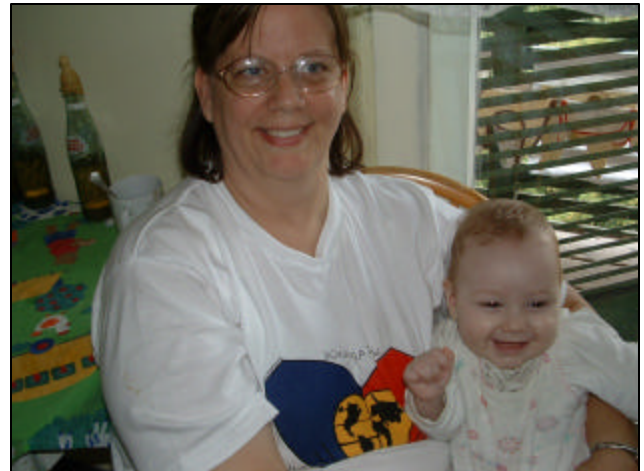


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**THE SUNFLOWER**  
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Newsletter of the International Children's Aid Foundation  
Fall 2004  
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## Summer 2004 Team Report: We Taught, Healed, Shared, and Learned

Our summer team was one of the smaller teams to go with us to Romania in recent years: only 18 members over the a little more than two weeks. In a way, this turned out to be a real blessing, because the group became more cohesive early on, with every hand needed in order to staff the same number of programs that we offer every year during our visits.

It began with some really bad luck for eight of the fourteen members due to arrive the first week: seven spent nine hours in Philadelphia airport, three on a sweltering commuter plane, and never left the ground that day. An eighth fell, striking her head, losing consciousness, and spending the evening in the emergency room. The departure day was fraught with other injuries and minor accidents—we



*Team member Debbie Aretz with Andrei—one of our Bright Beginnings kids at the Hunedoara orphanage.*

really had a feeling that things were working against us. Undaunted, we arrived at the airport again the next day, prayed for a safe trip, and embarked on what turned out to be an uneventful journey.

The team hit the ground running the next day: we were welcomed as old friends in the Brad church—now a “must” for every trip, and had the extra delight of witnessing the “blessing” of a new addition to the Criscior family, little Catelin, son of our employees at Emanuel, Marin and Ani (see p. 6) .

The afternoon saw groups of people preparing crafts for the next day's vacation Bible school, sorting medications for clinic, and generally getting to know each other and the



*Mirel, Ionut, Delia and Adreea were ready to play!*

*(Continued on page 2)*

# 2004 Mission Team Report

*(Continued from page 1)*

kids.

The rest of the week was a flurry of activity from morning until evening. Vacation Bible School was held the first week right in our courtyard, and the second week in the lovely village of Varfurile. As usual, upwards of one hundred kids showed up to sing, make crafts, and learn. Betty De Groat planned a curriculum based on the theme "Trusting God," and on each day the kids learned about someone in the Bible who trusted God in the face of adversity: Noah, Daniel, Joshua, and Jesus, and the kids really took to the games and stories with enthusiasm. Romanian translator Atti, skilled with the guitar and a broad repertoire of songs, kept the kids singing and playing with the help of some of the older kids from Emanuel, Larisa, and Brigite. Team members helped with the games, crafts, and telling the Bible stories. We often take for granted that people have heard the stories of the Bible, but there are always some kids who don't even know who Jesus is.

. Each week, the parents were invited to return with their children on the last night, to hear a message about what they had been learning all week. Pastor Larry Miller delivered the Good News the first week, and Ruben Oprea, the new director of our Christian Center, spoke the second week to attentive crowds.

We'll talk more in the next issue about the Christian Center and English Club activities.



We began every day with devotions, thanks to team member Linda Patterson, which helped put us in the right frame of mind. After dinner, we each group shared what had happened that day—their victories and setbacks—and then there was time for enjoying each other's company and going to evening devotions with the kids.



The medical team, Bright Beginnings, and Bright Futures were also in full swing every day. Look for their stories also in this edition.

Whenever possible we spent time with the kids—playing, talking, and giving them much-needed attention. The older ones speak some English, but the little guys don't, prompting one team member to express regrets at not having learned even to count to ten in Romanian. Water balloons and soccer are international languages, thankfully, and both were sure-fire hits!



