Healthy diet gives strength and motivation to learn

BLYTHSWOOD NEWS

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Free training helps Elinet to land a job
Your support for summer camps matters to children like Mihailo
Helping girls overcome low expectations

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Free training helps Elinet to land a job

Sewing skills Zimbabwe – Gift code DA4

A 2021 graduate from the Streams of Hope Sewing Project in Harare, Zimbabwe has started working for a leading clothing manufacturer, putting into practice the skills she acquired in the adult training programme which is sponsored by Blythswood Care.

Elinet, now 46 years old, was still in primary school when her mother died. Her grandmother paid the girl’s school fees, enabling her to reach form 4, but passed away before Elinet could sit A levels. Without qualifications, the young woman supported herself by domestic service until she got married, aged 26. But after the death of their three-year-old child, her husband deserted her and disappeared to South Africa.

Elinet was at a low point in her life when a friend from church told her about the sewing skills training programme. Your gifts through Blythswood’s gift catalogue enable people who lack resources to pay for training to acquire marketable skills in just nine months. Elinet threw herself into the programme, landing the 2nd prize of $50 and a full-time job.

“We are grateful for Blythswood’s support,” says Streams of Hope director Stephen Damuptuirai. “We have business women, motor mechanics, teachers, nurses and people in various professions thanks to your sponsorship of education and skills training.”

Give a child a month of daily nutritious meals – Gift Code DA5

When he gets to school at eight o’clock in the morning, Alessio enjoys a bowl of hot soup. Your gifts enable disadvantaged children to grow and learn

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Elinet at the sewing skills programme: your gifts enable people in poverty to acquire life-changing skills

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Blythswood News

Cover story

Give a child a month of daily nutritious meals – Gift Code DA5

When he gets to school at eight o’clock in the morning, Alessio receives the milk and biscuits which are available to every pupil in Romania.

His first meal of the day is at Blythswood’s after-school programme Talita Kum, where he sits down to a cooked meal at lunchtime. The first course is always soup, followed by meat with potatoes or cabbage, or pasta Bolognese, or rice with chilli con carne.

“The meals provided by Blythswood are more nutritionally-balanced than what most of the children would receive at home,” says Carmen Popa. “And in the evening before they go home, they each are given a piece of cake or strudel, or pancakes.”

Eight-year-old Alessio started his first year at school in September and is not doing particularly well, according to Carmen. “But we’re confident that since he enjoys the meals so much and attends the programme every day he will be motivated to learn,” she says. “The healthy diet at Talita Kum helps the children concentrate on their homework and grow strong.”
TOUCHING YOUNG LIVES IN TRANSYLVANIA

Maintain a ministry –
Gift code PS1

When Gabriella Belenyesi restarted her Philothea Klub for children and young people after the Covid lockdown, she was both encouraged and challenged.

“We were happy to see that our programme was more popular than ever with the kids and teenagers,” she says. “But on the other hand we had to confront the damage done by confinement to home with all the stress and pressure that that brings.”

Gabriella’s pastoral ministry under the auspices of Christian Endeavour is supported by Blythswood Care, and aims to help children from difficult home circumstances in and around the city of Targu Mures, Romania.

Normal Philothea Klub activities include Romanian and German language clubs which meet several times a week, giving vital language support to youngsters growing up in mainly Hungarian-speaking communities.

Then there are counselling sessions addressing needs such as teambuilding, personal development and the prevention of bullying and of harmful addictions.

“My Child Is My Blessing offers practical aid and Christian friendship to parents caring for adult children with disabilities

Deal with disaster –
Gift code DR1

My Child Is My Blessing is the name of one of Blythswood’s partner organisations in Chisinau, Moldova. For those whom it seeks to help, children are both a blessing and a challenge. Victoria is 54 and lost her husband five years ago. Her son Nikolai is 33. Born with a severe form of cerebral palsy he can neither walk nor talk nor swallow solid food.

Victoria cares for him at home. She cooks for him, puts the food through a blender, and then feeds him, one spoonful at a time. She changes him and cleans him and does everything for him that a mother would do for her infant. And she does so knowing that her boy will never be able to do these things for himself.

“The help we receive from Blythswood gives us the opportunity to help people like Victoria and Nikolai,” says ministry leader Elena Chirciu. “We provide for them food and diapers and clothing and we are able to give them some money for medicine. Your help brings joy and hope to these people. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.”

Gabriella’s ministry touched the lives of more than 650 children and young people in 2021.

“Everyone has his or her own personal issues yet some of them jumped in as volunteers to help at kids’ clubs and holiday activities. We encourage them to be aware of other people’s needs and we are glad to see how willing they are to help.”

You can donate online at any time – go to www.blythswood.org/donate
Aid with an animal – Gift code DA11

The gift of some chickens, funded by Blythswood’s gift catalogue, has increased protein in the diet of a large family in Orizari, Bulgaria.

