

FOCUS NEWS



MISSION WITHOUT BORDERS | SEPTEMBER 2011



Jay at the Berat soup kitchen

Feeding the hungry

One of the practical ways that Mission Without Borders extends loving concern to the needy in Eastern Europe is through soup kitchens. The Mission operates 22 soup kitchens across our six field countries, providing daily hot meals to local people desperately in need of help.

One such soup kitchen operates in Berat, Albania. Some 50 people are enrolled for on-going help. Their needs are usually many. The coordinator, Sonila Sinaj, witnesses the poverty and suffering of the group every day. She says, "They need all our love and prayers, because they have known little love in their lives, but they recognise genuine love when they see it and find ways of showing their gratitude."

Sonila tells the background of one of the children attending the soup kitchen. His name is Anxhelo but everyone calls him "Jay". He has just turned 10 but suffers from encephalopathy. Jay lives at home with his mother and brother. Jay's mother is in the early stages of leukaemia. Jay's father left Albania to work in Greece and occasionally comes home to see them. He sends them very little money, and they all feel that he has abandoned them.

"They need all our love and prayers because they have known little love in their lives..."

Jay cannot speak and has difficulty concentrating. When he first started going to the soup kitchen, he was very nervous and would not communicate at all with the other children or the staff at the soup kitchen. He used sounds rather than words and was totally dependent on the others.



Jay and the others having lunch together, Berat soup kitchen, Albania

- ▶ But he has made good progress. He has learned how to use a spoon to feed himself. He has also got used to being with the other children. He has a very sweet nature and when he is happy, he smiles and makes sounds as if he were trying to speak. His eyes shine with a joy when there is an activity going on at the soup kitchen, or when clothing or gifts are being distributed. His family receives support from the local church and from the soup kitchen's coordinator and other volunteers.

The soup kitchen is staffed by volunteers from the local church. The church's pastor, Petrit Sinaj, expresses his gratitude to the Mission and its supporters: "We want to thank you for the support that has made the soup kitchen possible. Through warm meals and constant attention shown towards them, we have the opportunity to show those being cared for the love of Christ and help them find peace in the Lord. Thank you for your prayers and please continue to pray that we reach not only the hearts of every person for Christ, but that through them we can reach their families, too."

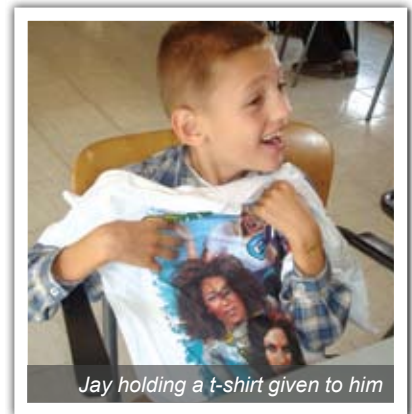
Through the help from the Mission's supporters and generous donors, the soup kitchen can also provide gifts of clothing and handmade goods. At Christmas, Operation Christmas Love parcels are given to each home represented. Thank you for supporting our work, and through us, these folk. ♦



The coordinator Sonila (middle row, second from the left) with some of those being helped



Jay, receiving a parcel from one of the local church volunteers



Jay holding a t-shirt given to him

Sponsoring Families and Children



If you have just become a sponsor or supporter, then a big Welcome to you! We have a steady number of folk taking on family and child and family sponsorship. This is a good way for New Zealanders to become involved in a vital part of our work in Eastern Europe. Please encourage family, friends and groups to become sponsors (\$40 a month). For more information, please call us 0800 469 269.

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