*Lisa had the kids drawing with chalk on the driveway, as Vale mastered the Skip 'n' Step.*

There's something special about being in Romania—away from phones, news, TV, all the things that compete for our attention— and concentrating on doing God's work, following His lead, looking for Him at work in the world around us. It changes the way you look at things. We all came back better prepared to deal with our own lives. As is so often the case, we received far more than we gave.

## Love is in the Air in Romania!

Adriana Crisan has faithfully served our ministry as secretary in Criscior since 1999. Many past team members will remember her cheerful and tireless translating during our visits.

When we opened the TeenPride screen printing shop in 2003, Adriana was promoted to manage the operation. Soon thereafter, we hired Catalin Paraoan as production manager—a position in which he has excelled.

We are thrilled to announce the engagement of Adriana and Catalin, and wish them a lifetime of love and happiness together following their wedding on 11 September, 2004.

Members of the Teen Pride team, including our first employee Radu, Catalin, Bill Millaway, and Adriana



### 2005 Summer Mission Trip Dates

These are the dates for next year's summer mission trips:

July 28—August 7th, Thursday—Sunday

August 5th—14th, Friday—Sunday

OR July 28-August 14, Thursday—Sunday

We need team members for VBS, clinic, English Club, Bible Study, and especially volunteers who can pitch in anywhere. If you have a heart for going, then there is a need for you there! Check our web site for more information about our trips.

There will also be a spring break trip in Early March—contact us or watch for the next *Sunflower*.

## More Good News from an Old Friend

When we began serving the Lord in Beius, back in 1991, our very first translator was Adrian Ciorna. Everybody who ever met Adrian, either on a mission trip or on his visits to our homes and churches in the U.S., fell in love with the lanky young man with the impish sense of humor and a true heart for ministry to the needy.

When Habitat for Humanity expanded into Romania, they chose “our” Adrian to head their mission—a position he still holds today. And when ICAF was shocked to uncover corruption within the organization we had hitherto supported in Beius, it was Adrian who introduced us to Lutu—and the entire ICAF ministry you know today was born.

Two years ago, Adrian told us of Nikina Matova, Habitat's volunteer coordinator in Bulgaria whom he had met, and who was also helping young children in an orphanage there. She was so intrigued by our Bright Beginnings early childhood development program that a few months later, she brought a group of her colleagues to Romania where our mission team trained them in its application. Two of our directors, Gary Brosvic and Linda Westlin, then ac-

Niki with one of the Bulgarian orphans in her care.



companied Niki's group back to Bulgaria to observe and coach them in the program.

Now Adrian and Niki have announced their engagement, and they plan to marry on 6 November, 2004.

We know everybody who has met Niki and Adrian send their congratulations and deepest affection to the happy couple.

# TeenPride Branches Out and Grows!

It was just a year ago that ICAF opened its newest mission within the Bright Futures program, which we called *TeenPride*. The idea behind Bright Futures is to take teenagers from the state orphanage—kids that are about to be ejected onto the streets upon reaching 18, and who have almost no chance of finding meaningful employment—and teaching them job skills and life skills.

Bright Futures I teaches kids computer skills in our own modern computer lab in Deva. But not every teenager has the ability to grasp the essentials of computer literacy, so in August 2003, ICAF opened a shop to teach kids how to design and produce screen printed materials. Not only do we teach job skills and life skills; the program also has the potential to contribute profits to the rest of our ministry, thus relieving some of our need for donations.

At first, we assumed we could “make it” by designing and producing tee shirts, but when November rolled along, we came to the sudden realization that not many people buy tee shirts when the frigid winter weather rolls across the Carpathian Mountains! So the *TeenPride* team quickly adapted by screen printing invitations, appointment books, work uniforms and advertising materials.

January and February were economic disasters, but then again, how many new businesses of any genre are profitable just five

months after they open their doors? We have benefited from some excellent publicity; Romanians have really come to appreciate the idea that they can help the kids whom society has abandoned: radio stations and newspapers ran several positive stories and *pro bono* advertisements for us. The month of March was profitable...and so were April, May, June, and July. By August, the year-to-date loss was down to less than \$4,000, and still orders continued to come in at a rate suggesting that we will end our first calendar year in the black.

