



THE TALE OF THE STARFISH AND THREE JUBILEE GIRLS

There is a familiar story about a man who was walking on a beach covered with thousands of dying starfish who had washed up on the beach. As he walked, he stooped and picked up one starfish after another and threw it back into the water where he knew the starfish could survive. Another man - watching this act of mercy exclaimed "You are trying to do the impossible, there's just too many of them to rescue!" But the first man answered back as he threw one more starfish into the water - "that one appreciates me!"

And that is Elena's story. Elena has become our starfish. Confined to a wheelchair, beaten and bloodied by her 76yr old father, an alcoholic, her plight was reported to the police and he was arrested and removed from the home. Left alone, Elena could not survive. For ten years she had lived with her father - confined to her wheelchair - with no heat (think Romanian winter-see picture) and little food while he drank away her \$100 per month from the state because she was judged to be so handicapped. The Social Service authorities responsible for monitoring Jubilee's facilities in Giurgiu County (GCSS) where the Girls Home is located, are faced with enormous odds with literally hundreds of Elena's to "protect" and now, this Elena is alone and they could not ignore her situation.



They called Nelu for help. He and another staff member went to Elena's home and found her - a 50yr old woman in a wheelchair, hungry, sick, beaten on the face, dirty and in serious need (like our starfish). The GCSS asked us to take Elena and to care for her.

At this point in our story, the question often arises, should we become "involved" and why should we presume that it is our "mission" to rescue this particular "starfish" (think budget?) and why not someone else just as needy? And perhaps that will not take up so much time and effort? But God, who is rich in mercy touched our hearts and said to us "Doesn't Elena fit? Weren't all of us once called dirty and smelly ourselves and He had compassion on us, didn't He?

Weren't we all just like those starfish - dead in sin and helpless?

But as God reached Elena and brought her to Jubilee, He also was at work in the hearts of our girls for their benefit too. We're calling it a "miracle". Perhaps you will too.

WHEN GOD DOES IT, IT IS A PERFECT FIT

When you live on the streets as many of our girls have done, you do not learn compassion, but you do learn to fend for yourself - often by taking advantage of someone else. When our girls came to Jubilee, they did not shed their ways and suddenly become unselfish and grateful. They had become too scarred and jaded about life to be taken advantage of. "What's in it for me?" became their mantra. Often it impeded them from making real progress. In short, they had to learn to live with other girls just like them.

Back to our starfish....Elena...

Elena obviously needed much care at first and the GCSS allowed us to hire one of the other girls to care for her and they paid her a small stipend. Then it became obvious she needed another helper and the GCSS agreed to that also.

Now Elena is beginning to thrive in the "ocean" of God's love - regular meals, medical care, cleaned and bathed daily, diapers changed regularly, a warm house and a clean bed for the first time in 10 yrs...our "starfish" is even putting on some weight and regularly attending Bible classes in the upstairs lounge. Two of our difficult and unemployable girls, Berki and Lamonita (her two helpers) now have paying jobs and actually have had their hearts changed too. They've begun to realize how helpless they were once - just like Elena - and how God allowed them to survive also.

Please continue to pray for Elena, Berki and Lamonita that their hearts will be open to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and become adopted into God's family. **They will fit in perfectly.**

**For all US & Canadian donations,
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