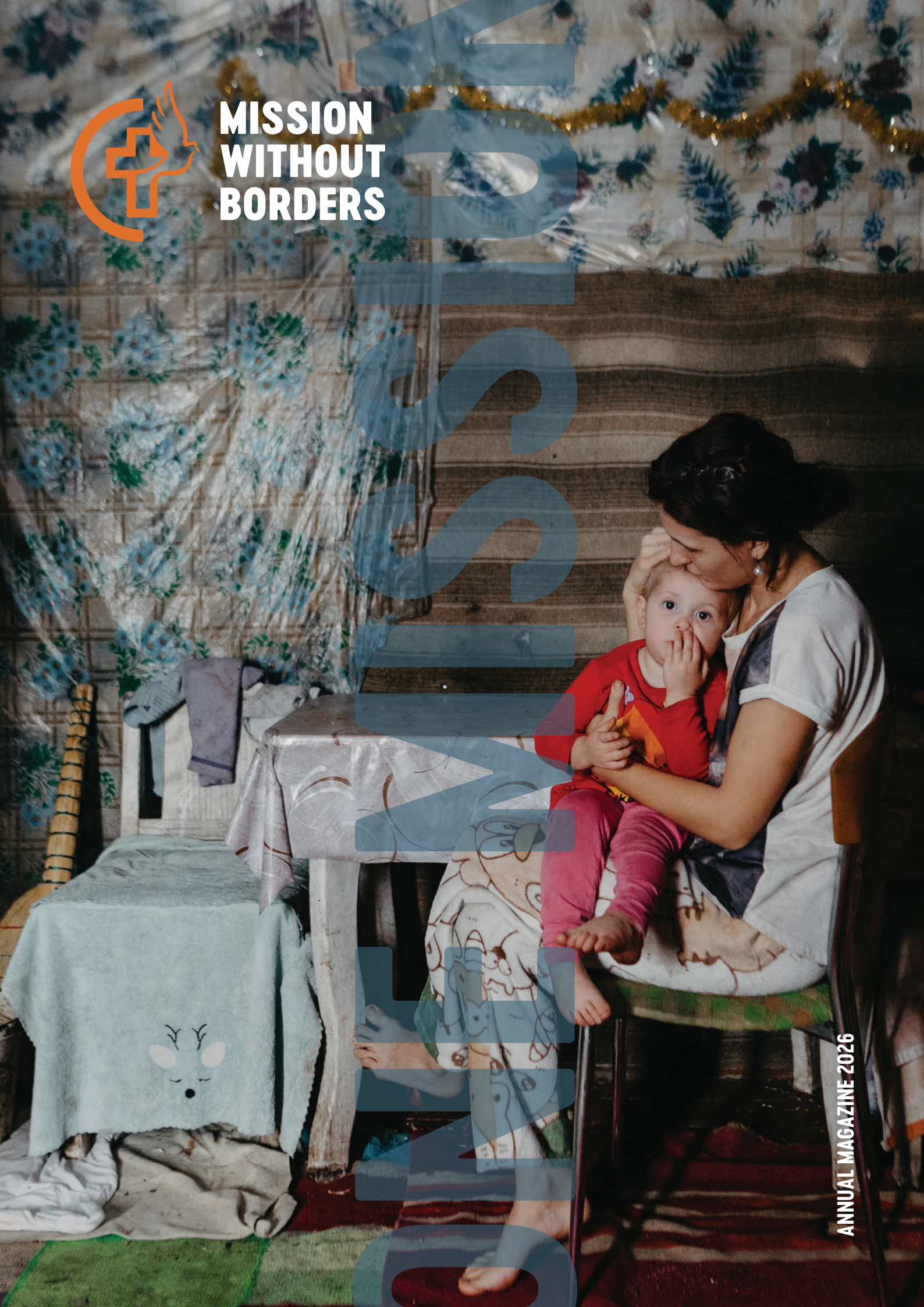
MISSION WITHOUT BORDERS



ANNUAL

ANNUAL MAGAZINE 2026




UKRAINE
MOLDOVA
ROMANIA
BOSNIA-
HERZEGOVINA
BULGARIA
ALBANIA



GETTING TO KNOW US

SIX COUNTRIES, ONE MISSION, COUNTLESS LIVES CHANGED

Across Eastern Europe, millions of people live with the compounding weight of poverty, war, political instability and isolation.

These are not distant or abstract realities.

They are the daily conditions of the families, children and elderly people that Mission Without Borders walks alongside, in six countries, every single day.

SIX COUNTRIES – SIX VOICES

From every country we serve a word from the families you stand with

Ukraine - "I am waiting for peace. For me, peace means the end of fear, the opportunity to walk outside without worrying." - Sofiya, 11

Moldova - "I feel so good when I'm here, it's like I'm in heaven. I wouldn't ever want to leave." - Gabriela, 12

Romania - He's the only help I've got." - Ioana, 47

Bosnia & Herzegovina - Now we have that sense of security in our minds that someone will come and help us make it through." - Dina, 32

Bulgaria - "Our mother taught us to be strong. We had to keep going to make her proud." - Ivan, 24

Albania – "It is a refuge and a lifeline to me." - Klodiana, 35

FIELD STATS

495 CHURCH PARTNERS

226 STAFF

1,659 VOLUNTEERS

172 COMMUNITIES

A MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR

STANDING JUST TWO KILOMETRES FROM THE UKRAINIAN BORDER IN THE VILLAGE OF PALANCA, MOLDOVA, I WAS REMINDED OF THE EXTRAORDINARY DIFFERENCE YOUR SUPPORT CONTINUES TO MAKE.

Standing just two kilometres from the Ukrainian border in the village of Palanca, Moldova, I was reminded of the extraordinary difference your support continues to make.

Recently, I had the privilege of travelling to Moldova for our International Directors Conference. One of the most moving experiences was visiting Palanca, a community that became one of the first points of safety for families fleeing Ukraine when war broke out.

Working alongside partner churches, Mission Without Borders helped support more than 80,000 refugees crossing the border to safety. During my visit, I met some of the remarkable local people who prepared up to 2,000 meals a day for families arriving exhausted, frightened, and uncertain of what lay ahead.

Standing there, I was reminded that behind every statistic is a person, a family, and a story of courage, resilience, and hope.

Today, our work in Moldova continues through a range of life-transforming programmes, including Child & Family Sponsorship, Afterschool Programmes, Educational Scholarships, Summer Camps, and practical family support initiatives. Together, these programmes help vulnerable children and families build brighter futures by providing encouragement, opportunity, practical assistance, and the hope that comes from knowing they are not alone.

Across all six field countries, the impact of your support continues to be extraordinary.

Over the past year, New Zealand supporters helped distribute 134,169 items of clothing, blankets, school supplies, and hygiene products through our Gifts-in-Kind programme. Additional container shipments strengthened winter preparedness and provided practical support to families facing ongoing hardship.

Through sponsorship, 211 children and 516 sponsor-family relationships continued to provide encouragement, connection, and hope. Education remains a key pathway out of poverty, with 926 children receiving educational support and scholarships, and 938 children attending summer camps where they experienced friendship, mentoring, personal development, and the opportunity to hear about God's love.

At Christmas, New Zealand supporters helped provide 3,026 Christmas Love Boxes to vulnerable families - a powerful reminder that they had not been forgotten.

In this edition of our magazine, we feature Alick and Veronica from our Church & Philanthropy team. They have worked tirelessly to strengthen relationships with churches, supporters, and generous donors throughout New Zealand. Over the past year they have represented Mission Without Borders at Festival One, New Wine Festival, and many other events, helping share stories of hope and inviting more people to join this life-changing mission.

The stories we share in this magazine are a testament to what God can do through faithful partnership. Every sponsored child, every family supported, every scholarship awarded, and every parcel delivered reflects the generosity, prayers, and compassion of supporters like you.

Thank you for your partnership, your prayers, and your generosity. Together, we are bringing hope, dignity, and transformation to vulnerable people across Eastern Europe.

