

Holt International Children's Services

Child Welfare in Romania Project

USAID Co-operative Agreement 186-0016-A-00-8112-00

October 1998 - September 2002

January –March 2001

Project Quarter 10

I. Executive Summary

This quarter activities continued to focus on further developing and improving community services as part of the project, maximise the programs' impact in the communities we serve and sign the MOUs with the local DPCs from Constanta and Iasi.

We continued all "Child Welfare in Romania Project" – programs components in Constanta and Iasi: Crisis Intervention Services for At-Risk Families and Children (with three components: Pregnancy Counselling, Community Based Services to Families At-Risk and Services to Abandoned Children), Domestic Adoption Services, Foster care Services and Services to HIV+ Children and their Families.

Social assistants continued to assist abandoned children in maternities, pediatric hospitals, dystrophic units and institutions, as well as serving children and families at risk. They continued to provide economic assistance to families through donations of material goods and information on family planning methods and referral to local family planning clinics.

Holt participated at the S O 3.2 meetings under the leadership of Mrs. Lucia Correll, the Senior Child Welfare Advisor, during this quarter.

Holt had meetings with World Vision & Bethany in order to discuss regarding MOUs in Constanta and Iasi.

Holt continued the efforts at the national level for developing domestic adoption in Romania –through offering technical assistance in the National Training Program in Domestic Adoption (partnership with UNICEF and National Authority for Child Protection and Adoption) and through active participation in a National Task Force for developing minimal standards for adoption services in Romania (organized by World Learning under USAID Mission).

Holt started the communication and collaboration with the National Authority for the Protection of Children and for Adoption.

Holt was pretty involved in "Global Movement for Children" which were held in Constanta, Iasi and Mures and ended with a National Conference on February 28th.

Holt staff participated in a consultative meeting on "Child Abuse-Prevention and Care" organized by Save the Children Romania (February 6th).

Holt participated to a meeting of FORUM for HIV+ infected persons in order to prepare the National Forum which was held on March 28 -29, 2001.

Training

Holt will continue the National Training in Domestic Adoption. Last year, we covered 7 regions (28 counties) scheduled for year 2000. We have 3 more regions (13 counties) to cover during this year. We will start on May 2001.

During this quarter, Holt offered training for a total of **4 new foster families** as part of their training to become maternal assistants. Also, Holt offered training for **12 new adoptive families**.

II. Data

All project components developed by Holt are implemented in direct collaboration with the local DPCs in the counties of Constanta and Iasi.

IASI

1. Crisis Intervention Services for At-risk Families and Children

There are six (6) social assistants in the Crisis Intervention Program in Iasi County:

One social assistant is located in the maternity hospital of Iasi and works with pregnant women at risk, women after delivery, children at risk of being abandoned and abandoned children in the maternity ward.

Two social assistant are working out of two local health dispensaries in Iasi city and offer services to pregnant women, families and children at risk from those communities.

One social assistant is working in the pediatric wards of Iasi hospitals and children abandoned in maternities. She used to be located in the dystrophic Unit. This position has been taken over by the local DPC during last Quarter.

Two social assistants are located in Placement Centers doing child evaluation for the long term institutionalized children, and they develop permanency plans for these children.

This quarter:

A number of 131 new children (new cases for this quarter) received services under the Crisis Intervention Program developed by Holt in Iasi, of which 24 were abandoned children (in institution and medical facilities) and 107 were at risk of abandonment.

A total number of 406 children (all cases served) received services under the Crisis Intervention program during this quarter.

A number of 55 at risk children- received services through the Crisis Intervention program remained with their families and 4 abandoned children returned to their birth families as a result of services received.

A. Pregnancy Counseling Component

64 new women (new cases for this quarter) in crisis were served through the pregnancy counseling component (the quarterly objectives have been reached – 106,66%). Of this number 6 were pregnant and 58 had already delivered.

A total number of 145 (all cases served) received services through this program during this quarter.

39 new women received information on and referral to family planning clinics.

