



### Latest News

- Warm thanks to all the volunteers who helped over the summer break looking after our dogs (both ongoing and short term to cover other volunteer holidays)
- Koren, a gymnastics teacher from the UK visited in September for a week to do some sessions in the schools here in Bucharest. Of particular value were the gymnastic sessions in School for the Deaf (Dămăroaia)
- Many thanks to our latest fundraiser Paul Georgescu who successfully swam the English Channel raising money for Light into Europe in 13h36m. He was the fastest Romanian and very brave to go back after a failed first attempt
- Business Lease have sponsored a Dacia Duster for our everyday dog and puppy training needs
- Mega Image have donated office furniture for the School for the Deaf and over 2000 items of uniform that will be distributed to different schools around the country
- Isfahan Doekhie from Bliss Imobiliare is named an official Ambassador for Light into Europe



## Tanzanian Street Kids to Romanian Guide Dogs

interview with **Rob Bousie** - Development Manager

by Ruth Rusby

Rob is a British expat in his early 30s who moved to Bucharest with his wife Naomi a year ago. Rob has a background in environmental science and renewable energy. However, when he and Naomi decided to move to Mwanza, Tanzania in September 2011, Naomi started teaching at the British School whilst Rob decided to work with children as a long-term volunteer with a local NGO.

“There was a drop-in centre for street kids,” says Rob, “where they would come for a bed, food and respite from the violence and dangers of the street.”

Whilst linking these children with social workers and trying to get them fostered by relatives such as aunts or grandparents, they tried to find out why the children had left home.

“We developed street football sessions for younger kids,” says Rob, “as a means of building relationships. Early morning, from 7:30 am to 9:30 am, in three parts of the city throughout the week we would set up a pitch on wasteland using jumpers for goal posts. We provided the coaches and balls and lent the kids clothing and shoes.”

The children were mainly boys from six to 14 years old who were involved



in begging throughout the day. They were taught team skills, listening skills, discipline and other life skills including maths and word problems.

In 2010 Tanzania had entered a team in the Street Child World Cup in South Africa. The aim for Rob was to do the same in 2014 and take a team to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Throughout this project, Rob worked alongside their partners in the Street Child World Cup 2014 organization.

The aim was to have as much of a positive impact as possible on the lives of street kids by changing the

perceptions of society. Street kids were viewed as second-class citizens with no ID, no schooling and no money who were considered responsible for much of the crime.

“We started training more nationally,” says Rob, “for the national street child football tournament. Teams came from around the country for assessment in Mwanza.”

Rob was involved in the coordination of the BT Sport documentary “Street Child to Soccer Star” involving Tottenham Hotspurs player Benoit Assou-Ekotto and presented by Nick Hancock (see links below).

After a series of football trials a group of 15 street kids were selected to take part in the 2014 Street Child World Cup in Rio. Eventually this was reduced to 10 players who were sponsored to take part in this life-changing tournament.

Training took place over 6 months, during which time Rob’s street football sessions continued as normal. The 10 selected children had to be prepared mentally as well as physically for the tournament and birth certificates and passports had to be obtained.

*(continued overleaf)*

“The kids were taught other skills,” says Rob, “such as expressing their feelings through art projects and were guided by two of the players who’d taken part in the 2010 world cup.”

Their trip to Rio for the 2014 Street Child World Cup ultimately resulted in Tanzania winning the boys tournament.

“Tanzania had never won anything football-related before,” explains Rob. “The Prime Minister welcomed us on our return and we were introduced to parliament.”

The project was promised many things – some of which were realized, such as continuing school fees for the children.

“I put my whole life into it,” says Rob. “In the end I had to step back, it was almost too much. I took it as far as I could. We tried to get more support for the street children.

In July 2015 Rob and Naomi left Tanzania and in August they came to Bucharest.

“We wanted to come back to Europe,” says Rob, “and Romania seemed a good half-way house.”

Naomi started teaching science at the British School of Bucharest while Rob looked for a job with an NGO. Within a month he had become the new “Development Manager” at Light into Europe.

“I’m helping to expand awareness of the charity,” says Rob, “by modernizing things and gaining more support for the charity via sponsorship.”

Rob is involved in lots of events throughout the year – not just fund-raising, but maintaining links to five international schools, taking part in Expat Fairs and maintaining ties with the Dutch, British, Belgian and Austrian Chambers of Commerce.

“On a day-to-day basis I assist and support Capt. Stan Platt in the running of the charity,” says Rob. “The most fun part is meeting businesses and changing perceptions about guide dogs and the difference they can make.”

Rob has learned a lot by meeting people like Sean Dilley (political journalist and Board Member, Light

into Europe) and seeing the newly trained guide dogs paired with new beneficiaries in the last year.

“I would like people to be more understanding and supportive of guide dogs,” says Rob, “so that we could take them to more places. For this we need a critical number of working guide dog – beneficiary pairs.”

Rob would like to see at least another five more dogs out in the community in the near future as well as more involvement with the IGDF (International Guide Dog Federation).

“I would love to make better links with the shopping centres, malls and supermarkets,” says Rob, “so that we could train the guide dog puppies there during the long winters and hot summers.”

A guide dog was recently given permission to enter Baneasa Mall, but then stopped repeatedly by security guards once inside.

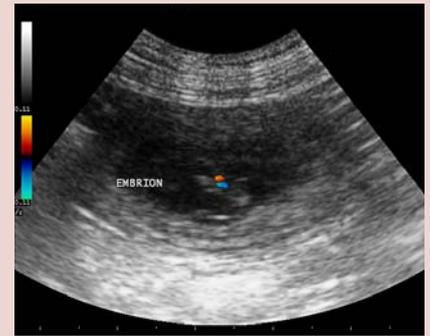
“This involves goodness-in-heart for guide dog training,” explains Rob, “because officially only fully-trained guide and assistance dogs with a licence should be allowed to enter.”

Whilst Light into Europe is currently looking for a new centre for guide dog training, this is currently carried out on Blvd. Ion Mihalache where there are plenty of trams, traffic lights and badly parked cars to be negotiated.

“I would like to improve outreach to the blind community,” says Rob. “There is such a lack of awareness of the needs of the blind. I’d love to travel on the buses, trams and metro all day with a guide dog speaking to people and raising awareness. Hopefully I’ll be in Bucharest for another five years or so and can make a difference to society in that time.”

#### Links:

1. Street Child to Soccer Star  
<https://youtu.be/yl2L6uXIGWw>
2. Gilberto Silva’s Road to Rio  
<https://youtu.be/1PUZi4R28-Q>  
(Tanzania team starts at 12:45 mins)



Misty’s ultrasound

- **Misty is expecting puppies!** They are due at end of October and we will be looking for new puppy walkers in time for Christmas!
- **Two new puppies arrived from Guide Dogs Stockholm.** They will be puppy walked in the UK and arrive here ready for their final Guide Dog training.
- **eMag new volunteering partnership.** Supplying puppy walkers for weekends.
- **Bobby, Basil, Betty and Bridie** undergoing advanced training before being placed with beneficiaries later this year.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- ◆ **Bonfire Night, Hotel Caro,** 4th November 2016, 7 PM
- ◆ **Curry Night, DonCafe Pipera** 11th November 2016, TBC
- ◆ **Caledonian Ball,** InterContinental Hotel, 19th November 2016, 6.30 PM