

## FRIENDS FOR ROMANIA : CHAIRMAN'S REPORT : 2023-24

After a four year hiatus in activity due to the Covid epidemic, we finally were able to resume fundraising and trips to Romania this year. A total of 27 students from St. Louis Grammar School volunteered to participate in the project. Planning for fundraising began in September 2023 and all students were assigned a target amount. Every student reached their target and several of them significantly exceeded them. As always our charity is grateful to the boys and girls for devoting so much time and effort into raising money.

We were offered the possibility of applying for a grant from the Turing Foundation but had to decline as the criteria set by the school were wholly inappropriate to the purposes of our charity. We may reconsider the funding source next year if the criteria are more appropriate.

The costs of the trips have greatly increased since 2020. Coach transport to Dublin airport has risen substantially and due to unavailability of our usual accommodation at Casa Elim in June, we were compelled to arrange flights and more expensive hotel accommodation via a travel agent. In order to make the trips available to students from all backgrounds we decided to pay for coach transport and travel insurance for all students from charity funds. We also decided to pay for summer ground transport in Romania from funds.

A group of four teachers and eighteen Year 13 students departed for Romania in February 2024. They purchased substantial quantities of aid and delivered it to the following institutions : Sunshine Foundation Centre, Bradet Disabled Centre, Bambi Children's Home, Timis Disabled Centre, Codlea Children's Home, Down's Syndrome Centre, Lizuca & Patrocle Children's Home, Daniel Children's Home and Chip & Dale Children's Home. They also delivered food packages to poor families in Mina 1 Mai village.

Two teachers and nine students traveled to Romania in early June. They purchased and delivered aid to the same institutions and village as the winter team except for Chip & Dale Children's Home and the Down's Syndrome Centre. In addition they delivered to Adrian's Disabled Centre, Sacele Junior School and a home for displaced mothers and children.

As chair I wish to thank all the teachers who have dedicated their time and effort to this project, either as trustees or accompanying students to Romania. I am hopeful that due to your efforts our project will return to full levels of activity next year.

E. Marquess

Chair 2023- 2024