



Daniel Szabó shares Bible stories with Roma children at a day camp in Nagydobrony.

## A day in the life of a missionary

Your gifts to *Presbyterians Sharing* support David Pándy-Szekeres who is serving with the Reformed Church of the Sub-Carpathian Ukraine (RCCU), a church of ethnic Hungarians in Ukraine. David supervises the work of RCCU missionaries working in Ukraine and coordinates four Christian secondary schools. Here, David shares a day in his life as a missionary who supports missionaries.

The day began early enough. By 6:30 am I had already picked up Daniel Szabó who, at 77, continues to be one of God's most hardworking servants and missionaries. We were on our way to the Reformed Church Secondary School in Nagydobrony, a school that has been much supported over the years by The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The school's farm provides vegetables, fruit, meat, milk and eggs for the students. At present it has four large heated greenhouses, dairy cows, chickens, pigs and fields of crops.



to a cement-like consistency. Having personally supervised and planted most of the four hundred fruit trees and bushes, Daniel was hoping to loosen the soil above the roots of the trees to improve aeration. But he would need some help, so we went to find a few local men who often assist with tasks. It turned out that the men were working elsewhere, but we discovered that the summer day camp at the Roma kindergarten was spilling over with children. Daniel immediately seized the opportunity to tell the children a Bible story; vividly illustrating God's purpose in their lives.

Daniel's plan for the day was to deliver two roosters and chickens and to work in the farm's orchard. Heavy and continuous rains in May caused severe flooding and made it virtually impossible to tend the orchard. Weeds grew over a meter and the heavy rain, followed by days of scorching sun, hardened the soil

From there we went to the secondary school where the principal showed us the foundation which had just been completed for a new addition. He informed us that volunteers from England and the Netherlands would help erect the building. He

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then gave a report about the school's graduation ceremonies and we discussed a new plan to offer tuition support for potential students. The RCCU leadership has had to increase tuition fees, which less and less families can afford.

I left Daniel at the farm and headed to Csonkapapi to photograph some of the students and the principal at the elementary public school. The principal explained how antiquated their heating system is and how they have managed to upgrade one-third of the system but have no more funds to continue.

Arriving in the town of Mezővári, I visited the kindergarten for Roma children to discuss plans for a work team arriving from the Netherlands in July. I then made a stop in the town of Beregszász to meet two university students who have been selected to attend a one-month summer program in Chautauqua, New York. In a few days they would travel 890 kilometers to Kiev to try to obtain entry tourist visas to the USA – something of a hit and miss affair – and I was helping them with last minute paperwork. After this I made a quick stop at the local hospital where I delivered 25 kg of detergent to the ward for abandoned infants, something I have been doing on a monthly basis for several years now, thanks to a donation from a Dutch youth group.

From here I went to the village of Nagyberég to meet Ferenc Homoki, an RCCU missionary under my supervision who organizes and leads the activities of a Roma congregation he established almost two years ago. A work team from the Netherlands was supposed to construct a kindergarten and multi-purpose building for the congregation, but administrative bungling by the municipal authorities stalled the undertaking. So Ferenc and I worked to plan an alternate program for the team, and then I returned to Beregszász to meet a former missionary, now an assistant pastor. We arranged for him to take a badly-ailing Roma man to the Christian Medical Clinic in the next town.

Returning to Nagydobrony, I picked up Daniel, who had not made much progress in the maligned orchard. This saddened both of us, as the orchard was designed not only to provide fruit for the local church secondary school, Roma school and Roma kindergarten, but also to be a place for the whole community to visit and reflect on the beauty and bounty of God's creation.

For our final stop, we visited the head lay-person of one of the three RCCU church presbyteries. Although it was nine-thirty by the time we arrived, his family greeted us with a warm, home-cooked meal. For the next few hours we discussed countless different topics regarding the mission outreach we do for the benefit of our church communities and for those in need. Given that the needs here seem to be endless at times, our discussion continued well into the night. It was one-thirty in the morning when Daniel bid me farewell in front of his home, already telling me what needed to be done once the sun came up again.

- David Pándy-Szekeres  
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**Top and Middle:** Children impacted by the ministries of the Reformed Church of the Sub-Carpathian Ukraine. **Bottom:** An outhouse provided by RCCU churches to people in need in the Sub-Carpathian Ukraine.



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