

PRESS RELEASE

Track record day in Timisoara: "Speranța" Rehabilitation Foundation and its partner, "Save the children" Organization – Timisoara branch are closing an innovative project for small disabled children

"Speranța" Rehabilitation Foundation turns another page in the book of well-doing. For the last 18 months, over 150 young disabled children aged 0-4, in Timis county, have been offered free of charge early intervention services, according to their specific needs, through the project "A good start". At the end, it's summing up time.

The closure conference will take place on Thursday, March 3 2016, from 4 p.m., at Viena hall, Timisoara hotel, 1-3, Mărășești street.



The project was initiated by the "Speranța" Rehabilitation Foundation, in partnership with "Save the children" Organization – Timisoara branch and funded by the EEA Grants 2009-2014, within the NGO Funds in Romania - **Componenta 4 Servicii sociale și de bază (reference no. RO2013_C4_30), with the sum of 223.391,00 eur.**

An year and a half ago, in response to current needs, "Speranța" Rehabilitation Foundation and "Save the children" Organization – Timisoara branch were launching a new project and along with it, an innovative and complex early intervention service for children with disabilities or at risk of developmental delay or disability, and their families. The centre, called "A good start", was opening widely its doors for over 150 children with autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy and other neuromotor conditions, mental retards and other forms of developmental delays. For these children, their inclusion into an early intervention programme meant another chance to a life as close to normal as possible.

"We have set the goal of prevention and reducing the risk of social and education exclusion for children with disabilities or at risk of developmental delay or disability, and their families, through setting up a complex early intervention service in Timisoara. After 18 months of running the project, the activities and, most of all, the results encourage us to consider that we have achieved our objectives and contributed to setting up a model of good practice in the early intervention field. For the targeted children, we have offered the start. "A good start" is turning now into "Have a safe way further!", says Mrs. Letiția Baba, project manager and Executive Director of the "Speranța" Rehabilitation Foundation, bringing into discussion **the achieved results:**

- 162 children included in therapeutic programs, including 16 children with Down syndrome, 30 with autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorders, 26 with neuromotor conditions, 32 with speech disorders, 2 hearing impaired, 4 visually impaired and 52 with other forms of developmental delays, as shown in the graphic;



- 200 more informed and counseled parents, to better understand their own disabled children. Early intervention services have a significant impact over the families of disabled children. The family would be resentful and feel disapproved, social secluded, stressed, frustrated, helpless. Daily stress, worsened by the presence of a disabled child, can affect family life equally as the child's development. Families with disabled children recorded high rates of divorce and suicide, and children themselves are more vulnerable to abuse than children without disabilities. Early intervention leads to improving the parents' self esteem and their attitude towards the child, raising awareness and improving parental skills and, very important, prevents child abandonment in state institutions.



The level of parents' satisfaction on the quality of services could be quantified and it is easily visible in their testimonies about the project:

1. "M. gladly goes to therapies, being extremely happy when reaching the Foundation, happiness which further accentuates when seeing the therapists. I cannot but note how beneficial these meetings are, and especially see the results of their work in my child's evolution. As a parent, in my turn, I found here support, understanding and, furthermore, professional counselling on my child's needs and how to act in everyday life. Thank you very much, wonderful people!" – S.P., parent.



2. "Not everyone can do what these people are doing. They put a huge amount of heart in every cause. As parents, in our turn, we have received advice and counselling whenever we needed, unconditionally. When the day comes for therapy, our little girl can hardly wait to get there. She is very happy, and I cannot say that when speaking about kindergarten or any other place" – C.J., O.J., parents.

3. "To us, as a family, this foundation has changed our lives. Indeed, the name "Hope" was very well chosen" – D.I., parent.



4. "My child has been helped to better manage his emotions, develop his motor skills, to communicate better, to adapt better in school. I have seen progress in his behavior and his ability to adapt. All the materials and the therapeutical equipment, entirely, were made available for us by the Foundation. All of these helped me, as a parent, to be closer to my child's needs and understand him better. Thank you!" – L.A., parent.

5. "I wish there were established as many centres like this one as possible in this country, to help these children integrate among normal children. Thank you!" – M.M., parent.

This particular context represents an opportunity to public release a very useful tool for parents: "**My child's abilities. Observation guide for the small child (0 – 4 years)**", developed through the activities run by the "A good start" project. This guide is targeting the parents and it is meant to be a tool for the parent to **learn to observe his/her child**, in order to detect potential developmental delays or deviations as early as possible and consult a specialist. The information helps the parent capture most of the aspects of an age appropriate development for the main types of acquisitions, as well as alarm signals, for which it is suggested to consult a specialist.



We have invited to attend the official meeting local authorities' representatives, representatives of educational structures (schools and kindergartens) and medical structures (maternity hospitals, medical staff), professionals, NGO and business sector representatives, parents.

About the "Speranta" Rehabilitation Foundation

For over 22 years, the "Speranta" Rehabilitation Foundation provides support for the inclusion of disabled children, through the 35 projects that have been run, 7 centres to prevent segregation and support inclusion for the disabled children (70-75% of the over 4000 beneficiary children have been enrolled into mainstream education), the services offered to parents, the accredited trainings on Inclusive Education and through the Inclusive Education Network, with over 4000 active members, as well.

About "Save the children" Organization – Timisoara Branch

"Save the children" Organization – Timisoara Branch is a nongovernmental, nonprofit organisation which, since 1992, has been running activities for children and young people, especially those in difficulty. "Save the children" Organization – Timisoara Branch is part of the national Organization "Save the children" Romania, that involved over 600.000 children in its campaigns and programmes, during the 24 years of activity. Save the children Romania is a member of Save the Children International, the biggest independent organization in the world that promotes the rights of the child, comprising 30 members and running programmes in over 120 countries.

*For official information on the EEA grants,
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