Customers have ranged from prestigious international Bucharest-based law firms to world-class firms such as Volvo, Rotary Inter-



First project: The *TeenPride* Dacia

national, and Habitat for Humanity. In the first year, *TeenPride* had designed and delivered more than 150 different products.



Our new lighted sign, with the Citadel of Deva behind it.



We recently purchased a heat transfer machine. This will permit us to produce certain types of products unsuitable for screen printing—such as very small quantities or shirts with photographs reproduced.

One of our team members in July was Bill Millaway. Bill donated the equipment to enable *TeenPride* to design and produce commercial signs: truck lettering, retail shop signage, banners, etc. Bill then spent the entire week teaching the staff how to operate the

(Continued on page 5)

# Clinic Treats 276, More for Glasses

Clinic was staffed by Chris Forward, Family Nurse Practitioner, pediatrician Brian Patten, and RN Pearl Parris, assisted by several translators and many volunteers. We saw a lot of familiar faces, and thanks to the efforts of many state-side helpers, we had quite a lot of medication to dispense to 276 patients who came from near



and far. There were the usual cases of high blood pressure out of control because our patients couldn't afford their pills.

We saw long—neglected wounds and supplied bandages and teaching. There were others with heartbreaking stories of abuse or neglect, who were so relieved to have a concerned ear and a sincere prayer offered by our prayer team. Many commented on how they were treated with dignity, compared to standard doctors' offices.

When we unpacked our supplies

*(Continued from page 4)*

equipment. Literally by the time he had arrived back in New Jersey, they had sold their first sign job! This will enable us to expand our business portfolio and be less reliant on seasonal products, such as tee shirts.

So what comes next for TeenPride? First, we are hiring a new salesperson to cover the emerging vibrant commercial centers around Timisoara, and then will probably look for someone to represent us for sales opportunities in Bucharest.

We would like to buy a new machine—a \$995 purchase—that will enable us to imprint designs on round, solid items, such as pens and pencils.

from a Romanian ministry, we found three cases of used eyeglasses. When word got out that we had them, there was a steady stream of patients complaining of “blurred vision”.

Two team members, Tae Yang Kim and Lindsay Veit jumped into the breach, learned enough Romanian to conduct eye exams, and dispensed over 300 pairs in a little over a week!



While we have not yet been able to open the clinic year-round, we know that we have been able to make a big difference for so many of these folks not only in improving their health and relieving their pain, but by showing them God's love at work.



Finally, we have lost several very large orders (one customer asked us to produce 30,000 tee shirts in 10 days), so we are putting together a business plan to buy an automatic screen printing machine. Such equipment would make a 6-color shirt every six seconds and would enable us to get business from companies elsewhere in Europe—and provide employment & training for many more teenagers. Please pray for this important ministry opportunity.

If you would like more information about how we can make custom-designed items for your organization—or to buy one of our shirt designs that we now inventory in the U.S., call ICAF at 856.988.1738.

# Bright Beginnings Flourishes in the State Orphanage at Hunedoara

For six years the Bright Beginnings program has grown and matured under the capable direction of talented and dedicated professionals in the fields of psychology, medicine, nursing, social work, teaching, occupational and physical therapy.

The program is a solution to the problem of the many children who are “warehoused” in state institutions, given no stimulation, attention, or love. Such a poor start at an early age guarantees poor academic performance in school and deficient social skills necessary to live and work in the outside world. Once again, ICAF’s vision is not to establish a lot of foreigners in the orphanages, but rather to hire and train Christian Romanian women in the skills needed to provide motor, language, and social success.

Three years ago we were challenged by the authorities with a group of children from a home for “irrecoverables”. The Division of Child



*Educator Otilia involves one of the children in play with a large ball to develop her reflexes and stimulate her.*

Protection had noted our success with “normal” children, and wanted to see what we could do with some difficult cases. We took on 29 children who were facing a lifetime incarcerated in an institution resembling Bedlam, and began to peel away the shells left by years of neglect and compounded by birth defects or early childhood diseases that had left them speechless, unable to walk, and some even unable to feed themselves. Most of them had been written off as hopeless cases but our volunteers saw potential

This past summer Linda took six weeks leave from her job as an occupational therapist to come to Hunedoara and give



each child an intensive exam, developing a program for each one

that addressed his particular needs. In addition, she began working with the babies in the abandoned baby section of the orphanage. Little by little, she has gained the respect of the orphanage directors, who, though once skeptical, now have acknowledged the importance of holding, talking to, and giving individualized care to children from their earliest days.