A number of 70 new children received services as part of the Pregnancy Counseling component (children of women in the Pregnancy Counseling Program).

B. Community Based Services to Families at Risk Component

37 new children received services as part of the community based services to families at-risk program during this quarter in Iasi.

21 new families (new cases) were registered and received services under this program component.

A total of 68 families at risk (all cases served) received services through this program during this quarter.

C. Services to Abandoned Children Component

24 new abandoned children received services through this program component.

2. Domestic Adoption Services

We have one social assistant working for this program in Iasi. She is located in Holt Office and she is working in good collaboration with the colleagues from the local DPC.

The quarterly objective for this program for Iasi was 6 new placements in domestic adoption. **We almost reached this objective (83,33 %) during this quarter.**

This quarter, 5 new children were placed in domestic adoption in Iasi.

16 children received follow up services (post placement services) during this quarter.

4 new adoptive families were recruited.

5 new adoptive families received training during this quarter.

A total of 22 adoptive families received services during the quarter.

3. Foster Care Services

We have one social assistant working in foster care program in Iasi.

We continue to focus on short term foster care for de-institutionalizing of children from institution and as a preventive services. In order to serve many children and to increase the number of the foster placements, we get in contact with the others Maternities from Iasi County to referral the cases to Holt. The social assistant and the

case coordinator started a good collaboration with the Maternity from Pascani, Iasi County.

The quarterly objectives for this program for Iasi was to have 5 new placements in foster care, for a total of 15 children placed in our Iasi foster care network. **We reached the quarterly objectives (120 %).**

**This quarter, 6 new children were placed in foster care in Iasi.
At the end of the quarter a total of 16 children were in care in Iasi site.**

**There was not any new foster care family recruited during this quarter.
There was not any family who received training.
1 new family was certified by the county during this quarter.**

4.Services to HIV+ Children and their families

Holt has one social assistant working in offering services to HIV/AIDS children and their families in Iasi site. She is located in the Hospital for Infectious Diseases of Iasi County, where Holt opened a social assistance office.

Our social assistant works in collaboration with medical staff working in the county hospital for infectious diseases and with the local authorities in order to support these children and their families. The social assistant supports the families to come together as a group and become stronger in order to fight for their children's life.

Holt continued to develop a reintegration program with temporary financial support of the family. In Iasi, there are 15 children infected with HIV/AIDS who received in addition of counseling economical support consisting in food, clothes, shoes, vitamins, medicine, school supplies, etc. All of these children are in their birth families. These families received a lot of support, counseling and other social services.

The quarterly objective for this program for Iasi was to serve 9 new cases (children with HIV/AIDS).

**This quarter, 6 new cases of children were opened.
A total number of 55 children with HIV/AIDS (all cases served) received services during this quarter.**

**The quarter ended with 49 active cases.
There are 15 children with HIV/AIDS in the reintegration program with temporary financial support of the family.**

CONSTANTA

1.Crisis Intervention Services At-Risk Families and Children

We have four social assistants working for this Program: 3 of them are located in Constanta city and covered the City of Constanta and the community around and near city and one social assistant is placed in Medgidia and covered Area of Medgidia.

This quarter:

A number of 121 new children (new cases for this quarter) received services under the Crisis Intervention Program implemented by Holt in Constanta, of which 11 were abandoned children (in institution and medical facilities) and 110 were identified as at risk for abandonment.

A total number of 332 children (all cases served) received services under this Program during this quarter.

A number of 98 at risk children –received services through the Crisis Intervention Program remained with their families and 6 abandoned children returned to their birth families as a result of services received).

A. Pregnancy Counselling Component

65 new women (new cases for this quarter) in crisis were served through the pregnancy counseling component (the quarterly objectives have been reached – 108,33 %). Of this number 3 were pregnant and 62 had already delivered.

A total number of 174 (all cases served) received services through this program during this quarter.

64 new women received information on and referral to family planning clinics.