WITH HEARTFELT GRATITUDE



Barry Raeburn
National Director



Standing with Ukraine Country Director Volydymr, in Palanca, Moldova just two kilometres from the Ukraine border

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FIELD COUNTRY UPDATES

ROMANIA



Alexandru and the team in Romania remain committed to serving vulnerable children, families, and communities, sharing Christ's love through the work of Mission Without Borders. This year, more than 1,000 children attended our summer camps, and we opened two new after-school projects offering hot meals, homework support, and a safe place to learn. Many adults are also hearing the Gospel, with some choosing to follow God. Thank you for standing with us, please keep our team and the people we serve in your prayers.

UKRAINE



Volodymyr has served with Mission Without Borders for 26 years and has been Country Director for Ukraine since January 2025. Despite another incredibly challenging year for our nation, the Lord's protection and your faithful generosity have enabled us to keep supporting vulnerable families, children, and elderly people across the country. Thank you for your compassion and unwavering care, your support brings practical help and hope to those facing the hardships of war. Please pray for peace and for Ukraine's long journey of rebuilding.

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA



Dalibor has served as Country Director for Bosnia and Herzegovina for 16 years, faithfully leading the ministry and helping bring lasting change to vulnerable families. Our goal is to reach, empower, and encourage families to transform their lives, sharing God's love and the hope found in Christ alongside practical support. We are deeply grateful to everyone who partners with us through prayer and generosity. Our prayer is that God will richly bless you and continue transforming the lives of the families we serve.

BULGARIA

Sarkis has served as Country Director for Bulgaria since 2008, faithfully leading the ministry and supporting families and children living in poverty. By God's grace, and thanks to your generosity, we supported 190 families, ran after-school programmes for 40 children, and sent 300 children to summer camps. We also delivered 3,500 Operation Christmas Love parcels, cared for 450 people with disabilities, served hot soup to 80 people experiencing homelessness, and supported 60 elderly people living alone. Thank you for partnering with us.



ALBANIA

Monika has served with Mission Without Borders since 1992 and is Country Director for Albania, faithfully walking alongside vulnerable families and communities. Thanks to your generosity, this past year we served 335 families, helped 31 families achieve independence through self-sufficiency projects, provided scholarships for 63 students, equipped 678 children with school supplies, and supported 95 children with learning difficulties. Behind every number is a story of hope and God's faithful provision. Thank you for partnering with us in this work.



MOLDOVA

Tudor has served with Mission Without Borders since 2016 and leads the ministry in Moldova as Country Director. This past year we witnessed God's faithful care for those living in poverty, and your generous support made a meaningful difference in the lives of children, families, and elderly people we serve. Together, we're bringing hope where it's needed most and sharing the love of Christ in practical ways. Thank you for standing with us, may God richly bless you.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

TOM O'NEIL SERVES AS THE COUNTRY BOARD CHAIR FOR MISSION WITHOUT BORDERS NEW ZEALAND.

Appointed to the NZ Board in 2022, Tom has a strong background in NFP governance, executive coaching, and human resource management.

As well as this, Tom was also appointed to the MWB International Board in 2024, jointly serving the organisation in this capacity.

As Board Chair, Tom channels his passion for Christian ministry and community advocacy into his role with Mission Without Borders, fostering the transformative hope of Jesus Christ within Eastern Europe. His deep commitment to Christian-driven community support and evangelism was initially shaped as a young man by his hands-on involvement in two short-term ministry initiatives within India and the Philippines.

Beyond his governance duties, Tom is Managing Director of CV.CO.NZ Ltd, a leading careers consultancy that has designed career solutions for over 15,000 clients in more than 60 countries worldwide. He is the author of four books, including the international best-selling personal development guide, The 1% Principle, (published by HarperCollins), as well as his most recent book The New Rules for Job Hunting. Tom has also written for the Harvard Business Review and The Economist, and has appeared as a career specialist on TVNZ, TV3 and Radio Rhema.

Tom is qualified with a Bachelor of Social Sciences in Psychology, and has recently completed a Certificate in Christian Ministry. He is now studying towards a Diploma in Divinity which he hopes to complete in 2028.

Tom lives on a lifestyle block near Waiuku (Auckland) with his wife, Sarah - who is also an international gardening author (AKA Sarah The Gardener) - and they fellowship at Elim Church in Pukekohe. Together they have two boys – both in their early twenties, as well as a dog, cat and 7 chickens.

As I reflect on the past year, I am deeply grateful for the commitment of our supporters, volunteers, staff, and partners across Aotearoa, New Zealand. Together, we have continued to bring practical support, hope, and the message of Christ to vulnerable families and communities across Eastern Europe. The impact achieved this year is a testament to the generosity and faithfulness of those who stand with Mission Without Borders. On behalf of the Board, I want to sincerely thank everyone who has contributed through prayer, giving, advocacy, and service. Looking ahead, we remain committed to strengthening our support for those we serve, stewarding resources wisely, and expanding our impact where the need is greatest. We are excited about the opportunities before us and confident that, together, we can continue transforming lives and communities through faith, compassion, and action.



Tom O'Neil
National Chairperson
Mission Without Borders NZ

A MESSAGE FROM OUR INTERNATIONAL CEO

WHEN I PAUSE AND REFLECT ON THE SHARED WORK OF MISSION WITHOUT BORDERS, I AM STRUCK NOT FIRST BY PROJECTS OR PROGRAMMES, BUT BY PEOPLE—EACH LIFE KNOWN, EACH STORY CARRYING BOTH BURDEN AND HOPE.

In our work in Eastern Europe, we often encounter situations that feel heavy: families facing ongoing hardship, children growing up with uncertainty, and communities where the future can seem fragile. In those moments, it is easy to feel the weight of what is still broken. And yet, quietly, and persistently, we witness something else - signs of hope taking root. A child beginning to flourish. A family rediscovering stability. A community finding strength, and people coming to faith.

These moments may seem small, but they remind us that true transformation is often steady, patient, and deeply personal.

I am continually encouraged by the faithfulness of our 2000+ local staff, volunteers and workers who carry this mission forward—but also our supporters, and partners. Each contributes not just effort, but heart. Much of what we do goes unseen: in long conversations, in faithful presence, and in the simple choice not to give up. This quiet perseverance reflects what God deeply values—faithfulness over time—and a shared conviction that every person matters, and no situation is beyond hope.

As we look ahead, our calling remains both simple and demanding: to stay close to those we serve, to listen well, and to respond with compassion and clarity. Lasting change rarely comes quickly, but it grows where there is trust, commitment, and a willingness to walk alongside others.

In this, we are encouraged by the words of Paul to the Galatians. In chapter 6:9 he says: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up".

Thank you for being part of this journey. Your financial support, prayers, and encouragement make a real difference—more than is often seen, but never without impact.

With gratitude.



Hans van Baaren

International CEO

THANKS TO YOUR SUPPORT

OUR IMPACT IN 2025

OVER THE COURSE OF 2025, MISSION WITHOUT BORDERS IMPACTED MORE THAN 60,000 PEOPLE.

Through our programmes and projects we have been able to support families, children and vulnerable adults across Eastern Europe practically, spiritually, and emotionally. We carry out this work through local staff, and church partners in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine.

STATISTICS



10,064
BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE STUDENTS



7,847
BACKPACKS DISTRIBUTED



495
CHURCH PARTNERS



116,318
SOUP KITCHEN MEALS SERVED TO THOSE IN NEED



32,000
LOVE BOXES DISTRIBUTED



7,671
CHILDREN ATTENDED SUMMER CAMPS



172
COMMUNITIES SUPPORTING FAMILIES AND CHILDREN



245
STUDENTS PROVIDED WITH VOCATIONAL TRAINING

81,785
BIBLES AND CHRISTIAN LITERATURE DISTRIBUTED

183
ELDERLY INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTED

812
AFTER SCHOOL CHILDREN

505
STUDENTS WHO RECEIVED SCHOLARSHIPS

24,416
STREET MERCY MEALS SERVED TO HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS

Together, we're not just easing hardship - we're building stronger communities, transforming lives, and sharing the love of Jesus. From all of us at Mission Without Borders, thank you for your extraordinary heart. We couldn't do this without you.

