



CELEBRATING  
15 YEARS!

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# HEARTS ACROSS ROMANIA

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Words from one of our founders  
and current board member,

Geanie Burns

July 2019 | *Fifteenth Anniversary Edition*

## *A heartfelt thank you for 15 years*

Fifteen years ago, three women sat around a kitchen table talking about ways to help Romanian orphans, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Our mission, and our hearts, were about helping the abandoned children, but what could three women really do? Turns out, quite a bit, with some help from donors like yourself.

As a founding member, I find our 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary a time to reflect on what we, as an organization, have done. We started with a handful of dollars, but we adopted the “if you build it, they will come” philosophy, and so you did.

Over 15 years, we have

- Purchased over \$50,000 of new medical equipment for the Children’s Hospital in Brasov;
- Distributed in-kind medical supplies valued at over \$265,000;
- Distributed over 4,000 pairs of new shoes made possible by the generosity of Buckner Shoes for Orphan Souls program valued at over \$107,000;
- Received a \$2,500 cash grant from Sunshine Heroes, plus 250 pairs of new shoes;
- Shipped and distributed new personal hygiene items valued at over \$1,600;

- Renovated and furnished rooms for a residential program for young men transitioning from orphanages to life on their own;
- Purchased a new vehicle for the transitional program;
- Established the Adriana Serbanescu Educational Scholarship awarded to a deserving college student;
- Sponsored medical and dental services for children in orphanages on an individual basis;
- Provided financial and in-kind assistance to orphanages in Brasov county;
- Strolled, fed and changed diapers for babies in facilities with few caretakers;
- Provided intangible support to kids in orphanages, who waited for our return year after year, Hearts being the most constant force in some of their lives.

We have watched children from orphanages grow up—some going on to complete college and get good jobs. Hearts has done some big things for them, as well as some little things. I believe the little things mattered.

We have watched the landscape in Brasov change with the elimination of the baby orphanage, more foster and group homes, and a movement toward less institutionalization. We continue to support the remaining orphanages that we have always worked with, but Hearts has also responded to Romania’s changes. We have broadened our mission to extend beyond orphanages and to include the community. We promote family preservation through our “sponsor a child program” and support education with our “sponsor a college student” project, both of which have been very successful because of your support.

I wrote “The Eyes Have It” while remembering my first experiences in Romania many years ago. It captures my feelings about the babies and children we met in orphanages, and how thoughts of them stayed with me through the years. Though there have been many changes in Romania, our focus has always been the same—helping orphaned and disadvantaged Romanian children have a better life.

Thank you for being part of our journey.



## The Eyes Have It

*A poem by Geanie Burns*

Eyes staring back at me with no emotion.  
Black pools as deep as the ocean.

Untethered children in a deprived land,  
Reaching out to take my hand.

And my heart, too, if I am not wary.  
Their burdens and disappointments I will soon carry.

As I come home to the land of milk and honey,  
Too much food to eat and too much money.

While they languish in a dark place,  
No mother or father to fill the empty space.

I make many return trips to try to fill their needs.  
Knowing there is no one to kiss them when they bleed.

My pail runs empty too soon; it was full when I came.  
I am unable to love them enough to my shame.

My life shall be forever intertwined  
With these thrown away children nobody tries to find.

Their silent cries never uttered or heard,  
But their haunting eyes speak every word.

With gratitude,  
Geanie Burns & Hearts Across Romania



[www.HeartsAcrossRomania.org](http://www.HeartsAcrossRomania.org)