I am learning to apply biblical truth in a Muslim context."

This summer Odil married Corina who is also a student in Chisinau. He says: "We plan to return to Tajikistan and serve our Lord there."

After-school programme motivates teenager in Hungary

Motivation is the key to learning. If that is true for students of all ages, it's especially true for a 15-year-old boy who doesn't get any encouragement at home.

Milan's older brothers failed their first year at secondary education and dropped out of school. His dad is interested only in drinking and thinks that education is a waste of time.

"It is impossible for Milan to study at home," says Lilla Ficsor, a volunteer with Hungarian charity Good News Foundation. "If he tried he would be bullied for it."

During a two-year break when GNF's literacy programme was closed for lack of staff, Milan's performance at school suffered. Lilla points out that this shows just how important one-to-one help with schoolwork in a safe environment is to young people who are severely disadvantaged at home.

Now she is confident that Milan will succeed. She says: "With the offer of a nice warm place to come to and teachers to give him extra tuition, he will manage to complete his secondary education."

Blythswood's partner organisation in Hungary gives Milan essential support with schoolwork



Ognyan and Margarita: she was a believer when the communists were in power and would secretly take her little children to church

Transport for gospel workers in Bulgaria

Margarita knows what it is to pray. For 18 years she prayed that God would convert her unbelieving husband. And shortly after Ognyan became a Christian, their faith was sorely tried. Their daughter Ivelina, a 23-year-old college student, was knocked down by a car and killed.

"They didn't lose their faith in God but continued to serve him," says Zhani Slavcheva who has known the couple well over many years. In 1998 Margarita was

invited to serve as a Sunday school teacher and then was called to work as a travelling preacher, serving village churches around her home region of Sliven, Bulgaria.

Margarita preaches up to 11 times a week and travels about 550 kilometres in all weather, encouraging congregations that vary in size from 20 people to just three.

In recent years, depopulation has affected many villages in Bulgaria and where there were large Sunday schools just a few years ago, now there are no children at all.

But Margarita is not discouraged. She visits those who are unwell at home, praying for them and their families, and sometimes offering the elderly a lift to church.

Blythswood Care contributes towards the cost of transport for rural church workers in Sliven, enabling Margarita and others to continue their vital ministry to 30 village churches. Zhani says: "Without the help of Blythswood Care it would be incredibly difficult to serve these congregations."

GOSPEL BROADCASTS CHANGE LIVES IN AFRICA'S GREAT LAKES REGION

Christian radio broadcasts funded by Blythswood Care are saving lives in Africa's Great Lakes region and changing them for good.

Medard lived with his uncle who insisted that he share his room and used him for his own sexual gratification. But when he heard the gospel explained on Radio Ivyizigiro (Radio Hope), the young man believed it and became a Christian. As a result he found faith and courage to walk away from the abusive relationship.

Fillotte worked as a maid until Burundi's recent crisis left her penniless. At a loss to know what to do, she sold herself to several men to earn some cash. But when she discovered that she was pregnant, she was afraid of what her father's reaction might be and decided to take her own life.

"Suicide is a very big problem in our society," says Delphine Ndayikeza, director of World Outreach Initiatives, Blythswood's partner organisation in Burundi. "This girl heard a broadcast about heaven and called our station and told our



producer what she planned to do.

"Today she is a believer and has decided to protect and deliver her baby. The fear of her father is gone because she trusts in Jesus. We're so delighted because the devil was about to take two lives but the Lord stopped him."

Delphine also cites the testimony of a young man, a Christian, who was under pressure at work to participate in a corrupt deal. "It was a lot of money," Delphine says. "His boss asked him did he not want to have his own house and car. That evening our broadcast was about wealth gained in a wrong way and how this will not prosper in the end.

"Pacifique was encouraged to remain faithful to Christ. Today he has his own home and a car, too, and he earned it all by honest work."

Presenter Nduwayo Bienvenue at the microphone: Radio Ivyizigiro broadcasts its message of hope in Kirundi, French, Swahili and English

PROVIDING CARE FOR VULNERABLE WOMEN IN ANDHRA PRADESH



Musamma enjoys the security of a caring community supported by Blythswood Care

Musamma is one of 16 elderly women who have found a place of safety in the home in Andhra Pradesh, India, run by Alpha Educational & Welfare Society with support from Blythswood Care.