"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." - Galatians 6:9

TOGETHER, WE'RE CHANGING LIVES FOR ETERNITY.

WINTER RESCUE

I AM THEIRS

A FAMILY IN SARAJEVO FIGHTS THE FREEZING DARK OF WINTER, UNTIL WARMTH AND FRIENDSHIP ARRIVE

No matter how hard they try, Eldin and Esmerelda cannot keep the cold from creeping into their home.

The young couple, both just 26, live in a small, rundown house in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Four children fill their days with noise and laughter — Isko, 8, Emira, 7, Danijel, 5, and Adil, 4 — but poverty presses in from every side. The house has no central heating. Its ageing woodwork lets in the bitter Balkan winter. Blankets stuffed against window frames offer little defense.

"As soon as winter sets in, they really feel the freezing cold," says Sandra, their Mission Without Borders family coordinator. "They try to get as much firewood as they can, but it's difficult to have enough to last the entire winter."

With four small children in an unheated home, illness follows the cold. Colds and flu spread through the house each winter, and Esmerelda has had to give up steady work to care for sick children again and again. Eldin takes whatever labor he can find; together, the couple also collect scrap metal and sell what they can at the Sunday market. Still, the smallest expense can feel overwhelming.

Every autumn brings the same crushing arithmetic: school supplies and warm clothing for the children just as heating costs begin to climb. For families already living in poverty, there is little room left to stretch.



WARMTH, FOOD AND HOPE

SHARE WARMTH TODAY TODAY

This year, through Mission Without Borders' family sponsorship programme, Eldin and Esmerelda received something they could hardly believe — a full winter's supply of firewood. As she watched it being unloaded, Esmerelda wept, overwhelmed by the relief of knowing her children would sleep warm.

But the firewood was not the only gift. Sandra's regular visits have brought something the family treasures just as much: friendship. Once shy and withdrawn, Esmerelda has slowly opened up, finding in Sandra someone she can talk to freely. The children race to greet her car.

"They can see that I am dear and important to them," Sandra says, "and that I am theirs."

For this family, poverty is a daily battle — against cold, against illness, against uncertainty. But thanks to the support of Mission Without Borders' sponsors, Eldin and Esmerelda now face winter with warmth, dignity, and the knowledge that they are not facing it alone.

"AS SOON AS WINTER SETS IN, THEY REALLY FEEL THE FREEZING COLD," SAYS SANDRA, THEIR MISSION WITHOUT BORDERS FAMILY COORDINATOR. "THEY TRY TO GET AS MUCH FIREWOOD AS THEY CAN, BUT IT'S DIFFICULT TO HAVE ENOUGH TO LAST THE ENTIRE WINTER."







CHILD SPONSORSHIP

WHERE JOY AND POVERTY MEET

CHILDREN'S LAUGHTER TELLS A STORY OF HOPE

I travelled to the city of Sibiu in Romania for our annual fundraising conference. It was a special opportunity to connect with representatives from our country affiliates and to spend time with our field team, who serve families and children across Romania every day.

While I was there, I had the privilege of visiting villages to see our work firsthand. It was an experience that deeply moved me.

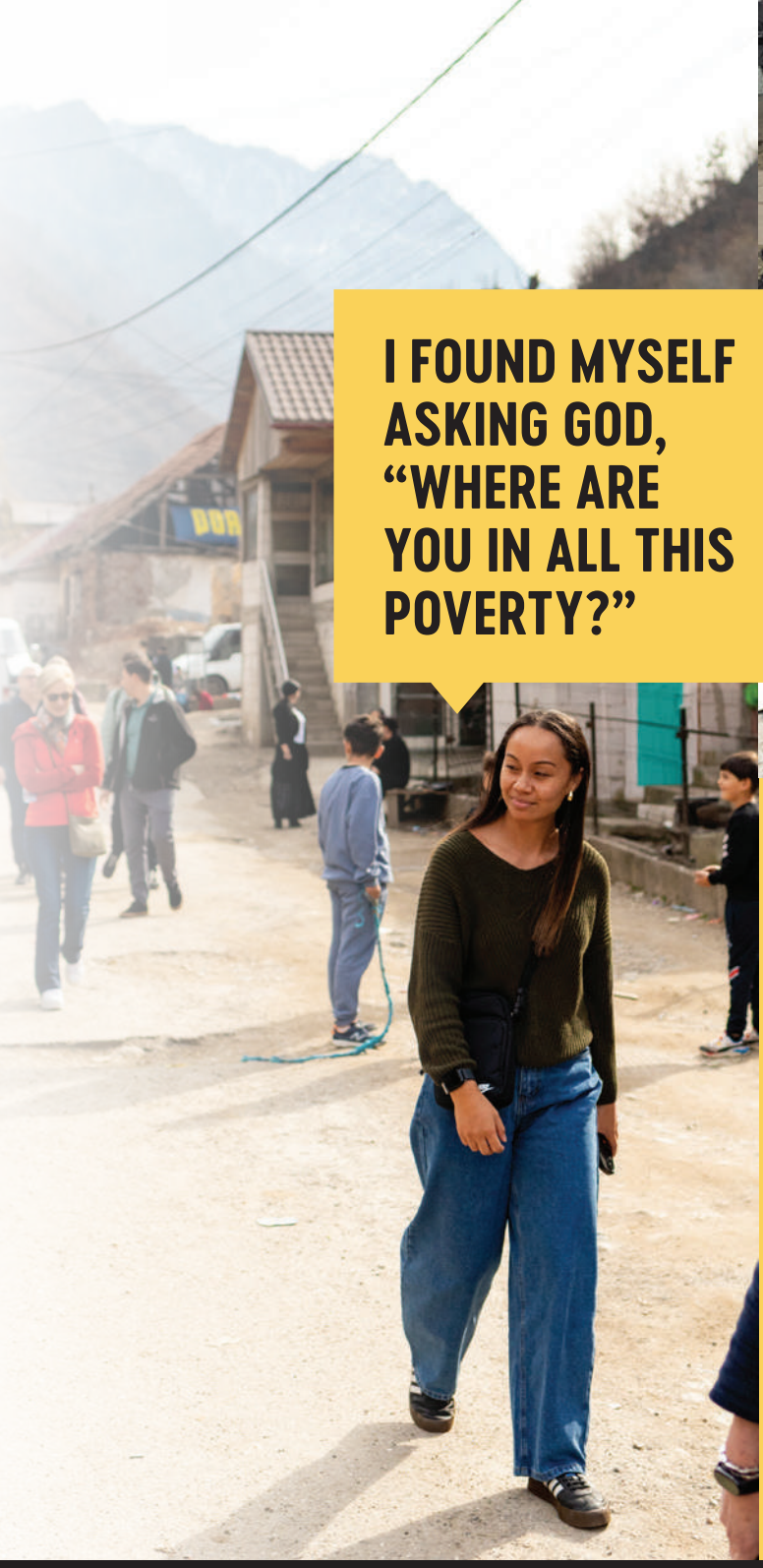
I found myself asking God, "Where are you in all this poverty?" Seeing families living in a single room — a space used for cooking, eating, sleeping and resting, with no toilet or bathroom — was difficult to take in.

And yet, in the midst of these hard realities, I began to see glimpses of hope shining through the work being done in these communities.

I saw it in the children — in their singing, their laughter in the after-school care programs, and the joy on their faces as they were served warm meals. I saw it in the dedication of our partnered local churches, whose hearts are fully committed to sharing Christ with the people around them. And I saw it in the tireless service of our field coordinators and volunteers, who pour themselves out for families day after day.

It was encouraging to witness God's love and compassion shining through them, touching the lives of those who need it most. A humbling reminder that faith and hope often come in unexpected ways.