Look for more in our next edition, with some case studies that show the wonderful progress that these kids are making.



*Educators and team members—front: Adriana, Eliza, Linda Westlin, Sharon Perkins, Cornelia. Back row: Emilia, Debbie Aretz, Dana, Marinela, & Otilia*

## A Gift of Lasting Value

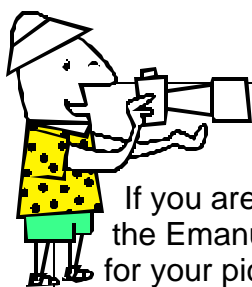


One of the young men in Debbie Bowen's Bible class had expressed a strong interest in her NIV Life Application Bible, and asked me to bring one for him when I came for the team mission trip. I did, and when I met him he told me how overwhelmed and happy he was with

this Bible, and that he had never even touched such a wonderful book. He said that he reads the book like a novel and takes joy in studying it daily.

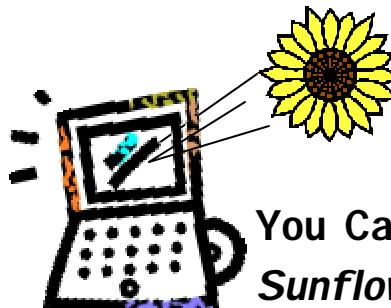
He said that he wanted to give me a gift because he was so happy. I told him that his smile and the fact that he so enjoys reading and studying the Bible was the greatest gift he could give me. However, on my last day in Romania, I was given a beautiful red satin pillow with gorgeous Romanian needle work that this young man's mother had made. He also gave one to Debbie, and we both had tears of gratitude for a gift that will always be treasured and a young man who will always be remembered for his pure love of God's word.

—Pat Knueppel



### Say Cheese!

If you are a sponsor of one of the kids at the Emanuel Orphanage, we would like for your picture to appear with the others on the Sponsor Board in the dining room. Please send a photo of yourself to *Sue Balsamo*, our sponsor coordinator, at 337 North Martha Street, Lombard, IL 60148 before October 20th. They will be hand-carried to the kids and given to them in a special ceremony. Don't let your sponsored child be left out!



### You Can receive *The Sunflower* by computer:

If you would like to receive our newsletter by PDF file as soon as it's printed, and in color, send us your e-mail address and we'll send you the file. You'll have the color version, and we'll save on postage!

### A Blessed Event at Emanuel!

One of Casa Emanuel's first employees back in 1996 was Ani Pomohaci, who started as a housekeeper. When we needed a construction manager to supervise the building of the new Emanuel home, we found one of those people who can do anything, build anything, and fix anything. His name is Marin Enache.

After working together for 3 years, God brought the two together, and they were married in May 12th, 2002

On May 26, 2004, their first child was born. The beautiful baby boy—Aurelian Catalin—was blessed in Brad Baptist Church on July 25 in a moving ceremony in which the Emanuel children and our just-arrived mission team participated.



We know the many supporters who have visited Casa Emanuel and been touched by Ani and Marin's kindness and friendliness will keep them and Catalin in their prayers.

# Prayers Answered! Faith Christian Center Opens!

It has been a five year journey of faith, always seeking the Lord's will yet unsure how He would have us structure the Christian Center. We knew from our research that fewer than two percent of the citizens of Brad, Romania, have an ongoing, meaningful relationship with God. We have seen dozens of cases where—particularly with young people—the unchurched feel alienated and unwelcomed by the existing church communities in Romania. Those institutions tend to adopt a very legalistic attitude and come down hard on anyone who has long hair, comes from a troubled background, or seeks anything other than traditional, staid, conservative worship services.

After a long (and sometimes frustrating) search for the right person to lead the Christian Center, God sent us Reuben and Simona Oprea. Reuben graduated from a Christian college with a degree in theology two years ago, and both before and after that has spent a lot of time working with youth in his home church and with nonbelievers in several villages.