A number of 75 new children received services as part of the Pregnancy Counseling component (children of women in the Pregnancy Counseling Program).

B. Community Based Services to Families at Risk Component

35 children (new cases) received services as part of the community based services to families at-risk program during this quarter in Constanta.

35 new families (new cases) were registered and received services under this program component.

A total of 105 families at risk (all cases served) received services through this program during this quarter.

C. Services to Abandoned Children Component

11 new abandoned children received services through this program component.

2.Domestic Adoption Services

We have one social assistant working for this program in Constanta. She is located in Holt Office and she is working in strong and close collaboration with the colleagues from the local DPC.

The quarterly objective for this program for Constanta was to have 6 new placements in domestic adoption. **We almost reached this objective (83,33 %) during this quarter.**

This quarter, 5 new children were placed in domestic adoption in Iasi.

14 children received follow up services (post placement services) during this quarter.

11 new adoptive families were recruited.
7 new adoptive families received training during this quarter.
A total of 23 adoptive families received services during the quarter.

3.Foster care Services

We have two social assistants working in foster care program in Constanta. One of them is located in Constanta City, working out of Holt's office and the other is placed in Medgidia, working out of the Holt Community Resource Center.

We continue to focus on short-term foster care for de-institutionalizing of children from institution and as preventive services.

Holt continues to develop in Constanta long-term foster care for HIV+ children. These children were abandoned in the institutions and medical units. They have been placed in the well trained and supervised foster families specialized to support and care for long term institutionalized children. They attend at the Community school and they are well re-integrate into the local community.

The quarterly objective for this program for Constanta was to have 10 new placements in foster care, for a total of 30 children placed in our Constanta foster care network. **We reached the quarterly objective (110 %).**

This quarter, 11 new children were placed in foster care in Constanta.
AT the end of the quarter a total of 32 children were in care in Constanta site.

10 new families were recruited to become foster families during this quarter.
4 foster families received training.
There was not any new family certified by the county during this quarter.

4.Services to HIV+ Children and their families

Holt has three social assistants providing services to HIV/AIDS children and their families in Constanta site. Two social assistants are located in Constanta City and they cover a large area in the county around the city. The third social assistant is located in Medgidia and works out of the local Holt Community Resource Center.

Our social assistants work in strong collaboration with medical staff working in the county hospital for infectious diseases and dispensaries and with the local authorities in order to find ways to support these children and their families.

Holt continued to develop a reintegration program with temporary financial support of the family. In Constanta, there are 25 children infected with HIV/AIDS who received besides counseling, economical support consisting in food, clothes, shoes, vitamins, medicine, school supplies, etc. All of these children are in their birth families. These families received a lot of support, counseling and other social services.

The quarterly objective for this program for Constanta was to serve 12 new cases (children with HIV/AIDS).

This quarter, 8 new cases of children were opened in Constanta site.

A total number of 148 children with HIV/AIDS (all cases served) received services during this quarter.

The quarter ended with 137 active cases.

There are 25 children with HIV/AIDS in the reintegration program with temporary financial support of the family.

There is a total of 10 children with HIV/AIDS placed in long term foster care.

D. Successes and Barriers by County

Successes –Iasi

- An intensive recruitment campaign in order to increase the number of domestic adoption placements
- Increase the number of foster care placements
- to find and reintegrate older children abandoned in the institution for a long period of time
- Project objectives for this quarter- reached for almost all program components and exceeded for some of them.
- Good partnership with the local networking of NGOs in order to support our clients

Successes – Constanta

- Continue to improve the collaboration with the local DPC
- A new and good collaboration with the local Mayor in Medgidia
- Started a new component in Medgidia “Welcome baby” –will be a step forward in order to identify mothers in difficulties and support them at the beginning
- Project objectives for this quarter – reached for almost all program components and exceeded for some of them.