I FOUND MYSELF ASKING GOD, "WHERE ARE YOU IN ALL THIS POVERTY?"







As Paul writes, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice!" This is a joy that does not depend on circumstances — even in the midst of the poverty I witnessed in these villages.

I continue to pray for these communities, and I look forward to visiting again.

Thank you for not only your prayers, but for generously giving and stewarding towards children in need — bringing hope where it's needed most.

In Christ,

Helen Ta'alo

Communications & Fundraising Manager

WOULD YOU CONSIDER SPONSORING A CHILD LIKE ONE OF THESE?

YOUR MONTHLY GIFT CAN HELP CHILDREN LIKE THESE MOVE FROM CRISIS TO STABILITY, FROM FEAR TO SAFETY - AND GIVE CHILDREN A CHANCE TO DREAM AGAIN.

BECAUSE EVERY CHILD DESERVES TO KNOW THEY ARE LOVED, AND NEVER FORGOTTEN.

THANK YOU.

Join us today and be the beacon of hope for a family in Eastern Europe.

FOR JUST $45 PER MONTH YOU CAN HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

CALL US TODAY
0800 469 269

OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
MISSIONWITHOUTBORDERS.ORG.NZ



SHE SHOULDN'T HAVE TO BE THIS BRAVE.

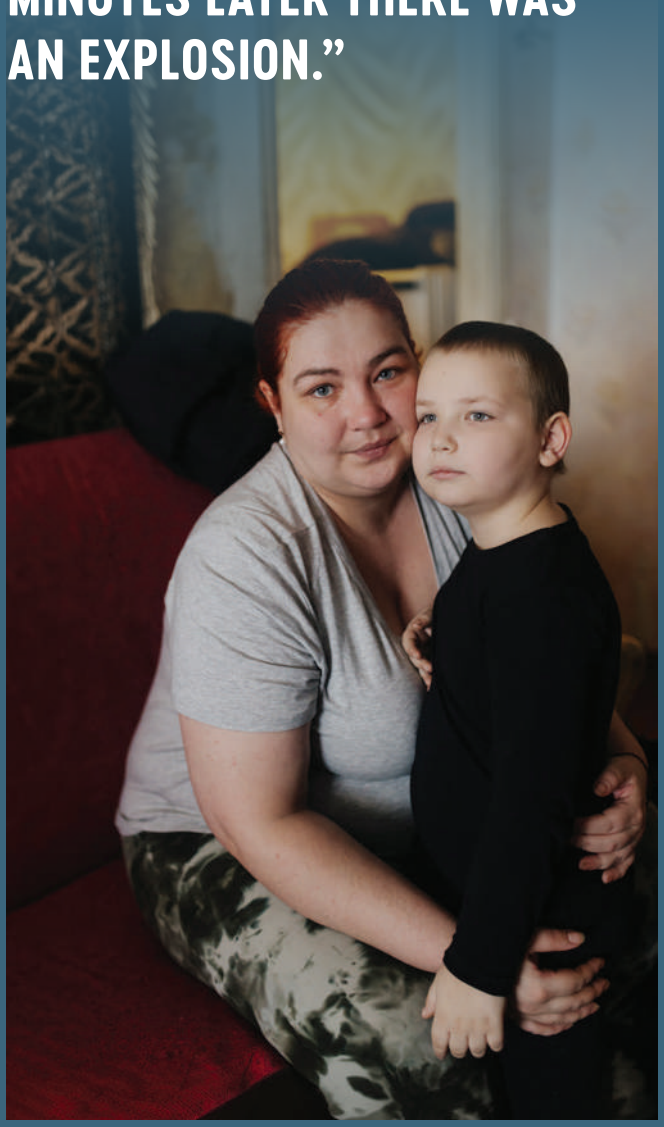
BEHIND EVERY STATISTIC FROM UKRAINE'S FRONTLINES IS A FACE LIKE HERS.

THROUGH FAMILY SPONSORSHIP, YOU CAN HELP HER AND HER FAMILY FIND, HOPE, STABILITY AND A FUTURE BEYOND SURVIVAL.



WOUNDS THAT NEED HEALING

“WE WERE DRINKING TEA IN THE YARD – ME, MY HUSBAND, AND MY GODFATHER. WE WERE TALKING ABOUT HOW STRANGE THE SILENCE FELT, AND HOW WE SHOULD APPRECIATE IT WHILE IT LASTED. A FEW MINUTES LATER THERE WAS AN EXPLOSION.”



Both Valentyna’s husband and godfather were killed. Valentyna survived, but now she faces the reality of picking up the pieces for her family. Fleeing with her two sons, mother, brother, and sister, they started in an abandoned house with no running water or heating. Eventually, they moved into a rented room, but were charged high rent and given little compassion. Now, they rent two small apartments next to each other, but the wounds of war need help to heal, and scars take time to fade. Valentyna’s youngest son, Mykola (6), stopped speaking properly after the attacks, and her niece wakes up from nightmares and panics at loud sounds. Every phone is kept on silent now. The gaps of what Valentyna’s life used to look like are still felt every day. “I loved working on the land,” she said. “Now my main responsibility is simply to care for my children. But I feel like there is little I can do to build a better future for them,” as jobs are scarce and housing is expensive.

Since receiving MWB’s support, Valentyna knows what it means when people step into the empty spaces and offer a helping hand. For families like hers, it is the ray of hope that lights the long path of recovery ahead of them. “We do not always know the full story of the people we help,” said Sergey, MWB staff. “With God’s help, with His love, we patiently support people, and we pray for God’s mercy in their extremely difficult circumstances.”

Stand in the gap for families in crisis



FAMILY SPONSORSHIP UPDATE

NEW EASTERN UKRAINE COMMUNITY

MWB IS MOVING TOWARDS THE HARDEST PLACES BECAUSE WHERE THERE IS NEED THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO STAND IN THE GAP

We're expanding our reach closer to the frontlines of war because the need is growing and we need people to step up so support can reach these new families

Will you be one of them?

STAND IN THE GAP FOR FAMILIES WHO HAVE NO ONE ELSE TO TURN TO YOUR MONTHLY GIFT

CAN HELP FAMILIES LIKE HERS MOVE FROM CRISIS TO STABILITY, FROM FEAR TO SAFETY - AND GIVE CHILDREN A CHANCE TO DREAM AGAIN.

BECAUSE EVERY FAMILY DESERVES TO KNOW THEY ARE LOVED, AND NEVER FORGOTTEN.

THANK YOU.

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OPERATION COVER UP



Letter From Liz

As we look back on another year of keeping children, families, the elderly and the street people warm, I want to take a moment to thank the silent heroes of our charity.

To the wonderful husbands and families of our volunteers. Every time your wife, mother or even grandmother sits down to knit, to co-ordinate a group or sort, box or press blankets and various other items, she was giving her time to someone in real need in Eastern Europe. We do recognise the time spent came from your evenings, your weekends and shared family moments.

By encouraging her passion and patiently navigating living (at times) with rooms that have been full of wool, or stacks of blankets and garments, you become an essential part of our mission.

You personally may not see or feel the bitter winter cold in Eastern Europe, but the underprivileged wrapping themselves in those warm woollen blankets and clothing are feeling the direct result of your generosity and support.

Thank you for being the foundation that allows our volunteers to do this life changing work. We truly couldn't do it without you, so thank you.

I say to Barry, who has many times had our house filled with huge amounts of blankets, quilts, clothing and many other items, "I truly could not do this work without your endless patience and love. I realise how difficult it has been at times for you". A woman with an insatiable passion to be a loving hand to the plight of the poor and needy is sometimes very hard to reason with!

I want to finish by expressing my deepest gratitude to everyone who has supported me in this Operation Cover Up journey. Every message, encouraging word and acts of support means the world to me. We truly could not have reached this point of twenty seven years of our mission, without the wonderful country wide community of coordinators, knitters, sewers and supporters. I would like to thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

May His grace be your strength.

