This summer we had a special and long awaited guest – Marcy McHenry. She came with her daughter, Mariana and although it was summer and vacation, we managed to have a meeting with our students. Marcy and Mariana brought the sponsors’ gifts for our students, but they also gave everybody candies, tea, school supplies, etc. We all had a friendly discussion in a warm and joyful atmosphere, and these two persons, Marcy and Mariana, impressed profoundly our students with their words, thoughts, generosity, kindheartedness and dedication. I know Marcy has much more to tell you about this meeting, however the students and I would like to thank this Exceptional and Wonderful person, Marcy McHenry, for working so hard and putting heart and soul to maintain this program and change our students’ lives.

MOLDOVAN NEWS
27 August, Moldova celebrated 25 years of Independence. This year Moldova had a special celebration; the map was drawn on the main street of the Great National Assembly Square, the military paraded in the center of the city, and of course a great concert was held there. Moldova hasn’t reached all its European objectives, but it still struggles to achieve them and become member of the European Union. However, our country firstly has to solve lots of problems like: poverty, corruption, immigration, etc. We know that one day we’ll succeed, because the new generation is more optimistic and determined and for sure they will complete what our parents or grandparents didn’t manage to do.

31 August – we celebrated Limba Noastra (Our Language) and even though we celebrated it for the 26th time, we still have divergences whether it is Moldovan or Romanian.

1st September – the 1st day of school for all students in Moldova.

NEWS OF OUR STUDENTS
Victor Organ – He has recently finished this movie. https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B5pFaRo-W3-fd2xPVDJUVmNENjQ/view?usp=drivesdk. He will participate soon at the film festival: Debut. It’s a festival for the academy’s students to present their films to the public and to complete the program, they include some other films. Victor’s film has been included in this festival.

Mihai Galbura – he will have a tour in Great Britain in October-December. This time he will go to Scotland, too. Mihai is a tuba player.

Oxana Gutu – this summer she sang for children who spent their vacations in camps. Also, on September the 1st she began her career as a canto teacher at the college where used to be a student. She is in the last year at academy, but she will partially teach.

Ion Terna – is preparing hard for the championship in November. He is a weightlifter.

Congratulations to Pavel Gutu and Mihai Galbura – who have successfully passed their exams and have been admitted to Master’s degree programs!
After many years of working with the Carolina Adoption Services’ Moldovan Sponsorship program, I was so excited to finally meet some of the students and see a little of Moldova in person. My daughter Mariana and I only had about 48 hours in Moldova, but we made the most of every waking hour! It didn’t start out so great when the Customs Inspector wanted to confiscate my large suitcases full of gifts for the students, but thankfully, Angela talked them down and they allowed me to bring them into the country. Angela and her husband Anatol (who served as our driver and enthusiastic travel partner during the two days) whisked us off from the small Chisinau airport to meet up with a few of our students for our first Moldovan experience. I had asked to see a school and dormitory of some of our students so to have a better idea of their lives. In typical Moldovan style, my daughter and I were greeted at the University we were to tour by one of our students, Valentina Racitscaia, with a kiss on both cheeks and a bouquet of flowers for each of us. Pavel Gutu spearheaded the tour of the Technical University of Moldova and we were also joined by Victor Organ and Artur Tiutuunicov (a former student in our program). Along with the school’s dean, we toured the one building of classrooms and workshops, and learned about the course of study and how the students spend their day.

Later that day, we also toured a dormitory where some of our students live. We were told that this dorm was the nicest of the dorms, where only the most accomplished students are allowed to reside. It was a 12 story building, a traditional hallway style dorm, with two-room suites that shared a bath. For an extra fee, students can live in the building over the summer. In the room that we visited (Valentina’s), four girls shared a room, a small closet, and each had a small nightstand for storage. I inquired about a stack of shallow tubs stacked under the bathroom sink shared by the 6 suitemates and was told they were used by the girls to take sponge baths when there was no hot water, and that they would use their hotpots to heat the water. Apparently, lack of hot water is a fairly frequent occurrence, and the hot water heater is not turned on in the summer. Valentina’s suite shared a small refrigerator where the students keep their own food. There was also a kitchen on each floor with two stoves/ovens, sinks and two washing machines. Balconies, windows and rooms are used to dry their clothes. We didn’t visit the other dorms, which are older and definitely more run down in appearance, but were told they weren’t nearly as nice as this one.

After our visit to the University, we zipped off to the Cricova Winery and were thrilled to be joined by Pavel and Valentina for our tour. On our way from Chisinau to Cricova, I very much enjoyed getting a closer view of the rolling hills of the Moldovan countryside, memorably dotted by sunflower fields and lines of walnut trees along the roads. Cricova is an amazing place - 75 miles of underground roadways storing wine in barrels and bottles in underground caves carved out in the 15th century.

The next morning, after my daughter and I enjoyed lovely breakfast in a café outside of our hotel, we gathered our many bags of gifts and walked only a couple of blocks to the restaurant where the student luncheons are held. The students trickled in and out, as many had summer jobs they were coming from or going to this summer. Although many were unable to attend, I was thrilled to speak to each one there about their lives, with the help of Angela’s translating skills. There were a few students who spoke enough English as to carry on a conversation with my daughter (much to her delight!) while Angela and I made our way around the table. I was so impressed with these kids and how hard they were working to make a good life for themselves. I found that the living conditions of the students vary, some live in dorms, some with family members (one student shared an apartment with 8 siblings!), some in apartments with other students, and some in boarding homes. I was also quite moved to see the bond that this program creates for the student participants. It was clear that many supportive friendships have developed as a result of this program. Needless to say, Angela and I were both in tears when at the end of the luncheon, Artiom Cojevnicov stood up and, in English and on behalf of all of the students, sweetly thanked us, the sponsors and the program for everything we ALL have done for them. Our time with the students was sadly over, but not before gifts were given and few more photos were taken, some with the students donning said gifts!
After the luncheon, Mariana and I, escorted by Angela, Anatol, and their sweet little daughter Lina, enjoyed another gorgeous summer day of sightseeing, leaving Chisinau and visiting the Milestii Mici underground wine cellars (the largest underground wine cellar in the world!) and the incredible Orheiul Vechi Cave Monastery. Most memorable was the traditional Moldovan music we enjoyed while tasting the fabulous wine at Milestii Mici. The next day we toured Chisinau a bit before returning to Bucharest to begin our Romania Ties tour, once again escorted and assisted to the airport by our wonderful friends and host. A sad farewell to them and to Moldova – I hope to return someday!

What a moving two days– to get a small taste of the lives of our students and the beautiful country of Moldova! I am beyond thankful for the opportunity for my daughter and me to have had this experience, and to Angela and Anatol for all they did to make it happen. Although I know that many of you sponsors have traveled to Moldova before, I hope that my description of my visit and the photos help you experience (or re-experience) the country and understand our students a bit better. But most of all, I hope that this newsletter account reinforces what an impact your support and this program has on the lives of these kids. My time there with these special people will forever be a cherished memory.
We all enjoy a wine tasting at Cricova

Lunch with the students

Georghe, Artiom & Alexandru open gifts

Marcy & Anatol

Denis proudly dons his gifts from his sponsor

Victor, Denis and Andrei
Pavel gathers fruit for our snack outside of Cricova

Walnut trees line the side of the road

At Orheiul Vechi Cave Monastery

Nativity Cathedral, Chişinău

Monk at Orheiul Vechi Cave Monastery