

A close-up photograph of a young child with dark hair and eyes, sitting in a red car seat. The child is wearing a red and white plaid shirt over a blue denim shirt. They are holding a colorful teething toy in their mouth. The toy consists of a yellow circular base with the words 'Teething Toy' embossed on it, and several colorful beads (yellow, red, green, orange, blue) attached to it. A white warning label is visible on the red car seat backrest, featuring a 'no smoking' symbol and the word 'WARNING' in yellow letters. The background is slightly blurred, showing the interior of the car.

# What We Do

*To cure, sometimes; To help, often; To comfort, always.*



## Children in Distress



Children in Distress was set up in the early 1990s in response to the crisis in paediatric care services exposed following the revolution that swept Romania's communist regime from power. The charity pioneered the treatment and care provision for those infants and children who had been infected with the HIV virus and associated life-threatening infections. The charity set up the first paediatric hospice offering respite, palliative and end of life care for children living with advanced AIDS.

Children in Distress and its sister foundation, Copii in Dificultate, now provides hospice care for children with life-threatening conditions as a result of accident, infection, genetic disorders and birth defects. We pioneer life-changing multiple therapies for those with disabilities and pioneer education and welfare for those with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

Educational opportunities are offered to children from

disadvantaged backgrounds and training is made available to educational, medical, nursing and therapy professionals to develop and improve the quality of opportunity and care available throughout Romania. In addition, a range of medical and social welfare programmes provide advocacy, disability care, food, clothing, educational material and opportunities to those suffering discrimination and disadvantage.

## Education and Training

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Children in Distress has empowered students and changed the attitudes of care staff to deliver the best possible care and current best practice. Our work has been significant in changing medical teaching and the delivery of care services for children throughout Romania, and in changing the attitude and approach of those caring for them.

Our education and training programmes have been carried out in conjunction with our partner organisation Fund-a-Physio, based in Ely, Cambridgeshire, as well as a host of volunteer doctors, therapists, nurses, psychologists, teachers and lecturers in the UK and in Romania.

## Equipment, Mobility Aids, Medicines

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Due to the generosity of donors, over many years Children in Distress has been able to build clinics, kit out wards and supply beds and bedding. We have also been able to provide vital equipment such as wheelchairs, mobility aids and computer systems to assist with diagnosis and therapy while medication, drugs, sterile dressings and medical equipment have changed the lives of infants, children, adults and senior citizens.

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## St. Margaret's – Bucharest

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St Margaret's Hospice and Children's Centre in Bucharest was initially opened as a street children's project that developed into a residential unit for infants and children with short life expectancy as result of accident, infection, birth defects, developmental or genetic malformations. The hospice has an enviable reputation for its respite, palliative and end of life care, dealing with the most severe cases, and its nurses are perhaps the best-trained and experienced paediatric nurses in Romania. The hospice has respite and longterm palliative end-of-life care beds. The hospice has been home to hundreds of children since opening its doors. Some have recovered sufficiently to return to family, foster or local authority care.

## Child Development Centres



Attached to St Margaret's a hospice, Child Development Centres provide the best in onsite therapy services and deliver peripatetic services to their immediate local and regional communities.

### Multiple Therapies

The programmes and outcomes for children were so significantly good that a second clinic and therapy unit was opened which offers a wider range of services to those whose condition is impaired by accident, infection or physical or developmental challenges.

### Physiotherapy

Arising from the need for therapy services for children resident within the hospices, the demand for individually-tailored programmes of child development services was identified. The first of two St Nicolas Child Development Centres opened to offer a range of services designed to allow a child with developmental needs the opportunity to maximise their potential and be the best that they can be. Children are referred by general practitioners,

paediatric specialists or hospital units who are unable to offer parents or their children the hope of improvement in their condition. Children are treated holistically and receive speech therapy, physiotherapy, counselling and treatment as required. Since opening its doors, over one thousand children have seen significant improvement in their development, being able to walk, talk, communicate, eat, dress and self toilet where previously their development was impaired.

## Student Work Experience and Training

Last year in association with three key universities and a number of local authorities, Children in Distress brokered and agreed an educational training protocol offering, over the next three years, two thousand psychology, physiotherapy and social work students access to practical work experience as part of their education and training. The aim is to introduce insight and expertise to the education curriculum and improve the attitude and expectation of students entering professional treatment and care.



## The Ways You Can Help



**There many ways you can help us. To find out more about any of them, please get in touch by calling us on 0141 559 5690, or visit [www.childrenindistress.org](http://www.childrenindistress.org)**

### **Love In A Box**

Over half a million children and senior citizens have benefitted from the generosity of donors in the United Kingdom and have had the joy of a gift at Christmas. The gift boxes have gone mostly to the poorest of the poor, the forgotten, destitute or those in hospitals or institutions. Your gifts, which you place in a shoebox, can include sweets, toys, clothes, toiletries, and much more. You can say whether the box goes to a girl or boy and what age.

### **Child Sponsorship**

Sponsorship is a wonderful way to bring hope and change to a

child. As a child sponsor you will have a unique connection with a child in our care but to ensure that your donation is spent as effectively as possible, child sponsorship funds work in the centre where your sponsored child lives. So you help not only the child you are sponsoring but also others around them. After you become a sponsor, we will introduce you to a child with a photograph and information about their life and the problems they face. You will receive regular updates on your child, can send gifts for birthdays and Christmas, and visit your child on organised trips. You will help us to provide the little extras that make sure each child knows there is someone who cares.

### **Gifts From The Heart**

With our Gifts From The Heart, supporters are able to give a gift to family or friends that offers someone in direst need hope and the thought that tomorrow might be better. The choice of gifts starts at £5.00 and ranges from life-saving operations to a petting dog and cat, a new baby pack to a set of school books. You can view and purchase gifts on our website, or by calling us. In return, you will receive a card describing the gift that you can then give out for a birthday, anniversary or any occasion.

### **Legacies**

Leaving a gift in your will is one of the biggest differences you can make to help the vulnerable children we care for. We have produced a short leaflet that helps you understand why you should consider leaving a gift in your will to Children in Distress. This is a major personal decision to make and we hope our leaflet will help you consider what is important to you. It also includes answers to key questions you may have along with information on what kinds of gift you can leave and how to do so.

## St. Christopher's – Curtea De Arges



The success of St Margaret's and the demand for care led to the opening of St Christopher's Hospice in a rural setting in Argeş County. It came to specialise in the care of infants with untreated hydrocephalus and developed a system of care that managed the condition for those who had not received shunt operations or were regarded as inoperable. There followed years of Children in Distress funded operations, and success in rehabilitation of infants and children with hydrocephalus and Spina bifida. Christopher's was subsequently converted into a sheltered holiday centre and now serves the children of its local community with education and welfare programmes.

## Welfare Donations

For over a decade, each year some ten thousand infants, children, young people and senior citizens have been given warm winter clothing, hand-knitted sweaters, hats, gloves, scarves and knitted cot, pram or bed blankets to keep them warm in winter. Innumerable other gifts of clothing have been distributed to destitute families and in emergency relief.





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