Liz Clarke
Operation Cover Up National Coordinator

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Or go online to:
www.missionwithoutborders.org.nz



WHAT'S NEEDED FOR 2027

BRAND NEW KNITTED ITEMS

- ◯ Jerseys, cardigans, socks, 3-piece sets of hat and gloves (or mittens) and scarfs. Knitwear for children, (however baby's items are not required)
- ◯ Blankets pure wool only see 'preferred blanket size' information.

BRAND NEW NON-KNITTED ITEM

- ◯ Clothes and shoes for children aged between four to 15 years old Clothes and shoes for adults.
- ◯ Hygiene items (soap, flannel, stick deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste, comb or brush, hair ties).
- ◯ Sports and games equipment e.g. balls for soccer, volleyball, tennis, basketball, inflation pump, baseball set, pole tennis set, hula hoops, frisbees, water guns, chess sets.
- ◯ Sewing machines (new or used in good working order). Material (preferably soft). Haberdashery. Stationery (exercise books, notebooks, pens, pencils). Linen (sheets, pillowcases, duvet covers, towels).
- ◯ For the homeless: sleeping bags, warm men's trousers, jackets, jerseys, warm socks, gloves and hats, backpacks, disposable shavers/shaving soap.
- ◯ Sanitary products, toiletries (soap, flannel, toothbrushes, and toothpaste), disposable razors and blade.

We received an abundance of beautiful blankets and knitted items-truly amazing! However, I need to remind everyone that we only accept new items, not second-hand goods. This year, we received quite a few second-hand items, which takes a lot of time to sort and dispose of, ultimately leading to unnecessary effort and waste.

CRAFTING BEAUTY STITCH BY STITCH

PREFERRED BLANKET SIZE

At least 160cm x 140cm. Seven strips measuring 160cm in length make a blanket. Use size 8 (4mm) needles. Cast on 40 stitches and knitting garter stitch (plain knitting) to 160cm in length. All blankets must be made of pure wool, not acrylic as it doesn't retain the same warmth, for the homeless, darker colors, heavier wool and even larger sizes are required and blankets. For more information, contact a local coordinator.

FUNDS FOR SHIPPING FREIGHT TO EASTERN EUROPE

We need your help to cover these costs. Total costs for internal transportation in New Zealand plus container shipping to Europe is around $35,000 all up, so as a guide, we ask for a donation of $5 per blanket. Payments of $5 or more qualify for a tax rebate receipt (name and address are needed).

PAYMENTS CAN BE MADE

By credit card: phone Mission Without Borders (toll free) 0800 469 269 or through our website www.missionwithoutborders.org.nz/donate

By direct deposit or online banking to Mission Without Borders' ANZ account:

North Island: 06 0185 0122206 04
South Island: 06 0185 0122206 05

Call, email or write to us with the details of your donation so we can send you a receipt.

Email: nzadmin@mwbi.org

Phone: 0800 469 269

Mission Without Borders POBox 76141 Freeman Way Auckland 2104

OCU STORY SOUTH ISLAND



Kaiapot Knit & Knatter group



Maureen Braun on the left and Anne Murchison on the right who jointly coordinate the South Island



The West Coast group of knitters

SIGN UP TO RECEIVE OUR OCU NEWSLETTER

Updates of what's happening across the country with our OCU community and on the field with the donated blankets and items



STITCHED WITH LOVE

THE KAIAPOI KNIT AND NATTER GROUP

For more than ten years, a small group of dedicated women in Kaiapoi has been meeting week after week, needles in hand, turning wool into warmth for families they will never meet.

The Kaiapoi Knit and Natter Group has produced hundreds of blankets and garments for Operation Cover Up over the past decade. Some members have been part of the group since it began; others have joined more recently, drawn in by the same sense of purpose and community.

Among them is a woman who suffered a severe stroke 30 years ago. Rather than let it stop her, she taught herself to knit and crochet using only her left hand — and now looks forward to the group's weekly gathering as one of the highlights of her week. Another member knits an astonishing two jerseys every single week.

This year alone, the group's dedication resulted in 58 blankets, 127 pairs of slippers, 109 sets, 120 jerseys, and 83 toys — each one made by hand, with care, for someone facing hardship on the other side of the world.

But for these women, the group offers more than a chance to give. It's a place of friendship and companionship, where ideas are shared over cups of tea and needles click in comfortable rhythm. There's a quiet joy in knowing that something made in Kaiapoi will bring warmth to a child or family they'll never meet.

Each year, before their creations are packed into the Canterbury shipment, the group holds a Blessing Service at their local church — a moment to give thanks for the hands that made each item, and to send their work out into the world with hope.

Ten years, hundreds of garments, and countless hours of love — the Kaiapoi Knit and Natter Group is proof that even the smallest stitches can make a lasting difference.

RANGIORA CLOTHING SHOP

RAISING MONEY FOR WOOL

AROUND 14 YEARS AGO, TWO WOMEN KNELT IN PRAYER, ASKING GOD HOW TO FUND THEIR MISSION WORK. GARAGE SALES AND BAKE SALES HAD RUN THEIR COURSE — IT WAS TIME FOR SOMETHING NEW.

An idea took root: a secondhand clothing shop. But where would they find a space, and where would the clothes come from?

One of the women, Maureen McQuarrie, had the answer sitting on her own property — a run-down shed with a dirt floor. A group of men rolled up their sleeves, gave the old shed a fresh coat of paint, and fitted it out. Someone donated a door. And just like that, they were in business.

The shop opened its doors in February 2014. Word spread, customers came, and donations of clothing began pouring in. The proceeds allowed Maureen and her team to buy wool for local knitters and to support Special Projects through Mission Without Borders.

By 2022, the little shed had been well and truly outgrown. The shop moved to a cottage on the grounds of the local Methodist church, where it still operates today.

Clothing comes from donations, garage sales, markets and fairs, with prices ranging from just $2 to $12. In these tight economic times, many customers are blessed to find good clothing at a fraction of retail price — and the shop runs entirely on volunteer hands and hearts.

Along the way, the volunteers have collected as many stories as garments. Some customers come just for a chat, sometimes opening up about hardships they're facing, grateful simply to be heard.

Once a year, the shop hosts a Designer Night, selling its top-quality, mostly label clothing.



THE SHOP OPENED ITS DOORS IN FEBRUARY 2014. WORD SPREAD, CUSTOMERS CAME, AND DONATIONS OF CLOTHING BEGAN POURING IN.

It's become a firm favourite — groups of women arrive together, hunting for bargains, and leave with beautiful finds.

With an estimated 350–400 knitters across Canterbury, the shop is able to supply wool that blesses not only the knitters themselves, but also the recipients of their work. Through Operation Cover Up, their blankets and garments make their way to families facing hardship in Eastern Europe.