Barriers –Constanta and Iasi

- Changes in all Public Ministries such as employment of new staff/ delayed existent programs, after the Elections 2000.
- Pro-institutionalization of children attitude of the director of the Iasi DPC. She has been changed on March, there was named an interim Director of the Iasi DPC. The newest Director is pretty open to de-institutionalized and prevent the institutionalization of children and to cooperate with Holt.
- A huge challenge continues to be the very poor economical status of the majority of our clients.

E. Information regarding “System Change ” Component

Holt presented in front of the National Authority for the Protection of Children and for Adoption the programs and results.

During last quarter, Holt finalized the three guides as objectives under the USAID project:

- a. Guide for young mothers
- b. Guide for social assistants providing pregnancy counseling services

- c. Guide for the professionals working with HIV/AIDS affected children and their families

We submitted a proposal to UNICEF under the Community Resource Center Joint Project between Holt and UNICEF in order to sponsor us to print these three guides. During this year, we should pre-test these three guides in order to prepare them for printing next year.

Holt will continue to implement a National Training Program In Domestic Adoption, in partnership with UNICEF and the National Authority for the Protection of Children and Adoption. The training is provided to staff working in local DPCs and to member of the local Commission for Child Protection in 13 left counties. This was an 18 months project and covered the Country. There will be a National Conference in Adoption at the end of the Project.

Holt continued to participate in the meetings of the National Task Force on Adoption, organized by USAID/ World Learning. The Minimal Standards on Adoption will improve the quality of adoption services in Romania.

Holt will developed and implement a Training of Trainers Program of “ Strengthening Romanian Families by Developing Parenting Skills” in partnership with UNICEF and the local Mayor of Medgidia. The TOT will be provided in 10 counties recommended by UNICEF. The training will be provided to staff working in the local DPCs and to members of NGOs actively in those counties.

Holt continues to be part of the National Federation of the NGOs active in Child Welfare in Romania.

Holt started the preparation to become founding member of the ProChild Romania. The ProChild Romania wants to build a strong voice for children and for children’s rights. Holt wants to support and be part of this effort.

F. Narrative stories

Please, see the case stories attached. The case stories highlithed the success regarding prevention of the abandonment and reintegration of older children from the institutions where we work.

G. Report from the County Council Secretary and the National Authority of Child Protection and Adoption regarding the progress of the project

H. Achieved goals this quarter and anticipated outputs for the next quarter

Please, see the Chapter II Data

I. Financial Report

Please, see the financial report attached

J. Attachments

- Financial Report
- Case stories with Photographs

Added Chapter to the HOLT Quarterly Report:

K. Other services to children (all Holt Romania Programs)

- This quarter a total of **451 new children** were served by Holt in all four sites: Constanta, Iasi, Bucharest and Mures
- Holt ended this quarter with a total of **1020 active cases** of children and 258 active cases of women in crisis, in all four sites.
- **Foster care Services** – 22 new children were placed in foster care this quarter
 - 108 children are placed and cared for in Holt foster care families
 - 13 new foster families were recruited
 - 56 foster families are recognized as official maternal assistants by the local Commission
- **Domestic Adoption** – 12 children were placed in Romanian adoptive families
 - 22 new families were recruited
 - 6 families officially approved this quarter as adoptive families
 - 30 children received follow up services
- **Crisis Intervention Services** – 158 new women in crisis were served
 - 159 new women received family planning information
 - 4 new mothers were placed in Holt's shelter for mother and child, during this quarter
 - 15 children were reintegrated into their birth family during this quarter
 - 298 children remained with their families based on the services received
- **Services to HIV+ Children and their families**
 - 38 new children with HIV and their families were served
 - 12 children are placed into the long term foster care
 - 63 HIV+ children received help through the reintegration program with financial support of the family
 - we ended this quarter with 248 HIV+ children active cases
- Holt continues to implement **The Community Resource Center**. This Program is a partnership between UNICEF, IOMC (Institute for Mother and Child Care, Bucharest sector 2) and Holt. The activity in our Community Resource Center continues to increase monthly. The families receive professional information, support and assistance in order to get their legal rights, counseling, other services like work groups with subjects picked up by the clients, special Events.
- **Long term Foster care for older children/sibling groups in Mures County**. During this quarter we placed the sixth group into the foster family. We ended the quarter with 15 children placed in long term foster care: three siblings each and three groups of two siblings. They received good care, improve the school education, psychology therapy, school and job orientation. The goal is to support them until they will be able to be independent.