During the summer, Stoyan, Katya and their five children pick and sell fresh wild herbs. Otherwise they depend on social security and child benefits paid by the Bulgarian government, giving them a household budget that allows only for basic food such as flour, beans, lentils and potatoes.

They were one of 44 low-income families in their district to receive such help from Blythswood Care in 2021, providing both eggs and meat. Each household was also given five kilos of pork which they boiled and sealed in jars with some sauerkraut to see them through the winter.

The referring agent got back in touch to say that Julie and her daughter were so grateful for the food, but also to say that the girl was really touched by the colouring book and pencils which were the only Christmas gift she received.

*not her real name

Foodbank support helps family shattered by grief

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Julie* was shattered when she lost one of her children to cancer a year ago. Trying to pick up the pieces of her life she decided to move back to the Highlands where she had been as a child and to make a fresh start there with her teenaged daughter.

But having used her savings to make the move, by the end of the year Julie was struggling cover the basic costs of food as well as fuel in their homeless accommodation.

The week before Christmas, mother and daughter were referred to Highland Foodbank by Highland Council.

“We were able to help Julie with emergency food, toiletries and some household cleaning items,” says Lorna Dempster, manager of Blythswood’s Highland Foodbank. “We also included an adult colouring book and some colouring pencils.

“The referring agent got back in touch to say that Julie and her daughter were so grateful for the food, but also to say that the girl was really touched by the colouring book and pencils which were the only Christmas gift she received.”

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You can make a credit card donation by phone – call 01349 830777 Monday-Friday 9am-5pm

Brushing up on oral hygiene

Pay for dental and medical treatment – Gift code OH1

Oral hygiene is not a priority in the poorest communities in Eastern Europe. Marius, now 12, was never taught by his parents to brush his teeth morning and evening. As a result he has really bad cavities and required three dental appointments for fillings last year.

Talita Kum, Blythswood’s after-school programme in Jimbolia, western Romania tries to instil in the children the habit of brushing their teeth. And when dental treatment is required, your gifts help Talita Kum to give them the access to medical care which they require.

“At first Marius was scared to go to the dentist,” says Carmen Popa, who organised the visit. “But now he knows what to expect and, even though it isn’t something he’s thrilled about, he will continue to go.”
New supply of safe water for 400 people in rural India

**Care with clean water – Gift code OH6**

Your gifts to Blythswood’s gift catalogue sponsored this water well, newly installed in a tribal village in Odisha State, India. Providing safe drinking water to 400 people in a mountainous location, it allows them to wash every day and saves them from having to carry heavy containers over several kilometres.

Food aid ensures children continue to attend school

**Fund a family in Eastern Europe – Gift code DA12**

Viorica lives in cramped conditions with her four children but at least their home is better than the old shipping container in which they used to sleep.

The local council agreed to help the family with rent on the condition that Viorica is working. But as the only job she can get is as a part-time cleaner for the council, she is in effect simply working to pay the rent and no more.

The monthly food package which this family receives from Blythswood’s Basis project enables them to use their scant income for other day-to-day expenses and helps to ensure that the children actually go to school.

Your gifts enable the Basis project to assist 30 low-income households in and around Cluj, Romania’s second city.

Your support for summer camps matters to children like Mihailo

**Children’s camp – Gift code SC2**

Mihailo is 12 and lives with his mother and sister. His parents are divorced and the family depend on social assistance which is minimal in Serbia. For a household like this which can barely survive financially, holidays are out of the question.

That’s why your support for Christian summer camps is so important for children like Mihailo.

“He had already been attending Bible study through our after-school programme, so camp was a great chance to learn more about Christianity with new friends from all over Serbia.”

“My parents are divorced,” says camp organiser David Armus. “He loves football and through activities like that we help him to develop a team spirit and to raise his self-confidence.”

Food aid helps low-income families meet day-to-day costs and helps prevent children from dropping out of school

**Zajecar, Serbia, summer 2021:**

60 children enjoyed camps run by Blythswood Serbia

Food aid ensures children continue to attend school

**You can buy a life-changing gift online at www.blythswood.org/gift-catalogue**
Learning for life – Gift code R2

A 12-year-old girl has learned to read at Blythswood’s after-school programme for children of junior secondary school age. It’s a great achievement and one which has given a tremendous boost to Minodora’s self-esteem, according to TK2 teacher Carmen Popa. “She is a happy girl who loves music and dancing but at the moment we are just trying to help her survive in a world where everything is stacked against her,” she says.

Because Minodora’s parents are illiterate and don’t understand the importance of education for girls, her schooling has been frequently interrupted by their expectation that she will help care for younger siblings. Only in the last two years has she been able to attend school regularly and come to Talita Kum.

