



For God's Children INTERNATIONAL

Hope, dignity & love in Jesus' name

January 18, 2021

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."
Romans 8:37/NIV

Dear Friends,

It's difficult to come up with one adjective to describe 2020. [I've heard so many.] Let's just say that by God's grace it was another year for us to creatively adapt and to be faithful to God's call to serve His hurting kids in this ever-changing world. Even with the obstacles, inconveniences, restrictions, travel bans and lockdowns, we saw God at work through FGCI's ministry. [You just can't stop the Gospel!] We saw our staff of nationals in Romania and Moldova step up to the plate to serve—and even flourish!—under difficult circumstances. We rejoiced as we witnessed several of the young people we serve choose Christ as Savior and Lord and be baptized. Several others have become followers of Jesus. And, a silver lining to 2020 was that we were able to work on several building projects at our Bible camp that had been sitting on the back burner for years.



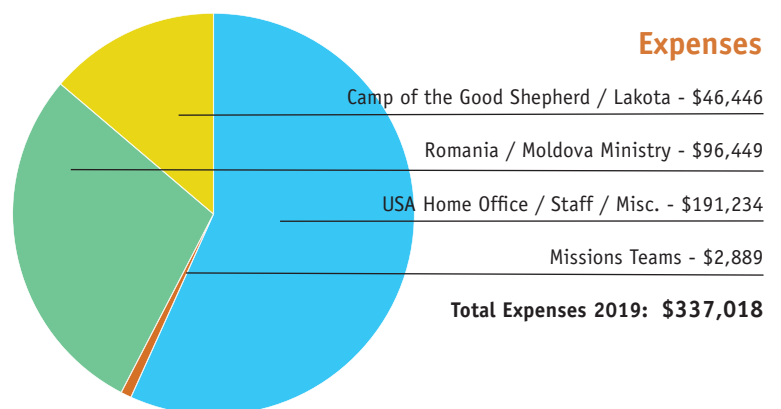
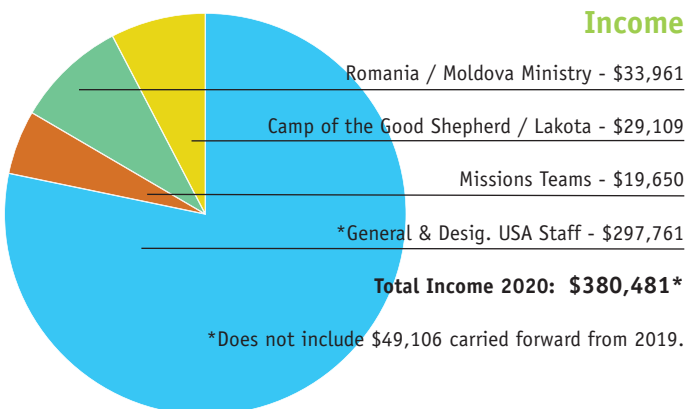
A grateful grandfather and adopted grandson receive a food packet.

Though our overall gift income was down in 2020, our expenses were down, too. This was largely due to two factors: 1) our dear missionaries, Eli and Sheena Davidson, returned from Romania in 2019; and 2) we were unable to send missions teams overseas due to travel restrictions. We rejoice that our supporters were generous and faithful to provide the funds and prayers we needed to get through the year. As a result, we ended 2020 in the black again. [See the Income-Expense pie charts below.] We were able to retain all of our staff members. Praise God! And, through the generosity of our FGCI supporters, we were able to send several thousands of dollars of aid to purchase and distribute food, firewood and other necessities for poor and needy families in Moldova and Romania.

American missions teams grounded in 2020

For the first time in our ministry's 25+ years of history, we were not permitted to take American missions team members into Romania or Moldova to serve during the entire year of 2020. We were unable to lead Bible camps or Vacation Bible School programs as we have in past years.

FGCI's 2020 Income-Expense Summary Snapshot



2020 Year In Review

Oh, how we miss being with our kids in person! We are praying that in 2021 we will be able to start sending missions teams again. As soon as possible after travel restrictions are lifted, Jeremy Befort (FGCI Associate Director) and I (Joel Burkum, Executive Director) plan to travel over to reconnect with our staff and with the children and adults we serve in Romania and Moldova. In the meantime, our capable FGCI-Romania and FGCI-Moldova staff nationals are moving forward with ministry among our kids. Please pray for them.



FGCI celebrates 25+ years of ministry to children!

And speaking of missions trips, June of 2020 marked the 25th Anniversary of For God's Children International's first official missions team that served in Romania back in 1995. In 2021, we plan to celebrate 25+ years of ministry "providing hope, dignity and love in Jesus' name" for God's hurting kids in Romania and Moldova. It sure doesn't seem like 25 years have passed since co-founder Walt Blankenship and I started FGCI. But, as I look back, I am amazed at what God has accomplished through those who have faithfully served with FGCI for the past quarter of a century. It's really astonishing when you start listing all of the ways the Kingdom of God has been impacted by this little ministry. Thousands of lives have been impacted for eternity. Praise God!

Our first "official" FGCI Missions Team (June 1995) to Romania. Top left, clockwise: FGCI Co-founder Walt Blankenship, Aubrey Derby, FGCI Co-founder Joel Burkum, Mary Blankenship, interpreter Michaela Soare & daughter Denisa.



Maleesha Mustion (above right) is FGCI's SponsorLink Ministry Assistant.

We plan to host a 25th Anniversary banquet at our Camp of the Good Shepherd (near Louisville, NE) sometime in August or September 2021. We hope that many of you our supporters and former missions team members will join us for the celebration.

