

A2B

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2018

He raises the poor out of the dust and
he lifts the needy out of the ash heap
that he may seat them with princes.

Psalm 113 vs 7-8



A Family Helped

By Tracy Bishop, Family Link Coordinator

When we visited the family Osmani in December 2017, we were surprised and delighted by the improvement in the living conditions. They have equipped the house with new sofas and other home furnishings. In the past, the doors and windows were broken, now they are replaced with new and they have paved the house with tiles. The house has no humidity and is warm during the cold winter days. These achievements have been realised through the hard work of the family and the support of A2B. Mother, father, brother and Zhuljeta herself are working together for a better standard of living. With the food package provided every month they have managed to save some money and buy furnishings. Our support to Zhuljeta has given her security and a new sense of dignity in front of her family and especially her daughter

"I am endlessly grateful to the help you have given me over these years! I do not know if I could have survived for so long without your support and not burdening my poor family. Situations like mine become even more difficult when you have a child to take care of.

But you support me by providing food for me, my daughter and my family! Not only food but you also bring to me hope, strength and desire to live, and to come out of it. And today I can say I did it - thanks to you all! Today, I still face problems and difficulties. Often I am psychologically burdened. But again, I can now work to provide somehow for the needs of my daughter! It is unbelievable that I have dreams today. I am dreaming to have my house and to live with my daughters. During these years with A2B so close it might be possible."

These are the words of Zhuljeta as she fights every day for her dreams and her daughter's future.



Let's pray for this family, that God will continue to provide for their needs whilst building healthy relationships between them.

If you are interested in sponsoring a family please contact us. It costs around £50 per month to provide for a family but if you cannot afford that you can part sponsor with somebody else, from £10 upwards. We provide food, clothing and sometimes accommodation.

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Annual Finance Report By David Ayrton, Treasurer

The Trustees are pleased to report that Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2017 have now been submitted to the Charity Commission. Here is a summary of our finances during the year.

This report relates to Aid to the Balkans Forward Trust - the old name for A2B. This trust was dissolved in June 2017 and a Charitable Incorporated Organisation called Aid to the Balkans UK (A2B) took over. There was a change of management policy at the beginning of April 2016 to allow A2B in Albania to manage how the grants are spent. We no longer monitor in detail, but we have a contract agreement for all money that we send out.

In 2016/17 we granted £37,718 for the General Fund to A2B in Albania. We received £34,974 and made up the difference by taking £2,744 from reserves. We also received £33,804 for various restricted funds. The general fund pays for operational costs such as buildings, vehicles and staff salaries. The restricted funds pay for specific projects and are only spent on these. The largest of these

projects (£18,350) was Family Link Sponsorship followed by £10,906 donated for a new vehicle. The graph shows a breakdown of the funds we received.

At the end of the year we had £4,493 in the bank, which is less than 1 month's grant requirement. The Trustees believe it is right that we should send out as much as we can each month and rely on God working through our supporters to fulfil any unforeseen needs

Accordingly, in 2017/18 we increased our monthly contribution to the General Fund because of the worsened exchange rate and increases in commitments. This led to a shortfall in income which has been met for the time being by one-off gifts, but we need your help to close that gap.

If God has been faithful in raising your income above the rate of inflation, then perhaps you could do the same for A2B. We understand that not everyone is

able to do this. By God's grace we have a year to try and get our income and expenses into balance, so we would ask you to pray about it. The extra money is needed for the General Fund, which provides the necessary backup to the various projects that A2B operate. We are also increasing our publicity to churches with whom we have links and are looking for other ways to raise money through sponsorship. We are grateful for every gift we have received and thank God for all our supporters, both individuals and churches, who have enabled us to carry on funding A2B Albania for another year.

New Data Protection Regulations By Andrew Davies, Legal Trustee

You will no doubt have received numerous emails and letters from all sorts of organisations referring to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The GDPR is a set new rules affecting how organisations can keep and use the information, or data, they have about you. Although these new rules are predominantly aimed at large data processing and marketing companies they also impact small charities such as ourselves.

At A2B we hold your details for the purposes of keeping you informed of our activities, by sending you notifications/updates such as this Newsletter, sending Prayer Letters, updates of Family Link activities and collecting in donations, amongst other things. You will now need to “opt in” positively to receive information from organisations, including A2B.

We are sending a formal privacy notice out with this newsletter, explaining how we use your details/data, and a supporters form. Please complete this supporters form and return it to us asap so that we can continue to send not only future newsletters but also otherwise keep you informed about A2B.

Positive Parenting Programme.

By Alketa Hasani, Director A2B Albania

The purpose of this activity was to encourage mothers, grandparents, or child caregivers in the Family Link Project. It was based around the vital principles that A2B has set from the beginning for Family Link. Over 12 months each family should:

- Support their children to be systematic in school during the school year
- Make every effort to start a job and provide for their family
- Respect the children's rights in their family
- Be part of an activity with social or awareness topics that A2B organises each month for them
- Set an example in their own lives for their children and society



It was a good experience to see mothers or grandparents voting for others as they introduced themselves based on the criteria. The children had prepared a drama on the subject: "Do not stop us from going to school." They also surprised the parents by playing songs on the guitar that they learned at Hope for the Future after-school club! The atmosphere of this activity was friendly and inclusive for everyone because they had all worked hard to meet the criteria of Family Link!

The A2B House of Opportunity

Nicola Davies, Prayer Co-ordinator and Minute Secretary

After years waiting for the right time, I was privileged to be able to go to Albania twice last year. The first time in May with a group of eighteen on a mission trip and the second time with a friend in November, visiting the projects and catching up with friends.

The first thing that struck me about Albania was its beauty. Lush green fields, hills and snowy mountains, so different from East Anglia! The second thing was the people. They are so friendly and hospitable and greet you like an old friend. The third thing was the poverty. Six people living in a ‘house’ the size of my living room with no glass in the one window and gaps between the bricks letting in rain,

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wind, snow etc. This was a family of mother and five children. Looking around there were no toys, no clothes, their only possessions seemed to be a couple of cooking pots. There were three beds between them, two single and one double. This was not an exception. Many people live in these sorts of conditions and worse.

On my first visit, one of the things we were asked to do was to sand the floors at the “A2B House of Opportunity”. At the time it was a bit of a building site. It is one of the oldest buildings in Elbasan and has some lovely period features. It has a modern, large kitchen and showers and toilets but they couldn't be used because the drains weren't in place. There was a deep trench in the garden for this but they were awaiting permission to connect up. Young people were waiting to move in so time was of the essence. When I returned back in November it was so heart-warming to see the house looking like a home with three young people living there along with house parents.



The House of Opportunity is designed to take up to eight young people. Often when children reach the age of sixteen they have to leave an orphanage and have nowhere to go. The aim is to give them a place of safety and to help them to find work. A2B has been heavily involved with this project working closely with the F.S.C.I. (Part of the Trussell Trust) charity based in Bulgaria.

Give as you Live and A2B

By David Ayrton, Treasurer



You can now raise free funds for us when you pop out to buy your groceries and many other things!

Whether you're dashing out for milk or doing your weekly shop, our Give-As-You-Live in-store cards are the convenient way to shop and raise funds for A2B.

Choose to shop at Waitrose, Marks & Spencer, Tesco, ASDA, John Lewis, Debenhams and many more.

Top up your card using the link below and use it again and again to keep raising free funds. If you're thinking of making a big purchase top up the card first and up to 4% will go to A2B. Click on this link or copy and paste it into your browser to get started.

<https://cardsforcauses.giveasyoulive.com/charity/aid-to-the-balkans-uk-a2b>

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