They first were recommended to ICAF's country manager by a well-respected pastor in Timisoara. ICAF director Rev. Larry Miller, whose Board responsibilities include the Christian Center, spent a lot of time with Reuben and Simona, and his own reports, along with the observations of other directors, team members, and local Romanians, were extremely positive. Reuben accepted our offer of employment and began work as the Director of Faith Christian Center on August 1<sup>st</sup>.

Since then, he and Simona have been busy getting to know the young people of Brad. They have held youth Bible studies several times a week, English Club, and are planning such activities as an after-school mentoring program, winter youth retreat in the mountains, and regular

weekly worship services with contemporary music. Debbie had already begun a library of Christian books, tapes, and DVDs, and this will hopefully now be dramatically expanded so that every attendee at the Christian Center will be able to find resources to strengthen their new faith journey.

A generous donor in Illinois has made it possible for us to buy a new TV and DVD player, and this is already being used for weekly movie nights—and real draw in this town of 18,000 which has no movie theatre and where few people have televisions. Next on Reuben's wish list is a ping pong table, which will attract young people to the Christian Center on those long winter nights when there is nothing else for them to do around this poor remote town.

The Christian Center is right in the center of Brad and has already attracted many people who want to see just what is going on in this former bank building. Reuben and Simona plan to introduce the young attendees to volunteerism and social ministry, and ICAF director Marilyn Shenenberger just persuaded the American Guild of Handbell Ringers to generously donate five octaves of bell chimes, with which we plan to start the Brad Community Chime Choir early in 2005. Praise the Lord for answering our prayers, both in calling Reuben and Simona to this ministry, and also for the response of the young people who have already become regulars at the Faith Christian Center.



# From the President's Pen...



I saw a poster recently that claimed to give “The Essence of Success.” As someone who is interested in being successful (and who was bored from waiting for a long-delayed flight), I read it with anticipation. “Successful,” it read, “is the person who has lived well, laughed often and loved much; who has gained the respect of children; who leaves the world better than they found it; who has never lacked appreciation for the earth’s beauty; who never fails to look for the best in others or give the best of themselves.”

son



I pondered this for a while, determined to find fault with trite gift-shop philosophy. I thought of those who, on the one hand consider “success” to be the size of their



paycheck, their title, or how many luxury cars they have in the driveway of their mansions. My mind wandered back to the mission team we had just hosted in Romania and I thought of those who had just made significant sacrifices to go to serve God through our ministry to Romania’s orphaned children. Some had worked extra jobs to earn the money, others had taken unpaid leave, while yet others had written dozens of letters to friends and family asking for financial support.

And during a week or two in Romania, their lives had changed.

They ministered to the sick in our free clinic; they brought relief to the “irrecoverable” special-needs children our Bright Beginnings program helps; they showed children and teens at VBS and English Club how a relationship with Jesus is so important. And from the shouts and squeals and sounds of fun in the courtyard at our Emanuel orphanage, they made the time a joyous one for the 19 children we call our own.



Whether at mealtime, team meetings, on the team van, or late into the night as the sounds of singing resonated across the valley, this was a team that “laughed often and loved much.” As we drove back and forth through Romania’s spectacular Carpathian Mountains, crisscrossing fields filled with haystacks and sunflowers and summer’s crops, they not only “appreciated the earth’s beauty,”—they glorified it.

It only took a week or two, but these people came together as a team and “looked for the best in others” while “giving the best of themselves.”

The people back home can keep their Hummers. The folks with whom I just shared a mission trip *truly* have “The Essence of Success.”



## And Now A Word From One of Our Sponsors:

Debbie Bowen received the following letter from someone who has received as much joy as she has been given by sponsoring of our Emanuel kids:

*Dear Debbie,*

*I wanted to let you know that John and I are so happy with the program you introduced us to. We have requested a little girl to provide funds for. Debbie, I am so very lucky to have met John as he is the most wonderful man. Because my own daughter was killed in the car accident he wanted to sponsor a little girl for me.*



*Izi's favorite activities often involve mud pies!*

*We have received her picture and her name is "Izabela Maria" She was born on October 4, 1999. You can imagine our surprise when we received her picture and information as John and I met October 4th. God continues to let us know that he is with us and blessing our relationship. We are planning on getting married next year and I have taken early retirement so that we can be together more, John is retired.*

*We will continue to pray for you and we wish you well. God bless you each day!*

*Love,*

*John & Gail*



*Debbie (left) with Gabi, one of the two educators permanently assigned to Emanuel Orphanage.*

## An Update from our Missionary, Debbie Bowen

It's hard to believe that the 10 months in Romania I had been praying and preparing for a year ago, is here and gone already. Being able to see and live what God has promised in His Word gives me no greater joy!