- Holt will continue the **National Training in Domestic Adoption Project** (partnership with UNICEF and the National Authority for child Protection and Adoption). Holt provided technical assistance for this Project.
- Holt signed a Convention of Collaboration for a joint project with UNICEF and local Mayor office from Medgidia including a **TOT for 10 counties**. Holt will provide technical assistance for this program.

- **Community Day Center –Rozmarinul/ Tg.Mures, Mures County**

Holt signed a new convention of collaboration with the local DPC Mures regarding this partnership to open, develop and run a new project Community Day Center. The main objectives are prevention of child abandonment, child institutionalization and school abandonment. This project is a partnership between the local DPC Mures, Holt, the local Mayor's Office and the local Ministry of Education. The implementation of this project has started this quarter.

- **The" Make Parenting a Pleasure"** training series have started during this quarter.

- **The Parents Resource Center/ Bucharest, sector 1**

Holt obtained a space from the local DPC sector 1 in order to open, develop and run this Center. The Parents Resource Center will provide individual counseling for parents, parenting courses and other information for parents and children. The objectives are to prevent the abandonment and desinstitutionalization children from Orphanage no.1 at the beginning through increase and developed the parenting skills.

USAID

INDICATORS

**HOLT INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES
 QUARTELY REPORT
 JANUARY - MARCH, 2001**

USAID chart

USAID IR indicators

| | | Cluj | Iasi | Constanta | Total |
|---|------------------|-------------|--|------------------|--------------|
| Number of children protected in State institutions | | | <i>Data from NAPCR - see WV report</i> | | |
| Number of participans trained | Internal Staff* | | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| | Government staff | | <i>See WV report</i> | | |
| | NGO-s | | <i>See WV report</i> | | |
| Number of children served in community based services | USAID activity | | 461 | 480 | 941 |
| | County activity | | <i>Data from NAPCR - see WV report</i> | | |
| Number of families receiving services | | | 290 | 445 | 735 |
| Number of programs available | USAID activities | | 6 | 6 | 6 |

| | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|------------|--|---|----|
| Number of new children admitted in institutions in Iasi, Cluj and Constanta | This quarter | [REDACTED] | <i>Data from NAPCR - see WV report</i> | | |
| | Cumulative, since USAID activity | | | | |
| Number of children placed for adoption in Romanian adoptive families | By USAID activity this Quarter | [REDACTED] | 5 | 5 | 10 |
| Number of rural communities/urban districts impacted by community development programs | | [REDACTED] | | | |

*Define type of professionals trained

Number of professional meetings to develop procedures; number of new procedures agreed by all the professionals

USAID funded activities

Case Activity by Services (*)

| | Services | | Cluj | | Iasi | | Constanta | | Totals | |
|---|--|--|-------------|--|-------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|---------------|------------|
| Case management and Family Support | Family Reunification: Number of children reunified with their families | | | | 4 | 59 | 6 | 41 | 10 | 100 |
| | Foster care: | Number of foster parents recruited, | | | 0 | 136 | 10 | 103 | 10 | 239 |
| | | Number of foster parents trained | | | 0 | 65 | 4 | 79 | 4 | 144 |
| | | Number of foster parents certified by the county | | | 1 | 19 | 0 | 28 | 1 | 47 |
| | | Number of children placed in foster care | | | 6 | 42 | 11 | 106 | 17 | 148 |
| | Domestic adoption | Number of families recruited | | | 4 | 39 | 11 | 69 | 15 | 108 |
| | | Number of families trained | | | 5 | 39 | 7 | 55 | 12 | 94 |
| | | Number approved by county | | | 1 | 25 | 5 | 50 | 6 | 75 |
| | | Number of families receiving children | | | 5 | 34 | 4 | 50 | 9 | 84 |
| | | Number of children receiving post placement services | | | 16 | 29 | 14 | 50 | 30 | 79 |

