



**The Monthly Newsletter of Mustard Tree Ministries, Inc.**

**May 5, 2017**

**Volume 1, Issue 3**

*A Note From the Desk of our Director:  
Our Partners in Romania are coming the week of May 10-17*

**Our partners from Romania will be here the week of May 10th—17th!**

You will have the opportunity to meet and hear two of our partner pastors from Romania. Rares Calugar is the lead pastor of the churches in Romania. He pastors a church in Cluj while also fulfilling the role of overseeing the establishment and development of other churches in Romania. Right now there are seven active United Methodist Churches in Romania. Three are Romanian churches and four are in Roma (Gypsy) communities. Rares also helps direct a group called Alphagrup. Alphagrup is a ministry that goes to the Romanian orphanages and brings opportunity for fun with the message of God's love. It is



amazing to watch the interaction between the orphans and those that come with Alpha.



Cristian Istrate and his wife Ligia and their daughter Hannah are also coming. They pastor a church start in Sibiu. They have an outreach into local coffee shops. They are reaching out to the youth culture their in Sibiu. They have a band that plays these local coffee shops and gives testimony. They also have an outreach to the orphanage in Sibiu and are planning an outreach into the Roma community outside it's cities borders.

Ligia is director of women's ministries for all of Romania, and also for their district. She is involved in advocating for peace through the European Methodiat women as she is there editor and on their Board of directors. She is the youngest woman involved in this. She is author or editor of several books. One being a women's devotional book Chest of Jewels, and her most recent release is The Paradoxical Brotherhood and the Cyclical History, Jews and Egyptians in History and Theology. This was her doctrinal thesis, and now is published. They do all of these things while raising their daughter of three, Hannah.



*Sowing Seeds MTM Case Management Program*

*Client Highlights: Ms. Vanessa Norwood*



Vanessa was referred to us by a friend of hers last January. She had been turned down on her disability application and found herself in a tight place. Since that time, we are grateful to report that thanks to the conjoined efforts of Mustard Tree with her attorney, Vanessa's disability appeal was approved and she is awaiting her assignment of an apartment through CHA. Vanessa wants to thank everyone at MTM for their support and guidance during a very difficult time!



*Working to eradicate homelessness and poverty one life, one community at a time here and around the world.*

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## Director Highlight of the Month: Meet our Founder and Director: Barry Kidwell

Having a restored relationship with God is the most important aspect of my life, and to offer that same restoration to the people that God allows me to encounter throughout this journey on earth is my chief goal in life.

I met my wife, Diana, at Lee University. We graduated on May 7 of 1983 and got married on May 14. We are parents to 3 children, David, Kathleen, and Zak. I graduated from Asbury Theological Seminary in December of 1988. In June of 2004, we were called to Forrest Avenue UMC. This is where Mustard Tree Ministry (please note it is tree, not seed, for a reason) became a reality. Forrest Avenue was closed some-time around June of 2010. We worshiped under the Walnut Street Bridge for a while on Sunday mornings.

My family loves the outdoors, hiking, fishing and rafting/canoeing. I especially love to duck and deer hunt. My kids love the beach, I love the mountains; and we all love Puerto Rico, my wife's home place, even though as a family we have only been there once. Diana is a Big Orange fan, the rest of us are LSU Tigers! One last thing, we all love missions, especially to the forgotten people of Eastern Europe (the Roma). Please ask me about this ministry also. I look forward to our getting to know each other, as we offer God's restoration and transformation together to those we are led to. — Barry Kidwell

## Upcoming Events & Opportunities to Get Involved

- **Romanian Partners Visit:** Our Romanian partners will be leading our Sunday night services at FCUMC on May 14th! Don't miss out on this great opportunity to learn more about our work in Romania!
- **Chest of Jewels:** If you missed out on purchasing one of Ligia's devotionals, don't worry! Just let us know and we'll order one for you! Each devotional is only \$15.00 each!