GRADUATES' CONFESSIONS

Written by Angela Arhip

It's a sunny and nice morning. It's 15 minutes to 11:00 and I'm rushing because I know at 11:00 the students will be at Andy's Pizza, the place where we meet each quarter to speak and laugh, to complain and boast. It's 7 minutes to 11 and I'm inside. Some of the students are here, others are still coming. I notice a beautiful smile on their faces which they share with me and their friends from the project.

Our key objective for today is to meet with some of the past year graduates and talk to them about their ups and downs since they graduated from school and the project, to find out how they applied for a job and if and how they got it, to learn about their realizations and successes.

Lilia graduated 2 years ago. She is a medical assistant - an interesting and useful job, but not a very easy one. *"When I began working I was a little bit disappointed and maybe unhappy… it was hard, as medicine is very complicated, but I didn't give up. I asked myself why I got my clothes and shoes worn for 5 years going to college. I have to work to get experience and fulfill my goal. Gradually, I realized that I liked more and more what I did. I understood that the practice is much more interesting than theory and now I can affirm that I love it. I can help people, but I can also help myself and my sister. I can assist my friends and my neighbors. To know a little bit of medicine is important for everyone, especially for you girls; future mothers. It's essential for you to have some basic medical knowledge to be able to give birth to and grow healthy children."*

Lilia wasn't the only one whose suggestions left a good impact on our students. The next one who gladdened our hearts with his disclosures and experience was Dumitru , Mass Market Customer Care at Orange Moldova (France Telecom Group) *(He knows English very well and this is written directly by him, not translated by me):*

After one year of participating in Moldova Orphan Sponsorship Program, I want in return to thank you for everything you did for me. Thanks to this program, I was able to make my dream come true; I finished the Cisco Networking Academy that gave me the opportunity to find a good job. It was not easy, I was looking for different vacancies, some of them were not for me, and some of them had not a friendly team. After a half year of searching, I applied for a job as a customer care representative in internet department at our local mobile network operator Orange Moldova SA, where I was called for an interview, it was not the easiest one, but I managed to impress them, so I got the job. There I found a very friendly team, very good working conditions, and perspective of future growth, lots of new people. Now I am working hard to reach my goal to be a networking technician in the IT department in our company. The 1st day was unfortunately a terrible one, but I managed. Little by little it was better and better and I was also promoted. May God bless you for the good you do, you bring smile on our faces, and you spread hope for a better living, thank you for everything. Finally, I want to thank you and my coordinator for the hard work, I will follow this tradition, and I will sponsor children with the same situation like mine.

Maxim and other graduates also shared their first work experience with us. All these ideas were grasped and well *digested* especially by our graduates, whose faces were so happy that they've graduated, that one of their big dreams is realized, but their eyes hid that shadow of sadness that of not being a student anymore and that of saying goodbye to our project. A new and quite possibly a challenging way is right

in front of them that they have to make by themselves now, without any support; this is their future job, career, marriage, children, etc.

Our graduates have different personalities, as students, as people, but they have something in common - their gratitude towards OUR SPONSORS, those who were so kind to provide their time, their moral and financial support with them. Our students do not have money to reward their sponsors, but they have nice words to address them:

"I've graduated this month and I'm eager to share my happiness with you. I'm so happy for this and I thank you so much for your big support in helping me to realize my dreams – those of studying, obtaining a job, and building a bright future. Moreover, I'd like to add that now I'm richer, have more friends: you my dear sponsors, the coordinator and all students from the Sponsorship Program."

"I'm so glad to share my happiness with you – that of graduation. Today I got the diploma and only now I'm thinking of how quickly these 5 school years passed. Thank you so much for your support! I don't think this day would have been possible without your immense kindness towards me."

"I'd like to begin this letter with thanks for the people who work at the sponsorship program and who managed to find you, My Dear Parents. The family that I have never had was replaced by you, Pam & Wally. Now, being a fresh graduate of the university and program, I'm so happy that I've had you next to me, supporting me in realizing my dreams and goals. This meant a lot to me. You so far managed to take care of me as of your own child giving me a family, even if a distant one. I will pray the good Lord to be always with you."

We feel sorrow to part from them, but we are happy to see the harvest of our hard work – *the graduates.* It's sad not to have them with us in the project any more, but we really hope that they one day will offer the same help to needy students. We also think and do our best to replace them with new students who need our and your support, dear sponsors.

Dear Students!

The path you have to go along might be difficult, challenging and effortful. Don't panic and remember; the more complicated it is, the better results it has. Good luck!

Dear Sponsors!

You are so far, but we know that our graduates excitement reach you so well. Now, you live the same emotions and … or may be stronger ones, because you were the bellwether of these students during their college or university years. You have invested in them. They, invest in a better life. Thank you so much for being with us!

<u>News</u>

- One of the greatest news is: 4 new sponsors and 6 new students.
- **Ion Tarna** – in the last 6 months participated at 2 republican competitions in weight lifting and both times won the 1st place.
- **Mihai Galbura -** recently participated in a musical republican contest "Stefan Neaga" the seventeenth edition and won the 1st place.