| Services | | Cluj | Iasi | Constanta | Totals | | | |
|--|--|------|------|-----------|--------|-----|-----|-----|
| Home Based Counseling | | | | | | | | |
| Pregnancy Counseling (Holt's Program) | Number of women receiving counseling | | 64 | 332 | 65 | 655 | 129 | 987 |
| | Number of women receiving family planning info and referrals | | 39 | 275 | 64 | 553 | 103 | 828 |
| Services for Women in Transition (World Vision) | Number of cases (mother and child) served in Emergency Shelter (not prevent) | | | | | | | |
| | Day Care Services (Number children in day care) | | | | | | | |
| Services for Youth in Transition | Number of children served in Life Skills Programs | | | | | | | |
| HIV program | Number of HIV/AIDS children served (new cases) | | 6 | 82 | 8 | 237 | 14 | 319 |
| | Total number of children served during the quarter | | 55 | | 148 | | 203 | |
| | Family reintegration with economic support | | 15 | 61 | 25 | 106 | 40 | 167 |
| | Therapeutic Foster Care (Total number at the end of the quarter) | | 0 | 0 | 10 | 11 | 10 | 11 |

15

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Early Intervention and Prevention services | Number of cases receiving services | | | | | | | | |
| Crisis intervention services | Children abandoned in institutions (new cases) | | | 24 | 209 | 11 | 58 | 35 | 267 |
| | Number of families at risk served | | | 68 | 223 | 105 | 312 | 173 | 535 |
| Emergency Funds | Number of children benefiting | | | <i>See WV report</i> | | | | | |
| | Number of families | | | | | | | | |

CASE

STORIES



Translated from Romanian

HOLT INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES
IASI CENTER
CASE STORY – APRIL 2001
Social Assistant: Lacramioara GANEA

JOY OF OWN HEIGHTS

People are born every day.

We should be happy for each life that is born. In a world filled with sufferance and hardships, sometimes we ask what could make us happy. There is a joy: a flower, a sunny day, and especially the birth of a child ... or what would you say about the birth of three children in the same time?

It is a unique feeling a wonderful surprise for their family.

We are Vasile, Grigore and Ioan. We were born on February 8, 2001, with a low weight, but we have gained quickly weight, so we could go home where other two siblings waited us.

Our parents are very young. They planned for this pregnancy, but they haven't been prepared financially for this event: to raise three other children besides two that they already had.

Mother's children could not breastfeed them because she has no milk and her joy started to transform in fear and worry.

Vasile, the first born, with tears in his eyes, looks toward the other two brothers, and says:

- I don't want our mother to be said.

Grigore, the second born:

- Why is she so worried?

Ioan, sighing, says:

- We have been sent here to make them happy.

All together say "...someone is here, comes close to us ... she brought us clothes and formula... mom laughs again... now we understand.... She is not upset on us"...

Being helped by Holt Organization, children's mother regained "the joy of her own heights", being able to overcome the crisis, and thus the triplets could remain in the family, telling to one another beautiful stories.



Translated from Romanian

HOLT INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES
IASI CENTER
SOCIAL ASSISTANT – Roxana NECULA

At my grandparents' home

Madalina is an eight years old child from Budai Placement Center. She has been lived in this institution for 4 years.

Until she turned four years old, Madalina was very happy. She had a family and a two years younger brother. Then, something happened, something that Madalina could not understand, her parents divorced. She remained with her father and her brother with her mother. Shortly after that, Alexandru was placed into Children's home from another county and then he was adopted.

Madalina's father lived in an institution as well. As he became aware that rearing and nurturing a child require a special effort, he decided that it is in the best interest of Madalina to place her into a Children's Home. Thus, Madalina has been affected by three unhappy events: parents' divorce, separation of her brother and being abandoned in a Children's Home. Meanwhile, her mother married with someone else and another child resulted from this marriage.