For the 78-year-old widow the last three years have been a period of rest and security after a lifetime of poverty and hard labour. She and her late husband were low-caste field labourers, living in a remote village and sometimes walking a distance to get work. They had no children and her husband became a problem drinker, climbing his neighbours' trees to help himself to the sap used to make palm toddy.

When his health failed, no one would help them. Musamma sold their thatched hut so that she could seek medical attention for her husband. He died and she was left homeless and friendless. For a time she did domestic work in exchange for left-over food but the day came when she was no longer fit for that.

When she sought help from a church pastor visiting her village, he referred her to Blythswood's partners who look after orphaned and abandoned children as well as vulnerable widows. Musamma is not fit to do much but is a happy and valued member of the community at Alpha, enjoying the mixed company adults and children.

ROAD TO DAMASCUS THROUGH ANDHRA PRADESH

Mallesh didn't like Christians. Sometimes, when evangelists or pastors visited his village in rural Andhra Pradesh, India, he would beat them. Coming from a poor family, he was proud of his Hindu religion and culture. But those beliefs were not sufficient to prevent the downward spiral of his life.

He left school and lived by stealing and by begging for food and money in bus and railway stations. And he was drinking heavily, too, which took its toll on his health. When he lost the feeling in his hands and legs and could no longer walk, his parents took him to hospital. It seemed to be too late.

In despair – and to the surprise of his family – he asked to be taken to church. There the Christians prayed for him and



Mallesh now preaches the gospel that he once opposed

there he was healed.

"He became a Christian and was baptised immediately," says Pastor Samuel Babu, who has known Mallesh for five years. "He went on to do Bible training and became an evangelist. He led his own parents and brother to Christ and has done the same for many other families and young people."

As one of a team of men and women evangelists who visit villages in the vicinity of Hyderabad, Mallesh now experiences some of the violent opposition he used to mete out. Pastor Samuel Babu, whose team ministry receives support from Blythswood, says: "His main goal is to spread the gospel among his own community. Please remember him in your prayers."

EYE-OPS RESTORE SIGHT AND DIGNITY



When she was a little child Lar Pone Awar suffered an injury to her lower eyelid. As she reached her teenage years the resulting disfigurement became more of an embarrassment to her. She sought help from a hospital where she lives, in Karen State, Burma. The best they could do was to offer her eyedrops.

But then someone told her about Mae Tao Clinic in neighbouring Thailand. There volunteer surgeons from the United Kingdom perform cataract operations and other sight-restoring surgery that transforms the lives of people who cannot afford to pay for treatment.

In the unusual case of Lar Pone Awar, the result of the operation was simply cosmetic, bringing her eyelid into a better position. But it was extremely important nevertheless to the well-being of a girl on the threshold of adulthood.

Blythswood Care contributes to the cost of eye operations at Mae Tao Clinic, which in many cases restore the ability of patients to work and to provide again for their families.

Lar Pone Awar on the day on which her stitches were removed: she was delighted with the result

CHRISTIAN REHAB PROGRAMME RESTORES THE WILL TO LIVE



Working part time in Blythswood's warehouse helped Gavin regain confidence

It gave him back the will to live. That's what Gavin gained from Dochas, the community-based rehab programme run in the Highlands by Bethany Trust and Blythswood Care.

"I can remember praying to God for death," he says,

recalling his lowest point last winter. "I was taking fits and puking blood and had lost the feeling in one leg."

He describes his long and unhappy relationship with alcohol as "running away from something I couldn't run away from". He believes it began as a reaction to untreated depression in his teenage years and he relates how through his drinking he lost his first job in a bakery and subsequent jobs on farms, building sites and slaughter houses in Scotland, England and Holland.

"I could never find happiness in a new place, or in the money I made, or in friends. Looking back now I feel that God was always there because, when I was in the pits of despair, I would be praying to get me out of this. But once I was out of it I would just go 'thanks, right, see you later, I'm away doing my own thing again.'"

Having done the Twelve Step

programme in another clinic, Gavin had nine alcohol-free months before returning to drink with his girlfriend. Within four weeks both had lost their jobs and while he went to his parents to get sober, she continued drinking and sadly alcohol led to her death.

A move north didn't prevent Gavin from drinking again. But at his lowest point, his brother, with whom he was staying, arranged for a home detox. "One day the nurse came in with a little flier and asked if I was willing to do rehab again," he says. "I wasn't in a mental state to do rehab but when I saw the pain I was causing my brother and his family, I decided to do it for them."

