



WINGS OF HOPE INTERNATIONAL

TRANSFORMING the lives of people in MOLDOVA

Volume 9, Issue 1

Fall 2021

Message from WHI President

Greetings from all of us at Wings of Hope International (WHI) and from our partner in Moldova, non-profit organization Neemia! The work of our organizations presses on in Cobani and Becky and I were able to travel to Moldova this summer to observe and participate in some programs and services offered by Neemia.

The employees and volunteers of Neemia continued to offer most of their regular programs and services throughout 2021. They prepared and delivered hot meals to approximately thirty families, five times per week from January through June, then resumed three delivery days per week for the second half of the year. They also continued their afterschool program for elementary school children and all of the other volunteer programs, and initiated a community involvement program which you will read about in this newsletter.

Thank you for your financial support that makes it possible for us to impact lives in the village of Cobani. Please consider sending a donation to the address indicated on this newsletter, or donate online at www.whintl.org, to ensure our work continues.

With Hope for the Moldovan People,

Alec Zama

Alec Zama

Social Kitchen meal delivery: Alec and Becky Zama follow COVID-19 protocols in order to deliver meals.



Claca – A Community Action Day Initiative

By Alec Zama

One of the Neemia's original goals was to encourage members of the local community to address the needs of their community by engaging in various volunteer projects. July 2021 brought the realization of this goal with the first Claca, the Romanian word for volunteering. The young volunteers from Neemia solicited monetary donations from the members of the community in order to purchase the materials and pay for the labor to build nine benches and twenty trash bins. Nearly thirty volunteers came together for four hours to install these items along the two main streets in Cobani. Other volunteers donated food for an appreciation lunch following the installation. It was very encouraging to see members of the community respond to the call to address the need for a cleaner community and a place to rest while walking—the primary mode of getting around the village. We hope that this small volunteer project inspires additional ones to address other needs in the community.



Images from the Claca: Preparing cement, installing a bench, appreciation luncheon.

Perspective of Former Peace Corps Volunteer

By Sean Grossnickle

After being evacuated by the U.S. Peace Corps, it was a blessing to return to Wings of Hope International's partner, Neemia, last summer to see their continued good work.

It was heartwarming to see former youth volunteers, now in college, come back and assume summer leadership roles, helping organize volunteer activities and helping run the center's programs. One volunteer mentioned he was almost brought to tears when he described his experience at the community center and what it meant to him to his college friends who had asked about his time in the village.

Meals and camps went on as planned with youth volunteers filling in when the former teacher resigned. The center purchased laptops to help promote digital literacy and air conditioning was installed in the center. The crowning jewel of this summer was to witness the community action day. This was the fruit of all the years of hard work by Victor and his family to build community trust and vision. A large part of the project was community funded, all the labor was provided by volunteers, and the mayor's office agreed to begin a trash removal service in town. Having worked in community development, I know this did not happen overnight and is a testament to how Neemia and Wings of Hope International are changing lives in Moldova.



Computer purchases: Sean on far right, Victor second from right.



Renewal from Strategic Planning

By Victor Zama

NGO Neemia encountered many challenges in its work related to COVID-19, but also provided us time as an organization to focus internally on communication and visibility, monitoring and evaluation, strategic planning, legal aspect of internal processes, financial management, and human resources management. At the end of 2020, we were accepted in a project offering support to small organization to help them grow and develop. Through this process of organizational development, we improved the capacity building and effectiveness of our work.

Our Community Center continues to serve a very important role in our community through which we satisfy the needs of people of different ages through different projects and activities. In 2021, we organized summer camps for about 120 children and young adults, providing opportunities to develop relationships, relax, and learn. In November, after hiring a new teacher, we reopened the Afterschool Club for a group of 17 elementary school children. The Social Kitchen provides hot meals to about 30 elderly and/or people with disabilities.

Current projects and activities:

- Donation of coal for approximately 90 people from needy families
- Donation of winter clothes and shoes for a group of 25 children and young adults
- Assistance to the school in to build the sewage system
- Services to wash clothes and other items for needy families
- Volunteer Club
- Lessons on using various computer program

Plans for the future:

- Organize a Seniors Club to become active the community
- Explore the idea of opening a nursing home
- Organize environmental activities in the community

WHI Goals for 2022

In 2022 we will continue to support the operations of the community center in Cobani, will continue to focus on improving educational opportunities for children, improving access to quality healthcare, and assisting the elderly. Here are the fundraising needs for the upcoming year:

Community Center - \$42,000
Educational projects - \$2,000
Healthcare projects - \$2,500
Elderly projects - \$2,000

Please join us in achieving these goals and remember, your WHI contribution is tax-deductible!

The majority of the work that has been done for the good our community and region is due to the support and close partnership with Wings of Hope International (WHI). I hope that every person who has donated money or time to support our work in Cobani feels that they are part of our work. I would like to finish with the words of 92-year-old, Ecaterina, a former teacher of geography. Every time when we deliver hot meals to her she tells us "Thank you from the bottom of my heart for these meals. This means a lot to me. Please send my sincere thanks to all the people who contributed to these meals." Please accept these personal thanks for all of you who support the work of WHI and NGO Neemia.

Meeting with Future Leaders

By Alec Zama

During our travel to Moldova this summer, Becky and I met with a group of 10 high school and college student volunteers who have been involved with Neemia for the past few years. These young adults have delivered meals to the elderly, served as volunteers during the summer camps, and assisted with washing of clothes for elderly and other needy families, and other activities offered by Neemia. I was asked to discuss various aspects of leadership and encourage them to become involved in leadership and address the needs of their community.

I started the meeting by asking each of them to share why they decided to become Neemia's volunteers. It was very encouraging to hear that many of them saw what Neemia was doing for the Cobani and wanted to be part of serving their community. We also had a short discussion about various aspects of leadership and I encouraged them to take advantage of opportunities, whether in their hometown or in other places, to become involved in addressing the needs. We hope that the leadership seeds that Neemia is planting within these young volunteers produces great fruit in the future.



Future leaders ready to deliver meals to the elderly.

WHI Board of Directors

Alec Zama, President
Andre Drost, Vice-President
Dennis Dixon, Treasurer
Becky Zama, Secretary