Holt social assistant contacted Madalina's family during January 2001. Her mother and maternal grandparents have visited her several times. We also tried to contact her father without success.

Madalina's mother had tried several times to visit her daughter at the Placement Center, but institution staff didn't let her visit due to a statement written by the birthfather specifying that the birthmother must not be permitted to visit her child. However, the birthmother had tried to visit her child and had sent letters and packages. She would like to take her child back home, but she didn't know how to proceed. On one hand there was the refusal of the institution staff, and on the other hand she was living with her husband's parents, with whom they were not in very good relationships.

One contacted the child's paternal grandparents, hoping to find the father and trying to assess the possibility of child's reintegration with grandparents. We realized that there is no chance for Madalina to be reintegrated in her father's family, due to the fact that they were well known in the community as a disorganized family whose children have grown up in orphanages. Also, the father has no steady income and no place to live. Given this situation, we contacted the maternal grandparents who reared Madalina until she turned 4 (Madalina's parents lived in the same home with maternal grandparents).

Through counseling and moral support, Madalina's grandparents understood that they were the only who could provide a family for Madalina. The

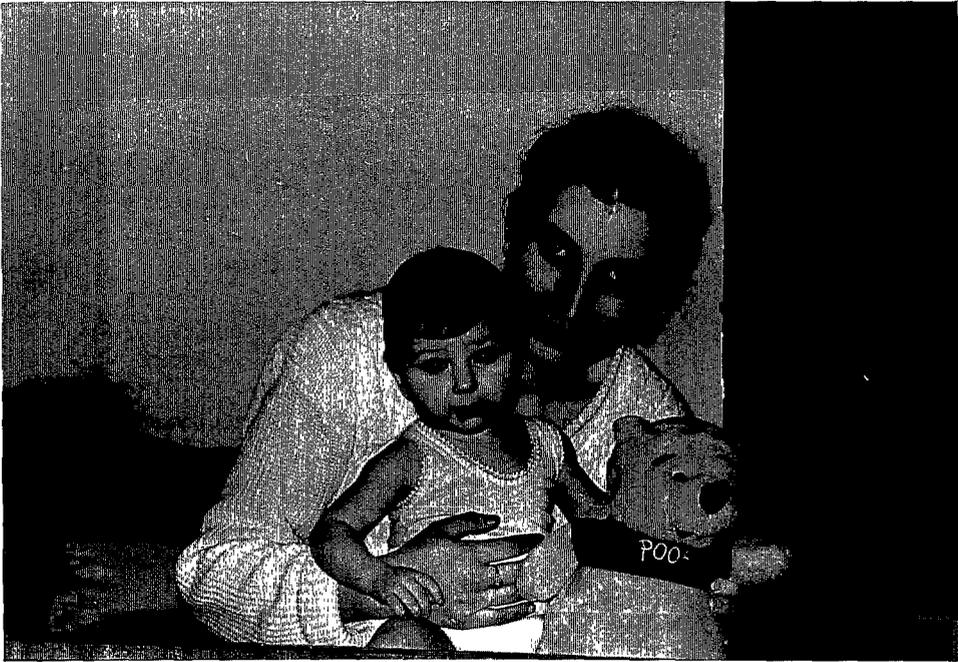
Translated from Romanian

reintegration has been hard to achieve because there was a statement written by the father at the institution, which had sentenced Madalina to live in the orphanage until she would turn 18.

Given these circumstances, the social assistant had to explain to the institution staff more than several times, that it is in the child's best interest to live in a family. Thus, after three months of working on this case, the social assistant could start the procedures regarding the child's reintegration into the family of her maternal grandparents (child receives a monthly allowance from Labor Directorate until she turns 18). Also, the social assistant arranged the child's transfer to the new school.

Madalina returned to her grandparents' home after she had lived four years in a Placement Center. Her grandparents will receive financial support for six months, and this money will be used to buy school supply, clothes and foods.