"DO NOT DESPISE THESE SMALL BEGINNINGS, FOR THE LORD REJOICES TO SEE THE WORK BEGIN."
— ZECHARIAH 4:10





LEAVE A LEGACY OF HOPE

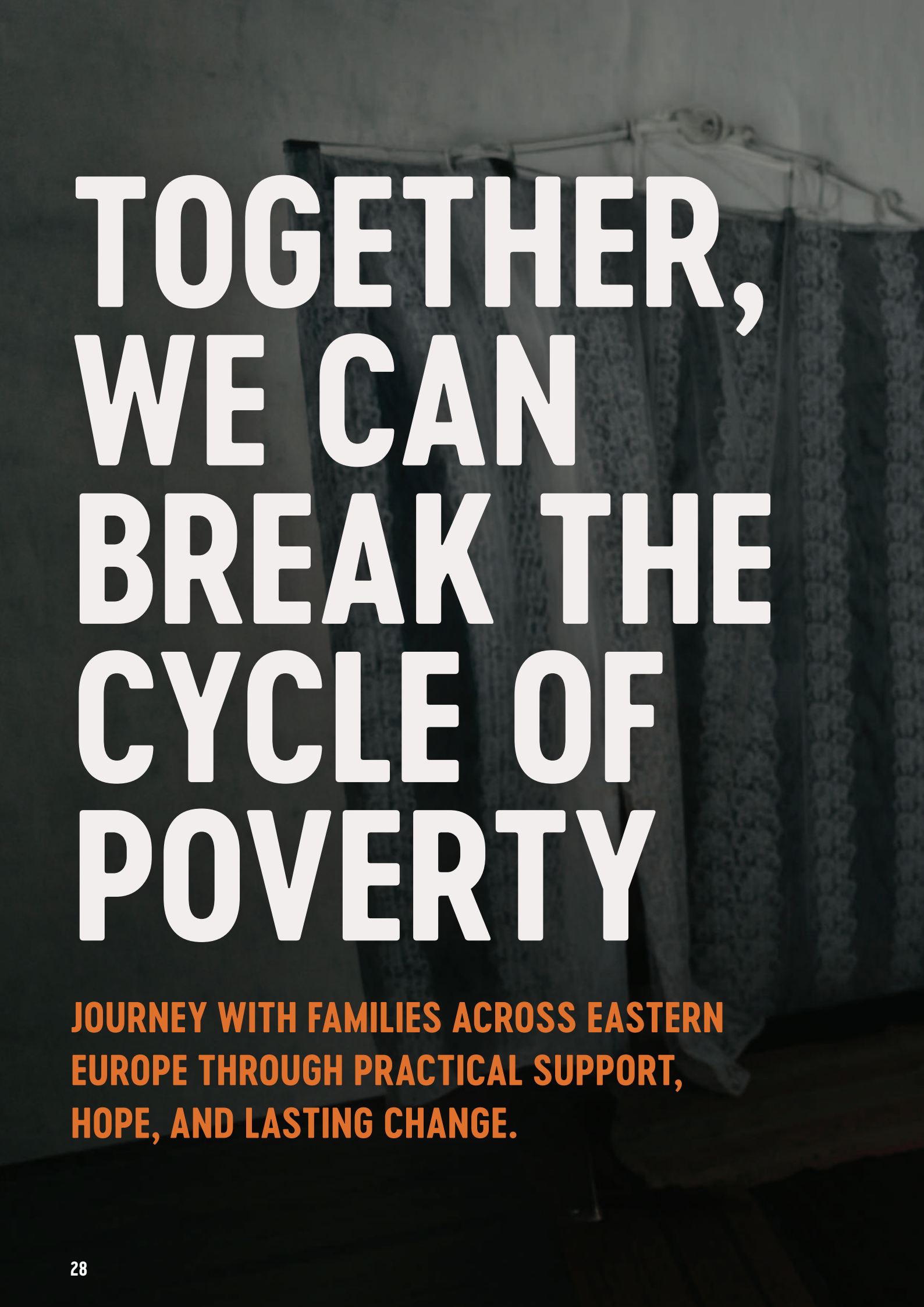
MISSION WITHOUT BORDERS HAS PARTNERED WITH EVERYWILL TO HELP YOU WRITE YOUR WILL ONLINE — FREE OF CHARGE.

ONCE YOUR LOVED ONES ARE PROVIDED FOR, YOU CAN CHOOSE TO LEAVE SOMETHING MORE: A GIFT THAT EMPOWERS FUTURE GENERATIONS LIVING IN POVERTY TO THRIVE, AND GIVES THEM A FUTURE FILLED WITH HOPE.

Start your free will today by scanning the QR code

A SMALL STEP FOR YOU. A LASTING LEGACY FOR A CHILD YET TO COME.





TOGETHER, WE CAN BREAK THE CYCLE OF POVERTY

JOURNEY WITH FAMILIES ACROSS EASTERN EUROPE THROUGH PRACTICAL SUPPORT, HOPE, AND LASTING CHANGE.







SUMMER CAMP

WHERE CHILDREN CAN BE CHILDREN

"SUMMER CAMP CHANGED HER": A GIRL GAINS CONFIDENCE AT CAMP

This summer, eight-year-old Elena did something she had never done before. She boarded a bus without her parents, holding tightly to a small backpack, her heart full of nervous excitement. She was on her way to a place she had only ever heard about from her older sister: summer camp.

Elena is one of nine children in a loving family facing poverty in Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Her parents work hard to provide the basics of food, clothing, school supplies, rent; but there's little left for anything extra. Frequent moves have made life even more unstable, and opportunities many take for granted, like school trips or a summer holiday, are simply out of reach.

That's why camp means so much.

Each year, Mission Without Borders runs summer camps across six countries in Eastern Europe, welcoming children growing up in poverty and unstable homes. For many, it's their only holiday away from home and often their first experience of a bed of their own, comfortable conditions, and three meals a day.

Alongside sports, crafts, and creative workshops, children take part in Bible lessons and worship, where they're reminded, they are known, valued, and loved. Mission coordinators and volunteers become trusted mentors, offering the kind of encouragement and care that lets children simply be children again.

When Elena arrived, she was shy, she struggled to fit in at school and felt unsure in new environments. But at camp, making friends came easily. Each day she grew a little more confident.



“SUMMER CAMP CHANGED HER,” BELMA SAID. “LEARNING TO BE AWAY FROM HOME, MAKING NEW FRIENDS, TRYING NEW THINGS... IT GAVE HER CONFIDENCE SHE DIDN’T HAVE BEFORE.”

Her older sister, Belma, 23, was volunteering at the camp as a group leader and watched the change unfold. “Summer camp changed her,” Belma said. “Learning to be away from home, making new friends, trying new things... it gave her confidence she didn’t have before.” Back at school, that change stuck, in second grade, Elena was more open, more secure, more willing to take part.

For Elena, it began with the swimming pool, which she proudly called “the sea.” She’d never swum before, and the first time in, she clung to the edge, afraid. But surrounded by encouragement and laughter, she slowly let go — and the moment she realised she could float and move through the water on her own was about more than swimming. It was about discovering she was braver than she thought.

Her mother, Amela, feels the weight of what this meant. “With nine children, it’s incredibly hard to give each of them extra opportunities,” she said. “Too often, everyone misses out. That’s why this meant so much.”

For Elena, and for children like her across Eastern Europe, a week at camp is never just a week. It’s a chance to be seen, to be encouraged, and to discover something new about who they are — a chance that stays with them long after the bus ride home.

HELPING CHILDREN DISCOVER WHO THEY ARE.

A DAUGHTER'S DREAM, A FAMILY'S HOPE

VANESA GREW UP IN POVERTY IN DURRËS. TODAY, SHE'S ON THE PATH TO BECOMING THE NURSE HER OWN FAMILY NEVER HAD.

Vanesa, 23, grew up with her family in the ex-swamp area of Durrës, Albania — a poor community of makeshift houses, few amenities, and frequent floods that spread pollution. Her parents both struggled with serious health issues and financial hardship, and there were times when it seemed unlikely Vanesa would even finish school. Yet despite the challenges, she refused to let poverty define her future.

When her family first joined Mission Without Borders' family sponsorship programme, they were living in a small house with barely enough income to cover daily necessities. Her father, Dashi, often collected scrap iron to sell just to provide for the family. Her mother, Mirela, suffered from facial nerve paralysis, making it hard for her to find work. Through it all, the Mission supported the family with food, hygiene products, advice, friendship, and prayer.

Even in the hardest seasons, Vanesa carried a quiet determination. After graduating from vocational high school in culinary studies, she made a life-changing decision: to study nursing.

"I wanted a profession that would give me stability and security," she said. "But I also wanted to care for people who are suffering and need support the most. Ever since I was little, I witnessed my parents not receiving proper care in hospitals. Medical staff often seemed to wait for bribes before offering treatment, but my parents had no money. It was painful to feel so helpless."

Through the Mission's scholarship project, Vanesa began university studies in nursing. Today, she has completed her Bachelor's degree and is continuing a Master's in Surgical Nursing, while preparing for the national "Nurse for Albania" exam and gaining hospital experience in Durrës.

"Sometimes it's tiring managing everything together, but every challenge reminds me why I started," she said.