FGCI's SponsorLink program taking shape

Jeremy Befort and I have been working to develop and refine FGCI's SponsorLink program to make it easier for sponsors to direct their gifts to more specific areas of our min-

istry. In 2020 we hired an additional staff member (Maleesha Mustion, SponsorLink Ministry Assistant) to help us gather and share information about the children, adults and programs we sponsor. And, we settled on five major areas for specially-dedicated funding. In 2021 you will hear more about these five basic sponsorship programs. You may become a SponsorLink sponsor by: 1) Sponsoring Students; 2) Sponsoring Foster Children; 3) Sponsoring Ministry Programs/Bible Camps; 4) Sponsoring our InSNC (Individual Specialized Needs Care) Sunshine (Therapy) Room in Zebil, Romania; 5) Sponsoring Medical/Dental Needs. [See more about becoming a SponsorLink sponsor on our website at: www.fgci.org]



Vlad & Carolina Pogor with our Home of the Good Shepherd foster family in Moldova.

minister among the Roma (Gypsy) youth and the community of Vulcanesti. We rejoiced to see Veronica (one of our girls from Home of the Good Shepherd) accept Christ and be baptized in 2020. A couple of the young people from the youth group in Vulcanesti also accepted Christ and were immersed in 2020. Praise God! Early in 2020, we were blessed to add another girl (Zina, now age 9, and loving being in her new home!) to our Home of the Good Shepherd family. Vlad has been leading Bible studies for the Roma youth in the church in Vulcanesti. FGCI, through our SponsorLink program, sponsors several students from this youth group to help them go to high school, and to take English and music classes.

Moldova ministry producing fruit for God's Kingdom

God has truly been blessing Vlad and Carolina Pogor's ministry as they serve with FGCI as house-parents for our Home of the Good Shepherd. They also work in the local church (in Nisporeni) and



Vlad and Roma (Gypsy) youth deliver food relief packs to needy families in Vulcanesti, Moldova.

necessary items for poor families in both countries. We have heard some amazing stories of God at work through these emergency relief packets. Throughout the past several months in Moldova, Vlad has been using the church youth group teens and leaders to prepare and deliver the packets and pray with the recipients. In Romania, "Mama" Nootsie Ristea and our workers there have been purchasing goods and delivering relief packets to many villagers in eastern Romania. Nootsie has been kept very busy

Gifts of food, firewood and other items provides relief and creates relationships

Through the coronavirus shutdowns and difficulties, we have been able to supply our Moldova and Romania workers with funds to purchase and distribute emergency food, firewood and other



Above left: Mama Nootsie and volunteers visit a young family FGCI serves. Above right: FGCI worker Nicoleta works with a girl in FGCI's Sunshine Room.

with phone calls and personal visits to counsel and disciple our kids scattered across Romania and in other countries. Our newest Romanian worker (Nicoleta Cerga) has been faithfully serving adults with special needs in our Sunshine (Therapy) Room in Zebil, Romania, throughout the coronavirus shutdowns. Praise God!

Camp of the Good Shepherd looking good for 2021

Last year would have been the 14th consecutive season of graded Bible camps at our Camp of the Good Shepherd. Sadly, we were unable to host camps due to pandemic restrictions. We had a drive-thru *Rally@theCamp!* in May. We led a few small camps for teens, and had several small groups use our facilities for their programs in late summer and fall. But we didn't let the shutdowns prevent us from moving forward with several building and outdoor work projects. We had some fantastic volunteers through the summer helping us to complete our entryway arch, put in patios and do concrete and drainage work, install a large window in our chapel balcony, do general clean up, mow and do lots of maintenance jobs.

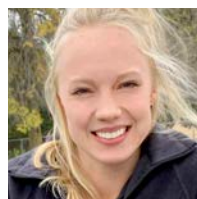


Joel, Brian and Carol (top right) complete the installation of the new CGS entryway letters.



In May, we held a drive-thru version of our annual *Rally@theCamp!* at CGS.

We were blessed to purchase a new zero-turn mower to replace our old mower. And, we raised funds to purchase a used Bobcat from Nebraska Christian College. These pieces of machinery have been used almost daily. Our Facilities Manager Brian Montieth is a very happy camper!



We're praying that things will open up by June to allow us to lead graded Bible camps this summer. In the fall, we were delighted to hire Averi Montieth (Brian's daughter-in-law pictured to the left) as our new CGS Reservations & Usage Coordinator. Contact Averi (through our website) if you are interested in using CGS for your event this year.

We would like to visit you to share an update

2020 didn't afford us many of our usual opportunities to recruit workers or to share ministry updates with our supporters. This year, we hope to visit many more churches, small groups and events. If you would like a personal ministry update from one of our FGCI staff members, please contact us. [Email: fgci@fgci.org. Phone: (712) 328-3776.]



Thank you for your support. Please pray for us as we continue to take the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ to the children whom we serve in Romania, Moldova and here in the States.

love in Jesus,

Joel Burkum

Joel Burkum, FGCI Executive Director



Jeremy Befort chats with a Roma girl who attended an FGCI Bible camp.

FGCI is a 501 (c)(3) Non-Profit ministry (Fed. ID#42-1448176) based in Council Bluffs, IA. FGCI serves children in Romania and Moldova, and at our Camp of the Good Shepherd here in the States (including Lakota children). In Romania and Moldova we also serve adults with special needs, and work among Roma (Gypsy) children and adults.