Looking back on the time he spent at Dochas, Gavin says it took a month for him to regain the will to live. But now he is able to identify some of the things that helped him. "Sharing your thoughts is one

of the most important things," he says. "I was reading the Bible and things were making sense to me. It was God pushing me in the right direction. I decided to turn my will over to God and things started getting easier. I was getting motivation from the Bible and from the Twelve Step programme."

Gavin was also helped by doing voluntary team work in Blythswood's warehouse at Evanton. "That made me stronger. I got my confidence back. Friendship with the guys I'm working with is priceless.

"I'm battling depression at the moment but it's a battle I can win without alcohol. My Highland Homeless care worker gives me the support I need. I've got family around me. My brother is a big support and I can spend time with my little niece. It's all just come together. The only way I can keep it together is by being sober."

BIBLES IN MANY LANGUAGES DISPERSED THROUGH HIGHLAND PORT



A cruise ship in Invergordon: bibles in various languages are studied eagerly by seafarers from around the world

Bibles and copies of the New Testament in many languages supplied by Blythswood Care are touching the lives of seafarers from all over the world as they pass through Invergordon.

In 2015 over 50 ships with almost 90,000 passengers called at the deep-water port which is just six miles from Blythswood's headquarters. Some cruise liners make repeated visits in a season and crews

know they are welcome to make use of the facilities of the Sailors' Society in one of the local churches.

Earlier this season, a young Christian crew member came to the church, received a bible in her own language and enjoyed a time of fellowship with the Sailors' Society team. A few weeks later her ship docked again and Anna* returned to the church, taking with her a shipmate from a different culture. Elizabeth shared Anna's desire to read the Bible and was delighted to receive one in her own language.

On the liner's third visit, Elizabeth reappeared at the church with Paula, a girl from a similar background. Soon they were reading the Bible together and after a time Paula was seen to be in floods of tears.

"I'm glad to say they were tears of repentance and of joy," says Sailors' Society port chaplain Drew Anderson. "Paula had been convicted of her sin and had gained faith's view of Jesus Christ as her saviour. These girls went back to their work rejoicing."

*names have been changed in this article

Gary leads team in fire prevention project



Fire awareness in Moldova: Gary's team visits schools as well as training local emergency crews

Gary Bennett leads a group of Blythswood volunteers who have delivered reconditioned fire engines, equipment and training to emergency services in Romania, Moldova and Serbia. Since 2006, 25 fire engines and 10 ambulances have been sent, and Gary estimates that each saves at least 20 lives a year, through rescuing people from fires and from damaged vehicles following accidents. So thousands of people's lives have been saved by this '999 Project.'

Blythswood runs the Project in conjunction with local pastors and churches who as a result deepen their relationship with communities and government organisations.

A former Fife fireman who now runs his

own business Fire Prevention Ltd in Edinburgh, Gary has gathered a team with a range of professional expertise: firefighters, mechanics, paramedics and engineers. Fire prevention activities include school visits to make children aware of the danger of fire within their homes. As this issue of Blythswood News goes to press, a delivery of five fire engines to Romania is scheduled for November, when Gary's team will provide a one-week course of intensive training in firefighting, road traffic accidents and trauma care.

Gary speaks of the joy of knowing 'that we are part of God's plan for us to love our neighbour in a very practical way.'

Job loss and benefit delay bring family to crisis



Mary had nearly run out of infant formula when she was referred to Highland Foodbank

When Mary's* husband was paid off in June, they depended on their savings to get by. But after three months without a job – and with a baby to look after – all that they had put aside was exhausted.

"The Scottish Welfare Fund referred the family to us," says Lorna Dempster who runs Highland Foodbank in Inverness and Nairn. "The Fund had been able to help them with an electricity bill and with bus fares into town so that Mary's husband could sign on.

"But Child Benefit had still not been processed and Mary was down to her last



JOAN JUMPS FOR JIMBOLIA

Blythswood volunteer Joan Wells celebrated her ninetieth birthday this summer by making a 10,000 foot tandem skydive to raise funds for Blythswood's after-school programme in Jimbolia, western Romania. Joan's July jump, which took place near Glenrothes raised more than £1,400.



feed of formula milk for the baby. The day she came to us we had one single box of formula milk in stock and it just happened to be the one she uses for her child.

"She was so delighted with the food and said that for them it was a life-saver."

In the first nine months of 2015, Highland Foodbank provided 4163 people in crisis with a three-day supply of food. Blythswood Care now runs foodbanks at nine locations across the Highland and Moray Council areas.