Mission family coordinator Kostandin Vasilini has watched the family's journey closely. "When we first met this family, they were struggling with survival and uncertainty. Today, Vanesa is preparing for a professional career in healthcare and becoming a source of hope for her entire family," he said.



"I WANTED A PROFESSION THAT WOULD GIVE ME STABILITY AND SECURITY,"

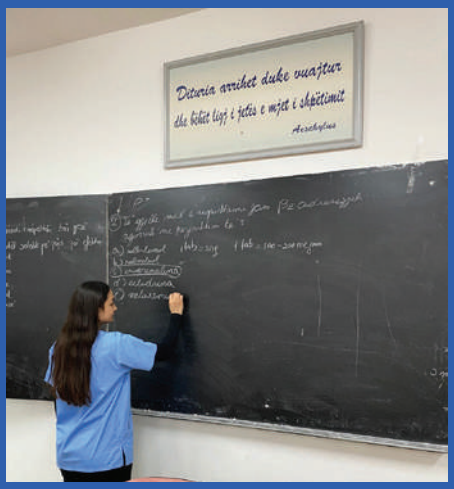
Her impact is already reaching further. Her younger sister, Sonila, 15, says Vanesa has inspired her to dream bigger. “Seeing her continue her studies encourages me to continue mine too. I hope to study at university one day,” she said.

For their mother, Mirela, it’s an answer to years of worry and prayer. “We both came from poor families, and when we got married, we continued to struggle with poverty. But through the support we received from the Mission and God’s help, we kept moving forward. Now, watching Vanesa pursue her dream fills my heart with joy.”

Vanesa’s story is no longer defined by hardship alone — it is one of dedication, faith, and the lasting impact that education can have on a determined young woman, and the family walking beside her.

“I know where I came from,” she said. “That is why I never want to give up. One day, I hope I can help others the same way people have helped me.”







ELDER CARE

GALYNA, 86 YEARS OLD, RIVNE, UKRAINE

I have been a widow for 40 years. It so happened that I don't have children of my own, but I love children very much. I worked for many years as a nanny in a local kindergarten. It makes me happy that my pupils recognise me and say hello when they see me. I loved watching them have children of their own and life goes on.

What does war mean to me? It is something that interrupts life; it is the worst thing that can happen. My neighbour had two wonderful sons, handsome boys who were like my own children. Both went to the front to defend their homeland. One became terribly injured; the other went missing. There has been no news from him for six months. Their mother is impossible to recognize from grief. Sometimes I go out into the yard and I can still see in my mind's eye two little boys crossing the fence coming towards me. The war ruined and destroyed their lives.

There was a television tower across from my house. When several rockets hit it, dozens of people were killed. It destroyed many houses around it, including part of mine. I fell out of bed and lost my hearing. Since then, I have never lost my sense of danger.

I pray that I will see peace in my country with my own eyes. I can still remember the hunger and poverty of the last war, I remember the terrible hardship, poverty, and grief. I was little then. I don't want this to happen in Ukraine. I don't want the enemy to destroy our whole country.





SOUP KITCHEN





MORE THAN JUST SOUP

HELP US FEED THE ELDERLY AND OTHER VULNERABLE PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY THROUGH OUR SOUP KITCHEN

Join us today and be the beacon of hope for a family in Eastern Europe.

CALL US TODAY
0800 469 269

OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
MISSIONWITHOUTBORDERS.ORG.NZ

OPERATION CHRISTMAS LOVE

THE LANDFILL WAS HER PLAYGROUND

A FAMILY SURVIVING ON SCRAPS FOUND NEW HOPE THROUGH OPERATION CHRISTMAS LOVE. EMINA IS ONLY TEN YEARS OLD, BUT ALREADY, SHE CARRIES MORE THAN ANY CHILD SHOULD.

Each morning, she wakes up in a cold, crumbling house in Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the edge of an isolated clearing. There is no running water, no electricity, no kitchen, no bathroom. At night, seven people — Emina, her parents Adis, 37, and Semira, 30, and her four younger siblings — share just two beds, gathering around a small wood-burning stove when the cold sets in.

Even in these conditions, Emina thinks first of others. She helps care for her younger brothers and sisters, aged three to eight, and when she receives something small — biscuits or sweets — she always shares it. Almost every day, her parents go to a nearby landfill to collect recyclable materials, the family's only source of income. With no one to look after the children, Emina and her siblings usually go too, facing sharp objects, harmful waste, and constant danger.

"I dream that we can give this family hope for a better tomorrow," said Senka, a family sponsorship coordinator with Mission Without Borders, who met the family during one of the hardest seasons of their lives. They had been staying in one room at a relative's house, taken in only for winter, before being asked to leave.

Despite everything, Emina holds tightly to one thing: school. She loves learning and works hard for her grades. Through family sponsorship, support has begun reaching them — food, hygiene supplies, firewood, school materials, seeds to grow vegetables, and an Operation Christmas Love box.

"For this family, every package means more than food," Senka said. "It means hope. It means that someone sees them, cares about them, and believes that change is possible."

Semira puts it simply: "Any word is too small to convey the gratitude I feel. Your care for us brought new joy and hope to our lives."

Emina's family doesn't celebrate Christmas. But through Operation Christmas Love, they still experience something powerful in that season: love, generosity, and the knowledge that someone, somewhere, cares. Each box brings essential food, small treats, and a message of hope — meaning that for one day in the middle of winter, a family like Emina's doesn't have to worry about what they will eat.

It's a day where Emina can sit with her family, share a meal, laugh with her siblings, and simply be a child.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO GIVE AN OPERATION CHRISTMAS LOVE BOX FOR $45, PLEASE CALL 0800 469 269 OR SCAN THE QR CODE AND TOGETHER, WE CAN BRING HOPE AND JOY WHERE IT'S NEEDED MOST.







"MY GREATEST WISH," SENKA SAID, "IS THAT THEY COME TO BELIEVE THEIR STORY DOES NOT HAVE TO STAY THIS WAY — THAT A DIFFERENT FUTURE IS POSSIBLE."

AMBASSADOR

BECOME THE VOICE FOR A CHILD WHO HAS NONE

WILL YOU BE AN AMBASSADOR FOR MISSION WITHOUT BORDERS?

Right now, in villages and cities across Eastern Europe, children like Emina, Elena, and Vanesa are waiting. Waiting for someone to notice. Waiting for someone to care. Waiting for hope.

You could be someone.

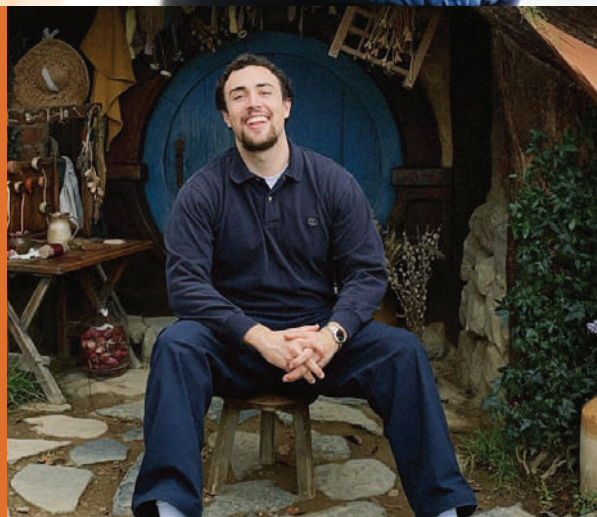
As a Mission Without Borders Ambassador, you become more than a supporter — you become a voice. A bridge between families facing unimaginable hardship and a community ready to respond with love.

AMBASSADORS HELP US:

- Share real stories of transformation with your church, workplace, or community
- Champion campaigns like Operation Christmas Love and Family Sponsorship
- Inspire others to give hope where it's needed most

You don't need a platform or special training just a willing heart, and a belief that every child deserves a chance at a brighter future.

Because behind every statistic is a face. Behind every face is a story. And every story deserves someone willing to tell it.



JOIN US. BE THE VOICE. BE THE HOPE.