Almost daily, in all aspects of the ICAF ministry, I found people very open and receptive to hearing about God and His Word, from young to old. "Good news is preached to the poor" (Matthew 11:5). In the previous Sunflower edition, there were details of some of those experiences. What a privilege to serve Him!!!!

What's the next step for me? Well, I continue to have the privilege to serve in this ministry by returning at different intervals throughout the year. During those times, I will be working with the ICAF staff on our human resources objectives, spending one-on-one time with the children at Casa Emanuel, helping with English Club at the Christian Center and helping with short-term mission teams, as needed. And, of course, however else the Lord decides to use me.

Many THANKS to all of you who continue to walk beside me in this mission with your prayers, love and financial support. All glory be to God!!!!



# INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S Aid FOUNDATION

www.ICAFKIDS.org

**I know ICAF's ministry can only continue with tangible, tax-deductible support.**

**Here's how I want to help:**

Please check as applicable and mail this form, with checks payable to ICAF, to  
14 West Lake Avenue, Medford, NJ 08055-3249

\_\_\_\_\_ A gift of \$1000    \$500    \$100    \$\_\_\_\_\_ toward ICAF's ministry to be used for (please check):

\_\_\_\_\_ Bright Futures    \_\_\_\_\_ Bright Beginnings    \_\_\_\_\_ Emanuel Home    \_\_\_\_\_ Dental clinic    \_\_\_\_\_ where most needed.

\_\_\_\_\_ I'll sponsor a Bright Beginnings child for \$25/month.\*

\_\_\_\_\_ I'll sponsor an Emanuel orphanage child for \$25/month.\*

\_\_\_\_\_ I'll sponsor the dental clinic for \$39/month\*

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to join an ICAF mission team. Please contact me.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like ICAF to present its ministry at my church or other group.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like information on including ICAF's ministry in my will.

\_\_\_\_\_ Other designation:

*\*I prefer to pay each month by (check one):*

\_\_\_\_\_ Having ICAF mail me a bill

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\_\_\_\_\_ Secure, automatic charges to the following American Express, MasterCard, or Visa



Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp \_\_\_/\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ A secure payment from my checking account. You will still receive a receipt for donations. Charge and automatic check pledges can be changed or canceled at any time. A \$1 fee will be added to each automatic check donation by the handling company so that ICAF receives your full donation. Just attach a voided unsigned blank check to set it up.

Please print name: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for becoming a part of the International Children's Aid Foundation: we pledge that we will make the most of your donation to help children of Romania!**



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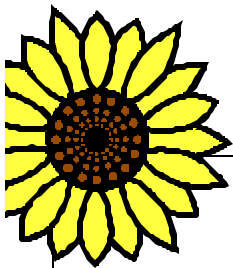
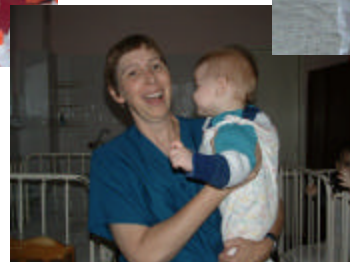
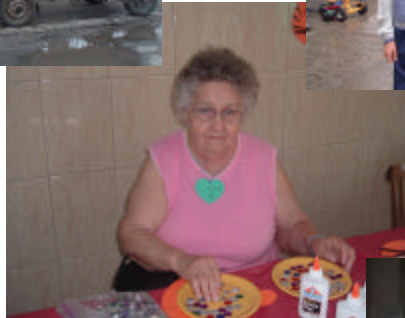
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Foundation  
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Medford, NJ 08055-3249

Phone: 856-988-1738  
Fax: 856-988-0511  
Email: ICAF@aol.com

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