*not her real name

Peter Spittlehouse looks back on 23 years with Blythwood

Peter Spittlehouse first encountered Jackie Ross, Blythwood's late founder and president, at a Christian Booksellers' Convention in Blackpool, back in the 1980s. "I was attracted by the centrality of the gospel message to what the Blythwood Tract Society was then doing," he says. "And when I joined I wasn't disappointed. I found it to be an organisation prepared to not just preach the gospel but to put it into practice."

Peter started representing Blythwood in January 1993, taking meetings in churches in Scotland, England and Wales. Then as the organisation opened its first charity shops he became involved in the retail



In recent years Peter has managed Blythwood's Let's Study Mark & Acts scheme as well as promoting Christian books in charity shops

side, taking responsibility for stocking Christian books.

Over the past six years, he has managed Blythwood's long-running Bible study course,

Let's Study Mark & Acts, sending books and Bibles to hundreds of young Christians in English-speaking Africa and enlisting the support of

volunteers here to mark their work. "The biggest encouragements I've had have been from students who completed the course and thanked us for it," he says, "especially those who have gone on to study the Bible in more depth and to ask for further literature."

"Some who completed the course ten years ago are now teachers, putting the same opportunity in front of their students."

As Peter looks forward to retiring in January, he remains enthusiastic about the opportunity Blythwood has to make Bibles and helpful Christian books available to charity shop customers. Since 2011, he has managed a bimonthly selection of books in up to 22 shops. Blythwood regards this as gospel outreach rather than a retail function. Peter says: "We must not lose sight of people's spiritual needs."



Nathan volunteering on a construction project in Romania: "Our role is to support rather than to lead"

MARATHON RUNNER NOW GOING THE SECOND MILE FOR BLYTHSWOOD

When Londonderry solicitor Nathan Hawthorne ran a marathon to raise funds for Blythwood's Daniel Centre, he couldn't have foreseen that he would take a leading role in the organisation.

But sixteen years later he now serves as chairman of Blythwood's board in Ireland, as well as being pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ballyclare.

In that period he has visited Romania many times as part of a team of volunteers, renovating kindergartens, doing construction work at venues for summer camps and helping with other building projects.

Why did he choose to become involved in Blythwood rather than in any other charity? "Blythwood is not just doing social work but has at its heart the gospel and a desire to share the gospel and show the compassion found in the gospel," he says. "We do what we do out

of love for Christ because he has done so much for his people and we want others to come to know and experience that love."

Over the years Nathan has observed changes in the churches in Romania. "They are more aware of needs in their own communities and in neighbouring countries like Serbia and Ukraine," he says. "Our role is to support rather than to lead. We go to encourage local church-based groups to carry on what they are doing. The work is driven by Romanian leaders."

Looking forward to Blythwood's 50th anniversary in 2016, Nathan wants to increase awareness of Blythwood amongst churches in Ireland. "When I do presentations at churches, people say to me: 'I didn't know Blythwood did all that.' Our organisation is doing great work and we need to tell as many people as possible about it."

BRISTOL TEACHER TAKES BLYTHSWOOD BACK TO SCHOOL

Kate Hunter brings a decade of experience teaching both children and adults to her current role as Blythwood's fundraising manager in South West England. After qualifying she taught year three in Bristol before moving on to the community sector where she enjoyed helping adults who had few or no qualifications. "They really wanted to be there and to learn," she says.

Then Kate spent a year at an international school in Egypt where she had children of nine nationalities in her class, before returning to teach in Bristol. At that time her father Andy Hunter was Blythwood's representative in the southwest and when he died suddenly in the autumn of 2014 she felt a strong interest in the work that he had been doing.

"My first impression of Blythwood was of an organisation that sent aid to Romania," Kate says. "I remember Mike Ogborne speaking about it at our church when I was in my teens."

"Since joining Blythwood in February, one of my challenges has been getting to grips with the breadth of the work that the organisation does in so many countries."

Covering an area from Penzance to Worcester to Bournemouth, Kate is ready to enable schools, churches and community groups to get involved in the Shoe Box Appeal and in other aspects of Blythwood's work.

For the South West England launch of Blythwood's 50th



Kate at Talita Kum, Blythwood's afterschool project in Romania

anniversary year, she is organising a Bristol event for Saturday 13 February when Dr Adrian Popa will explain his pioneering educational project in western Romania, Talita Kum. "Then we have the Schools Enterprise Challenge in June, the business start-up competition for both primary and secondary schools."