To find out more about becoming a Mission Without Borders Ambassador.

CONTACT ALICK VIA EMAIL AT AASHBY@MWBI.ORG OR CALL HIM ON 020 40389982



FUNDRAISE YOUR WAY — NOW THROUGH JUSTGIVING

MISSION WITHOUT BORDERS HAS PARTNERED WITH JUSTGIVING! WHETHER YOU'RE RUNNING, BAKING, CELEBRATING A BIRTHDAY, OR JUST PASSIONATE ABOUT CHANGING A CHILD'S LIFE, YOU CAN NOW TURN IT INTO HOPE FOR FAMILIES ACROSS EASTERN EUROPE.



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OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
MISSIONWITHOUTBORDERS.ORG.NZ

MEET OUR CHURCH TEAM

VERONICA RIVETT

My name is Veronica Rivett, and I serve as one of the Church & Philanthropy Managers at Mission Without Borders New Zealand.

I have the privilege of connecting churches, supporters, and generous individuals with opportunities to bring hope and share Christ across Eastern Europe.

With a background in ministry, relationship management, and fundraising, I am passionate about helping people see that the Gospel is both to be proclaimed and demonstrated. One of the greatest joys of my role is sharing stories of lives transformed through practical care, Christian witness, and the faithful generosity of supporters here in New Zealand.

My work takes me across New Zealand speaking in churches, meeting with supporters, and encouraging Christians to consider the part they might play in God's work among children, families, and elderly people facing poverty, isolation, and the ongoing effects of war and economic hardship in Eastern Europe.

My passion for mission and discipleship has been shaped through many years of ministry service. Together with my husband, Gavin, we served as Salvation Army ministers for nine years, leading churches and serving communities in a variety of settings throughout New Zealand. Those years deepened my pastoral heart, strengthened my lifelong passion for missions, and fostered a deep love and compassion for people living in poverty and hardship.

This year Gavin and I celebrated twenty-five years of marriage, a milestone we are incredibly grateful for. Together we have three wonderful children: Brooke (22), Jacob (20), and Aidan (18), all of whom have shared in our family's journey of ministry and service over the years.

When I'm not travelling or meeting with supporters, I love spending time with family and friends, reading a good book, walking in nature, playing the guitar or piano, visiting the beach, and enjoying a good coffee.

For me, one of the greatest privileges of this role is helping connect New Zealand Christians with the incredible things God is doing across Eastern Europe — bringing hope, sharing Christ, and seeing lives transformed for eternity.



ALICK ASHBY

I wouldn't quite say I grew up in a Christian home, but I was introduced to church when I was about seven. I moved in and out of church and youth groups before taking faith more seriously in my mid-teens. I later drifted away at university, but when I returned to New Zealand, something changed.

At 24, I became hungry to know God. I started reading the Bible, searching for Him, and wanting my faith to transform the way I lived. I was baptised at 25, and that was when I came to know Christ.

My time in New Zealand has shaped my faith more than anything else. I left England expecting to stay for six weeks, with little money, no accommodation, and few connections. I had to begin again and build a life from scratch. Some people might call that insane, but looking back, I can see that it required faith, even if that is easier to recognise in hindsight. God has been good to me throughout that journey.

Mission Without Borders appealed to me because it brought together things that mattered to me. It gave me the chance to develop my public-speaking skills while helping to further the gospel. The role allows me to meet people, serve churches and communities, travel, and speak about work that changes lives.

Before joining MWB, I was involved in ministry through my church, serving in young adults, youth ministry, Sunday school, and a Sunday sports programme. Through those experiences, I began to understand what it means to disciple people, invest in the next generation, and walk alongside people as they move towards faith and baptism. I have had the privilege of helping people come to Christ, which has been a real blessing.

I'm single and don't have children. Outside work, I enjoy the gym, Muay Thai, running, and reading. I own far more books than I have finished, although working through them remains on the list. My ideal Saturday used to involve Muay Thai, the gym, a run, a swim, a sauna, and then a steak. More recently, I have been leaning towards a slower life, where I take my time and try to do one thing well.

What has impacted me most since joining MWB is the people. I have seen people give so much of themselves to serve others, share the gospel, and help those who feel lost or forgotten. The role has shown me how little of the world I truly see, how much need exists, and how vast God is.

More than anything, I hope people remember that I care about people, love Christ, and am always willing to come, speak, listen, and meet them face to face.



PARTNER WITH US

TOGETHER, YOUR CHURCH CAN BRING LASTING HOPE.

At Mission Without Borders New Zealand, we believe the local church has the power to transform lives. Whether you're looking to inspire your congregation, support families in need, or serve beyond your own community, we'd love to partner with you.

INVITE US TO YOUR CHURCH

Our team would be delighted to visit your church, small group, or ministry to share how God is transforming lives across Eastern Europe. Through inspiring stories, practical insights, and a biblical perspective on mission, we'll help your congregation discover how they can make a lasting impact.

SUPPORT A MISSION PROJECT

Partner with a country, family, or one of our life-changing programmes. Whether it's Family Sponsorship, After School Clubs, Summer Camps, Winter Rescue, Operation Christmas Love, or another initiative, we'll work with you to create a partnership that aligns with your church's heart for mission.

EXPERIENCE MISSION FIRST-HAND

Take your congregation or youth group on a mission trip to see the impact of your support. Working alongside our local teams, you'll meet families, visit projects, encourage communities, and witness lives being transformed through practical care and the hope of Christ.

HOST A FUNDRAISING EVENT

Bring your community together while changing lives. Whether it's a fun run, bake sale, afternoon tea, quiz night, concert, market day, or clothing collection, we'll help you create a meaningful event that supports families living in poverty.

LET'S MAKE AN IMPACT TOGETHER

We'd love to explore how your church can partner with Mission Without Borders. Get in touch with our Church Engagement Team and discover how, together, we can bring hope, dignity, and lasting change to families in need.



INVITE A MEMBER OF OUR CHURCH & PHILANTHROPY TEAM TO SPEAK AT YOUR CHURCH

We would be happy to visit your church and talk more about our work in bringing hope in Eastern Europe.



Laidlaw House
Level 6, 20 Amersham Way
Manukau Auckland 2104 New Zealand

Charity Info
Charity Number: CC37218
Annual Report: missionwithoutborders.org.nz

Ways to Give
Online:
www.missionwithoutborders.org.nz/donate
Direct Credit: Account Number
06-0185-0122206-12
Phone: (free) 0800 469 269

Contact
P.O Box 76141, Manukau City, Auckland 2241

missionwithoutborders.org.nz
0800 469 269
nzadmin@mwbi.org

JOIN US IN TRANSFORMING LIVES

1. YOUR GIFT

$ _____

☐ MONTHLY ☐ ONE-OFF-GIFT

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO PARTNER WITH MWB MINISTRIES:

☐ SPONSORSHIP ($45) A MONTH ☐ FAMILY ☐ CHILD

☐ JOIN THE UKRAINE RESPONSE TEAM ($45 A MONTH)

PLEASE SEND ME INFORMATION ABOUT:

☐ LEAVING A GIFT IN MY WILL ☐ ARRANGING A SPEAKER

2. YOUR DETAILS

FULL NAME _____

CUSTOMER ID AND MAG24 TO MAG26 _____

EMAIL _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

3. I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE BY:

☐ **OPTION 1: DIRECT CREDIT**
ACCNT: 06-0185-0122206-12
REF: YOUR NAME, SUPPORTER NUMBER AND MAG26

☐ **OPTION 2: ON OUR WEBSITE**
WWW.MISSIONWITHOUTBORDERS.ORG.NZ/DONATE

☐ **OPTION 3: CREDIT CARD**
○ VISA ○ MASTERCARD ○ AMEX

NAME ON CARD _____

CARD NUMBER _____ _____ _____ _____

EXP _____ SIGNATURE _____



JOIN US IN TRANSFORMING LIVES IN JESUS' NAME

MISSION WITHOUT BORDERS