“When she was 11 we asked her teachers not to expect her to do homework so that we could concentrate on teaching her to read,” Carmen says. “Now that she has achieved this goal we hope she will continue to catch up with her age-group and learn the times table as well.”
LIFE-SKILLS TRAINING HELPS DANUT LOOK TO THE FUTURE

Believing in young people – Gift code R1

Danut is determined that his physical disability is not going to hold him back. Born with cerebral palsy, the 20-year-old is unable to use his left hand but this did not stop him from working as a refuse collector for three and half months last year before coming to Blythswood’s Daniel Centre in October.

Now with help from social worker Dani Ciupă he has found work as a cashier in a supermarket in Cluj. And he is still hopeful of gaining the high school bacalaureate which the Covid lockdown prevented him from completing in 2020.

“I liked maths, drawing and the Romanian language, especially poetry,” he says, reflecting on his schooldays. “As well as helping me to find a job, the Daniel Centre has shown me how to open a bank account and how to budget with money.”

These are essential life-skills for young people like Danut who have been brought up in the care of the state. Coming from a small town an hour away, he has also had to gain confidence to travel around Romania’s second city using public transport.

“All my life I have been dependent on others,” he says. “My main objective is to learn to live independently. My girlfriend is here in Cluj and I am very happy to be here. I want to have a stable job and I want to have my own family.”

Story of Daniel touches girl today in Pakistan

Sehar is just 12 years old but has the cares of the adult world on her young shoulders. Her father is dead and her mother struggles to provide for five children by working in one of the leather factories in Mirpur Khas, Pakistan.

“Mother asked me to leave school because of our financial situation but I wanted to continue my studies,” she says.

“I thought God didn’t love us. Why did He make us so poor? Sometimes I thought there was no God. “In October I was invited to a children’s camp in our area. I didn’t want to go but my friend insisted. We sang action songs and learned the story of Daniel and were each given a book about him.

“Seeing the story of Daniel in the Bible touched my heart how he was strong in prayers. God helped him at every stage in his life and even saved him from the hungry lions. “This story changed my life.”

Literature for life – Gift code CL8

Sehar with her book: “This story changed my life”

“Transforming lives through Christian care for body and soul”

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“Transforming lives through Christian care for body and soul”
REACHING THE NEW GENERATION IN PAKISTAN

Train a Sunday School teacher – Gift code CL5

Sofia was 20 years old when she realised that the young people around her were drifting away from church. “Usually they didn’t go to the Sunday service with their parents,” she says. “When they did go, they didn’t listen to the sermon and just irritated other people.

Four years previously Sofia had become a Christian at summer camp. “I repented and accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour,” she says. “Now I realised that I should share the good news with others.”

Sofia approached the pastor of her church in Faisalabad, Pakistan, and shared her concern for the young people growing up in the Christian minority community. He put her in touch with Pakistan Sunday School Ministry (PSSM) which provides training for Sunday School teachers, with support from Blythswood Care.

“The most important thing I learnt on the two-day course was that if we don’t teach our children, someone else will,” she says. “The new generation are all exposed to social media, the internet and satellite and cable TV and they are easily exploited.

Faisalabad, Pakistan: your gifts help equip teachers like Sofia to introduce young people to the Bible

Great Glen Way Hike

A two-day hike from Laggan Locks to Fort William which forms part of the Great Glen Way, a total of 22 miles spread over the two days.

The funds you raise will go to our Cornerstone Project in India. We work in partnership with Cornerstone to run a Women and Child Development Centre for women who have been trapped by human trafficking, and exposed to violence, deception and coercion.

Various challenges and events are planned for this year and more to come.

Keep your eye on our website for details – www.blythswood.org/events-for-you

Join us IN THESE EVENTS

Help raise funds for life-transforming projects

You can make a credit card donation by phone – call 01349 830777 Monday-Friday 9am-5pm

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THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL

Our founder Jackie Ross passed away twenty years ago, on 13 March 2002. His faith did not rely on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power working through him and the many people whom he inspired to get involved in sharing the gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Jackie – and those of us who have followed in his footsteps – was motivated to help people at their point of need, with clothing, food, medical supplies and gift boxes at Christmas. But the greatest gift of all is to know that Jesus loves us.

This issue of Blythswood News has some really encouraging stories. Evelyne came to faith in prison (see page 10), and now is reconciled to her estranged family.

Twelve-year-old Sehar (page 13) has been inspired by the story of Daniel and now she prays with her brothers and sisters every day. Sofia has trained to be a Sunday school teacher (page 15). Now she introduces children to the Bible and helps them to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord.

Thank you for buying a gift from Blythswood’s gift catalogue. Your gifts help those we serve to reach out with practical support and to share the good news of Jesus Christ. He receives everyone who comes to him by faith!

James Campbell
Chief Executive

I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom but on God’s power.

1 Corinthians 2: 3-5