Kate can be contacted on 07801 550213 or by email: kate.hunter@blythwood.org.



ADRIENNE REPRESENTS BLYTHSWOOD IN HIGHLANDS AND NE SCOTLAND

Adrienne Dempster is Blythwood's fundraising manager for the Highlands and North-East Scotland. Before joining Blythwood in January 2014, she worked for 20 years as a medical representative in the pharmaceutical industry, making sales presentations to doctors, nurses and practice managers in various parts of Scotland.

"It's all about communication," she says, comparing her past and present roles. "My main aim in the year ahead is to promote the organisation in its 50th anniversary. I'm here to encourage Blythwood supporters to form support groups that can hold regular and occasional fundraising events such as coffee mornings, soup and sandwich lunches, quiz nights and sponsored walks."

Adrienne's first awareness of Blythwood was through the Shoe Box Appeal as her children used to fill boxes for the Appeal when in primary school. Since then she has been amazed to discover how many projects the organisation is involved with in so many places, including Scotland.

"We have strong, active support groups in Buckie, Gairloch, Inverness and Skye," says Adrienne who sometimes travels hundreds of miles in a week to explain Blythwood's work. "I'm keen to hear from people who'd like to start groups in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, Moray, Badenoch and Strathspey, Caithness and the Northern Isles."

To contact Adrienne, email adrienne.dempster@blythwood.org or phone 07880 196903.



IT COULD BE YOU

Real stories of real people that might just have easily have been you or I – that's what we read here in Blythwood News. What they each have in common is that they were helped by Blythwood Care, with your support.

The baby who was fed because someone donated a box of formula milk.

The ex-orphanage boy given the skills and confidence to live an independent life.

The ship's crew member given a bible and brought to faith in Jesus.

The teenaged girl given learning support to pass her exams at school.

A family fleeing war in Syria given strength for the path ahead.

Next year, God willing, will mark Blythwood's 50th anniversary. How many lives have been transformed over the years? Reverently we must say that only God knows. His word changes hearts and saves souls. His grace – frequently experienced through simple acts of human kindness – enlightens the darkness of hopeless situations.

Your contribution is significant. Thank you so much for being part of Blythwood's ministry.

James Campbell
Chief Executive

You can help Blythwood by passing on this magazine to a friend

"Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus," 1 Thessalonians 5: 15-18

Yes, I want to support the work of Blythwood Care

Here is my donation of £.....

(please make cheques / CAF vouchers payable to Blythwood Care)

I am a taxpayer. Please send me a Gift Aid form ☐

If you can give us your email address, it will allow us to acknowledge your donation without incurring postage costs. Your email:

Please send me information on:

- ☐ 2015/2016 Gift Catalogue ☐ Leaving a legacy
☐ Volunteering for Blythwood ☐ Blythwood Care support groups
☐ Having a speaker at our church/club/school

We also accept donations by (please tick):

- ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ CAF ☐ Charity Card ☐ Switch/Maestro or online at
 www.blythwood.org

Card number

3 digit security number necessary

Start date

/

Expiry date

/

Issue no.

Name on card

Signature.....

Title (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Other) First Name

Surname

Address.....

Town..... Country.....

Postcode..... Tel no.....

Please return completed form to:

Blythwood Care, Deephaven, Evanton, Ross-shire, IV16 9XJ

Tel: 01349 830777 • email: info@blythwood.org

Standing Order

This cancels any existing standing orders in favour of Blythwood Care or Blythwood Tract Society but will be in addition to any standing order for child sponsorship.

Please DO fill in all the details including your name and address. You can find all the bank details we require in your cheque book.

From: (Full name of Account Holder)

.....

To:

.....

Bank PLC:

.....

Bank Address:

.....

Postcode:

.....

Your Bank Account:

Your Sort Code:

- -

From my account please pay £.....

Every ☐ Month ☐ Quarter Until further notice

Commencing:

Please pay Blythwood Care A/C No 00140261 Sort Code 80-08-84

Bank of Scotland, Lochcarron, Ross-shire, IV54 8YD

Please make sure all backdated payments are credited.

Signature

.....

Date

.....

Banks may decline to accept instructions to change Standing Orders to certain types of accounts other than current accounts.

FOR BANK USE ONLY Paying Bank please quote this reference

Blythwood Care, Deephaven, Evanton, Ross-shire, IV16 9XJ Tel: 01349 830777

Email: info@blythwood.org www.blythwood.org