



# St Gregory's Foundation

*Helping vulnerable children and families in Eastern Europe*



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## APPEAL TO REPAIR MKURNALI'S SHELTER

Late in January a sewage pipe serving not only the Mkurnali homeless shelter but three other houses failed and waste water gushed out into Mkurnali's yard. The great volume of water washed away a set of steps and part of the kitchen wall collapsed.

Getting the sewer fixed was quite a saga. It took two companies and one failed repair to discover that the problem was actually not on Mkurnali property. It took three weeks more to finally resolve the issue. First they had to persuade the company responsible to come out, then it took them several visits to locate the problem.

Finally, they only hired an excavator for two hours, so Mkurnali volunteers worked through

the night with shovels to dig up the street so a new pipe could be installed. After all this, they still had to complete work within the yard to reconnect the shelter to the main drains.

This drama has taken its toll. While Mkurnali were appealing to the authorities for help, one of the children living at the shelter had to be hospitalised because of an infection. Unfortunately, Mkurnali are responsible for the damage to their property, even though it wasn't their fault.

We are very grateful to donors who have already contributed £970 towards repairs. We still need to raise **£3,130** to make good the damage. Can you help?

# NEW EQUIPMENT FOR AUTISTIC CHILDREN



Our partners at The Wish, based in Călărași, Moldova, thank you for equipment bought with a grant from St Gregory's.

What they bought:

- elephant-shaped busy board
- balance boards
- therapy balls
- ambient light lamps
- educational activity booklets
- tactile materials (hands, footprints)
- sensory toys (tactile balls, mats)
- speech therapy tools
- coloured hoops for relaxation activities
- a multifunctional table and more

Dear Donors,

We extend our sincere gratitude for your generous support in helping our center acquire sensory equipment for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other disabilities. Your contribution has a direct and significant impact on the quality of therapeutic services we provide on a daily basis.

The equipment provides essential tools in the intervention process. These resources support the development of children's ability to process

and respond appropriately to environmental stimuli, facilitating emotional regulation, improving attention, and increasing comfort in daily activities.

For the specialists in our centre, these resources are of great value and significantly ease their work. Their consistent use in everyday activities allows therapy to be tailored to each child's individual needs and contributes to achieving key objectives, such as developing communication, social skills and personal autonomy, as well as cognitive and motor abilities.

By integrating this equipment into the therapeutic process, children benefit from a safe, stimulating, and adapted environment where they can learn, explore, and progress at their own pace. Every achievement, no matter how small, represents an important step toward a more independent life.

Thank you for your trust, involvement, and solidarity. Through your generosity, you are offering these children not only equipment, but also a real chance for development, inclusion, and a better future.

With deep appreciation,  
The Wish Centre Team

# SUNFLOWER'S SUMMER PLANS



Sunflower Centre works in St Petersburg, helping young people who've grown up in children's homes find their way into adult life. With support from St Gregory's, they have founded a year-round programme for parents who were raised in orphanages. We continue to fund their summer activities.

We're all looking forward to the warmth of summer, but the long days can be a challenge to families, especially those with social and financial difficulties. The cost of living crisis will make the summer holidays tough this year.

Sunflower have taken the decision not to run their usual rural summer camp for families this year. This is partly because of cost, but also because the families in their current group would find the journey and change of environment stressful.

However, Sunflower is always adaptable. Instead they will use the time to develop the skills needed for families to spend quality time together in the city without spending a fortune.

As ever, the group are already preparing themselves. The programme is drawn up in response to the particular difficulties the group of single mothers are experiencing. One of the mums said, 'I won't know how to handle the kids in front of everyone.' So, our colleagues are doing some training to raise confidence in taking children out and about. They'll be teaching the basic rules to keep everyone safe in a busy urban environment. Another day will be devoted to spending the day at home. Families will be able to try out activities and learn how to plan a day that doesn't disrupt their child's routines.

Altogether six families will spend six days together. They will learn how to choose activities that suit the whole family, not just the adults, how to keep control without being aggressive, and how to respect routines. The aim is to prevent the fall in children's well-being that often happens during the summer. We also hope that the activities will all be easy for families to repeat themselves without the support of the staff bringing benefits to the children well beyond summer 2026. The major cost will be staff time. It is our skilled colleagues that make these simple activities life-changing for struggling families.

