

First Impressions count

Piers Hurn, grandson of a long term supporter and now Trustees of Children in Distress, June Hurn, shares his first impressions of Romania, St Margaret's and St Andrew's Hospices and the children in their care.

Hot, dusty bleak and rundown with startling number on new buildings

This was my first visit to Romania and my first impressions once leaving the airport building in Bucharest was how hot and dusty the place was. I saw row upon row of bleak, rundown blocks of apartments but also a startling number of new buildings. I found the car journey strange because not only was the car left hand drive on the right side of the road but there was huge amounts of traffic in comparison with England. I was also slightly upset by the numbers of stray dogs and dead dogs just left by the side of the road.

I witness for the first time Hydrocephalus

A St Margaret's Hospice I was impressed by how well the children were looked after Each of the children their own separate personalities; Florin was a little boy who was a non-stop talker and who pretended to be a singer; Andrea was a girl who loved her new toy bus; and Camellia who gave such huge smiles when you spoke to her. With little Andre, I witnessed for the first time the results of hydrocephalus. It was extremely emotional to see, sadly his condition cannot be cured but André is being looked after so well by the carers in the Hospice.

Alex is a regular looking boy

My Granma and I moved on to Pitesti to visit St Andrew's Children's Centre. The main reason why we went to Pitesti was so that we could deliver Alexandru's new wheelchair. Alex is a regular looking boy, with slightly shorter legs, which he cannot use, however he has a brilliant technique for getting from bed to his wheelchair via a wooden board. He zoomed around the room in his new wheelchair showing of to everyone, in particular to little Neluç. Both Neluç and Claudia were fascinated by this McDonald's happy meal toy that I had brought along for them to play with. Madelin is a very determined boy; it was just amazing to see how he tried to roll himself down the road in his chair. I then helped Grandma adjust some of the children's wheelchairs and our work at the Hospice came to an end.

I enjoyed my trip to Romania and was very pleased to see the good work people do for those very sick children