

2011 Project Harvest Hope Unitarian Community Fund

Unitarian Church from Firtosvaralja

This isolated village had a van which helped transport elderly, sick individuals with disabilities and others to the nearest administrative center for medical treatment or to take care of paperwork. The old van has aged out of usefulness and the village has raised 60% of the costs for a new van. This grant will fund the remaining 40% and restore the service to the village. The driver of the van is a volunteer and the local government is a partner to cover the costs of petrol and upkeep.

Unitarian Church from Nyárádszereda

Begun in 2004, work on this community home is nearly complete. This last-dollar grant would finalize the space by bringing in electricity, drainage, heating and furnishing, as well as steps up to the front door. Interestingly, even without these amenities, the space is regularly used by the congregation during the summer months. Finishing would allow for a year-round space and may leverage a local government grant to build a guest room in the attic. Once finished, the parsonage is committed to English, Romanian and bible lessons.

Unitarian Church from Firtosmartonos

The beautiful and ancient congregation hall in this village sits on a hillside. While offering a nice view, it is prone to serious water damage. The grant will fund a drainage system, insulate and tile the space. These renovations, and the replacement of doors and windows, would make the room useable throughout the year and a safer place to house books, computers, etc. for the community. Volunteers are committed to doing the labor and building new furniture.

Pro Gyepes Association

The village plans to create a park out of the space around the congregation house. Currently, there is no park in the village. The project proposed to landscape the space and add a small playground and arbor. In addition, the community has a strong youth club and has made significant investments in a computer lab. They plan to add a projector and foosball table (foosball tournaments are becoming quite popular here.)

Kis Herceg Association

Orphanages, or group homes for children in Romania, shelter children until the age of 18. Once 18, the youth enter the community but often are grossly unprepared for life, lacking employable skills. This project would renovate a space in a village group home where youth are being taught skills such as basic carpentry, bike mechanics, etc. The grant is a last-dollar investment to add heating and lighting to the room so that these socially marginalized youngsters have a option to learn trades from local craftspeople in a well lit and warm environment, thus extending the program through the winter months.

Dávid Ferenc Youth Association (ODFIE)

The small Unitarian village of Szind sits 3 km from one of the most popular natural attractions in Transylvania. The community is the stopping point for those wishing to walk into the nature reserve and a Unitarian youth group has been actively remodeling the parsonage to create a guesthouse and coffee shop, which can serve tourists with local products made by the village and bring income into the community. The group has already done considerable work over the

last year, using the voluntary labor of more than 40 young people. This last-dollar investment would lead to the completion of the project in early summer.

Gyámszuloi Kozosseg Alapítvány

A vacant lot covered in rubble sits next to the local school and kindergarten. Children walk through it and play in it every day. The space is both unsafe and unattractive — an eyesore in the community. The project will bring together students, the local government, the church and parents to clear the rubble and landscape the approximately 1 acre of space into a small park and playground. After rubble is cleared by the local government, work will be done by parents and students. Ongoing maintenance is covered by the school.

Varosfalva Association

There is no public space for children or the elderly in this village. The project will renovate a schoolyard with the support of the locals. At this time, the schoolyard is the only public space, but it is unused due to lack of any facility or infrastructure — it is a dusty field. The project will work with local craftsmen to make benches and tables, buy a table tennis table, and work with citizens to landscape the space. The result will be a centrally located green space in which youth can play and the elderly can rest on their way to church or the cemetery, or gather to be social. 20 volunteers have already committed and the grant will cover only things not available in the village.

“Pro Unitas” Association/Bozod

The congregation house in this village is a well-used space and historical point (being the birthplace of a famous individual). In the summers, the house hosts a camp for more than 40 youth and throughout the year serves as a meeting point for the congregation’s youth group, elderly, women’s association, etc. The house itself is adobe and is at risk of becoming unusable. The project seeks to repair the roof, floors and walls, with the support of local volunteers. Additionally, the funds will upgrade furniture damaged by interior floods in recent years.

Providence Association/Siménfalva

This village began a congregation house in 2008 but has been unable to complete the process. Currently they have walls, a roof, windows and electrical hook up, but they would like to finish the space with plumbing, heating furniture and lighting. The village will do the labor and the grant will cover items like radiators and insulation. The center will also serve as a place for services during the winter since it is a fairly large village and the church is up on a hill, making it difficult for the elderly to attend.

Ittre Benced Foundation

This application seeks to build on a successful local newspaper project by purchasing a higher quality printer, launching an online edition and upgrading hardware. The existing printer is aging and limiting in its abilities. Launching an online edition offers the opportunity to reach out to individuals from the village and seeks to engage them in the development of their home through education. In addition to higher quality on- and offline options, the project will add 1 laptop to the community vault to be used for associated projects, volunteers working on the paper, community events, etc.

Unitarian Church from Kalnok

Over the last four years, the Congregation House has been extensively renovated and improved. It is now a frequent meeting point for several village groups and hosts celebrations,

clubs and informal gatherings. The grant will add a kitchen and toilet to the building. Currently it has outdoor plumbing and a stove in the main space. Bringing the plumbing indoors will make the space more comfortable in the winter and incorporating a separate kitchen will make the meal preparations less intrusive during events. In particular, bringing water into the space will make simple tasks like making coffee for the women's club significantly easier than carrying it in from the well.

Unitarian church from Korispatak

A small church under renovation, the majority of men working abroad and few options for either formal or informal group meetings led this group to apply. The goal of the project is to renovate two rooms in the congregation house. One room would be used simply as a meeting room for the women's club, be used for services during the winter (until the church is fixed), and for Sunday school. The other room would be used as a computer center. The villagers could thus communicate with their families abroad more easily, youth could learn computer skills with a local teacher, and farmers can receive information on European Union support programs.

Civitas

Building on support of the LDA network, this program seeks to engage 25 youth from 5 villages in the Odorhei region in designing and leading small projects. Each young person will benefit from meetings, trainings and team building before being supported in the creation of a small local project in their community. The youth will be partnered with LDAs to deliver their projects and will develop sustainability plans. This project has the potential to leverage larger funding from the European Union after demonstrating efficacy.