# TRAINING THERAPISTS IN MOLDOVA
























Our Moldovan partners, Rain Kids, work with children with complex needs that affect their communication skills, concentration, ability to manage their emotions and more. The charity has a multi-disciplinary team working with the children so that they can provide specialist attention across the different areas of their development. This also means that they need to keep up-to-date across a range of specialities. Knowing how few professionals are equipped to support autistic children in Moldova, we have made training the focus of our support for them.

Over the last few months, the charity has set up a range of training opportunities for staff. Two of these stand out particularly. The first was a session on play with autistic children. Play is central to much of their therapy. It doesn't just make therapy sessions fun, it also has value in itself. Through play the children learn a whole range of physical and social skills. However, for autistic children play can look different. We were delighted that the whole team was able to take part in a training session to help them motivate the children to play, to structure their play sessions, and to help the children transfer the learning from play into real life situations. The charity was also able to buy toys that promote learning through play.

Anna Cislaru, Centre Co-ordinator for Rain Kids took part in the second session, which was a two-day intensive training focusing on PECS - a pictorial language which can help children with significant difficulties in verbal communication to find 'their voice'. She learned a huge amount about the process of introducing and using PECS with a child. When she came back, she taught what she had learned to the rest of the team. They have already been able to use her learning with some of the children.

Thank you very much to everyone who has donated so we can help raise the standard of therapy for children in Moldova.

 I want		 I see		 Thankyou	
 Drink	 Biscuit	 Apple	 Cake	 Crisps	 Banana
 Book	 Sand	 Bricks	 Pens	 Farm	 Puzzle
 Shoe	 Junper	 Trousers	 Coat	 Sock	 Hat

An English language example of PECS, source : Shashidhar Chandrashekhar and Jyothi S. Bommangoudar

# OUR FINANCES



Alina Nikitina  
SGF accountant

At the time of writing, St. Gregory's Foundation remains steadfast in our mission to support vulnerable children and families across Eastern Europe.

Last year, we recorded a deficit of £60,655 and made a deliberate, strategic decision to draw upon our investment reserves to ensure the continued stability of our local partners. While this is an increase from the 2024 deficit of £41,061, it allowed our life-changing work to proceed without interruption during a period of global uncertainty. Following a positive re-evaluation of our assets, the final net movement of funds for the year was -£25,647.

Key highlights from 2025 were:

- Income totalled £73,047.
- Donations at £55,057 accounted for over 75% of our annual income.
- Reserves have been wisely managed to deliver £15,833 in dividends and interest for the year.
- Charitable project and activity costs met expectations at £95,291.

From providing critical legal aid to young people in Georgia to supporting children with autism in rural Moldova, your generosity has been our lifeline.

We have empowered young people with learning disabilities at Sunny Corner, provided therapeutic sessions through Communication Space, and helped orphanage leavers gain independence via the Sunflower Centre.

Thank you for continuing to stand with us and the families we serve.

What we received	2025 unrestricted funds, £	2024 total funds, £
Donations & Legacies	55,057	75,552
Other trading activities	2,157	23,707
Investments	15,833	17,165
Total income	73,047	116,424
What we spent	Year to 31.12.2025	Year to 31.12.2024
Wages	21,983	22,082
Raising donations & legacies	22,277	25,959
Charitable activities	95,291	99,534
Governance costs	10,868	9,910
Total spent	133,702	157,485
Gains/losses	Gains/losses	43,417
Net movement in funds	(25,647)	2,356
Total funds brought forward	520,013	517,657
Total funds carried forward	494,366	520,013

## TRIP TO MOLDOVA- LAST CALL!



We have just **a couple of places left** on our fundraising trip to Moldova and Romania this June (17th–23rd June) — **don't miss out!**

We've secured fantastic travel rates and created a truly unique itinerary packed with unforgettable experiences. You'll visit our inspiring project work, enjoy world-class wineries, and explore the breathtaking landscapes of Moldova, including the UNESCO-listed Old Orhei and a stunning nature reserve. The adventure continues in Romania with a visit to the iconic Dracula's Castle — a must-see experience!

This is a rare opportunity to combine meaningful impact with an extraordinary travel experience.

The full itinerary is available [HERE](#) — or get in touch and we'll send it straight over:

**Julia Ashmore**  
[julia@stgregorysfoundation.org.uk](mailto:julia@stgregorysfoundation.org.uk)  
or call 0203 372 4992



## TALK WITH ANNA PASTERNAK



We're delighted to announce a fundraising talk this autumn with Anna Pasternak, acclaimed author, columnist and journalist.