Madalina is very happy that she has returned to her grandparents' home, where she ran and played when she was 4.



Translated from Romanian

**HOLT INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES
IASI CENTER**

Social Assistant: **Diana DUMITRIU**

A CHILD'S DESIRE

In the silence of the summer night, a lively scream tells the world about the birth of a baby. The young mother tenderly looks at her delicate and beautiful princess-like baby girl. Her warm clothes caress the gentle body of the baby, holding it lovingly against her chest.

'Alina, my baby ! Alina, my dear baby...' She gently put a kiss on the baby's forehead, then went to sleep.

'I feel so good... I'm warm and well! But, where am I ? What happened to me ? And who is this person, near me ? Could it be... mother ? Yes, yes, yes!!! I'm certain it's mother. My mother! I feel it's mother. I have spent so much time near her soul, after all...! MOTHER.....'

With her tiny heart struggling like a bird, the little girl tried to reach out her small hands to caress the cheek of her mother. She reached her hands as far as she could towards her mother, but didn't reach her face. She understood during her strong attempt to move that her legs didn't obey her. Yes... She was not able to move the legs. She tried again and again, but without succeeding. She felt, instead, an increasing pain which really hurt her.

'I can't, I can't, I'll never be able to get closer to mom. Only if... I'd have wings to fly... Angel, my little angel, help me fly ! Make me have wings and be able to fly! I want to fly!!! Fly and be near my mother!

Alina, the little girl who wants so much to fly, was born with a congenital hip sub dislocation. She wore a plaster 4 months. The doctors did everything possible to cure the little girl's feet and be able to walk. Alina is now 8 months old. The results of the latest medical examination are optimistic. She will be able to walk and run along her mother.

In order to have Alina's wish come true, the social assistant of HOLT organization has supported her family through counseling, changing the sad thoughts of the mother, helping the parents overcome the crisis. Maybe Alina's prayer to her guardian angel hasn't been in vain after all.....



Translated from Romanian

**HOLT INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES
IASI CENTER**

Never is too late....

Nicoleta was born 14 years ago.

Her destiny has not been too happy for her, as it should be for any child. She had a beautiful family life together with her parent until....

Now, it is hard for her mother to talk about the past and to recognize her mistakes. The parents divorced due to the misunderstandings between them, and this determined the child's admittance into Cozmesti Placement Center. Nicoleta was 8 at that time.

The mother promised to herself that she would take the child back home after one year. Due to some reason that we are not entitled to judge, that one year transformed in six years. Meanwhile, the parents reconciled and another child was born – Ionut, he is five now. Maybe, Nicoleta could return at that time, but unfortunately the children's father died in a car accident when Ionut was 2. Later, the mother met someone and hoped that she would be able to restore her life. Ana Maria, the jewel of the family, was born from this relationship.

Although, she didn't understand what happened, Nicoleta accepted the explanations of "the grown –ups", and she hoped that someday she would be together with her mother and siblings. The child's hope has started to become real when mother requested the help of Holt Social assistant. As lately, the mother had tried to take her child back home, but had encountered many obstacles (every time she went to the Children's home to take Nicoleta home, they told her that this is not possible because she was living in a rented place). Maybe this was the reason of mother's distrust. She wished so much to take Nicoleta home, and she was afraid to hope. And though,.... The hope became a reality through the USAID project. At the end of February 2001, the little girl was reunited with her family. The family received support to transfer the child to another school, and the success of this reintegration was also determined by the financial support provided for 6 months. During the first month, the social assistant bought school supply, sport equipment, and a monthly bus ticket, which is used by the child to go to school and return home; the same ticket will be provided during the other months. During the second month, the support consisted of foods, toileting items. During the next months, we will buy for the child, clothes and foods. We will buy school supply for the next school year during the last month of this support, in August.

Nicoleta has also celebrated her 14th anniversary together with her mother, and this was another joy for her.