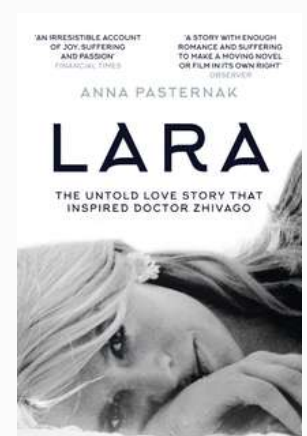
Anna is an international bestselling author who will speak about her remarkable family, including her great-uncle, Nobel Prize-winning novelist Boris Pasternak, author of *Doctor Zhivago*, and her great-grandfather, the Impressionist painter Leonid Pasternak. She'll also share the story behind her book *Lara: The Untold Love Story That Inspired Doctor Zhivago*, which uncovers the real-life muse behind the novel. The book received critical acclaim and is in development as a film.

We'll be announcing the date, time and venue this summer. If you'd like to reserve tickets, please email Julia Ashmore and we'll add you to the list.

The evening will include a 45-minute talk followed by a Q&A, and will support our work with children with special needs.

*"I would be delighted to give a talk in aid of St Gregory's Foundation. I've given many talks about my family and my book Lara, and would be very happy to do this for such a good cause later this year."*

**Anna Pasternak**



# HOW YOUR DONATIONS HELP

**£14** will pay a psychologist/teacher for an afternoon session with disabled children in rural Moldova  
**£20** will buy food and hygiene packages containing essential items for a family with children with special needs in Chisinau.

**£38** will pay for one week of training with a psychologist for 6 parents, who are former care leavers, and their children at Sunflower summer camp.

**£115** will pay for Mkurnali's lawyer to defend one vulnerable young person through an average case.

## MAKE A ONE-OFF DONATION

Donate online at  
**StGregorysFoundation.org.uk**  
or

send a cheque payable to  
The St Gregory's Foundation to:  
Julia Ashmore, SGF  
c/o Flat 2, Effingham Lodge, Surbiton Crescent  
Kingston upon Thames, KT1 2LN

## MAKE A REGULAR DONATION

Donate online at  
**StGregorysFoundation.org.uk**  
or

return this standing order form to SGF

To the manager of ..... bank

Bank address: .....

.....

.....

Account name: .....

Account No. ....

Sort Code: .....

Please pay into the account of the St Gregory's Foundation, Royal Bank of Scotland

Acc. 12348109 Sort Code: 16-12-53

the sum of £..... starting on ..... (date)

and continuing on the same day

monthly/quarterly/annually\* until further

notice. This replaces any existing order in

favour of St Gregory's Foundation.

Name: .....

Date: .....

Signature: .....

## KEEP IN TOUCH

I wish to become a member of St Gregory's Foundation and enclose my annual subscription of £30 (waged)/£20 (unwaged).

I wish to receive the newsletter by post

I wish to receive news by e-mail

## MY DETAILS AND CONSENT

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Phone:

E-mail:

Signature:

## PLEASE *giftaid* YOUR DONATION

I wish to gift aid my donation of £..... to St Gregory's Foundation (single donation)

I wish to gift aid my donation of £....., and donations I make in the future and any donations I have made in the past 4 years to St Gregory's Foundation (multiple donations)

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less income tax and/or capital gains tax than the gift aid claimed on all my donations in any tax year, it is my responsibility to pay the difference.

# What We Do

St Gregory's Foundation supports local charities in Eastern Europe to tackle poverty and social insecurity facing children, teenagers, parents and carers. Our projects address the root causes of disadvantage by putting families before institutions, strengthening a sense of responsibility and providing opportunities for vulnerable people to fulfil their potential. Our work encourages local initiatives and makes our beneficiaries active participants in improving their own lives.

## CONTACTS

### Please send donations to:

Julia Ashmore  
c/o Flat 2, Effingham Lodge  
Surbiton Crescent  
Kingston upon Thames,  
KT1 2LN

### For info and volunteering:

Julia Ashmore  
Executive Secretary  
Tel: 0203 372 4992  
julia@stgregorysfoundation.org.uk

### Online shop queries?

shop@stgregorysfoundation.org.uk


### SGF Directors:

- Nicholas Kolarz, Chair
- Tania Illingworth
- Jane Jones
- Simon Jennings, Honorable Treasurer

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## MKURNALI'S HANDMADE JEWELLERY



[ebay.co.uk/usr/stgregorysfoundation](http://ebay.co.uk/usr/stgregorysfoundation)

Mkurnali trains young people who have experienced homelessness to make this beautiful jewellery. By buying it on our Ebay shop you are supporting Mkurnali and young people in their care.

