

Heidi Olson Ministries

Circle of Friends

Within His circle each holds an equal place!

When I was barely 2 years old, my Swedish Great Grandmother, Ebba declared, "I *just* know she's going to be a missionary! She's so friendly!" Ever since I was a little girl I had a desire to go to the overseas mission field. This desire grew through high school and college. When I was a senior in high school I attended the world renowned Urbana Missions conference and left feeling both inspired and frustrated that I had to finish high school and college before heading out as a full time missionary. After I received an Elementary Education degree in college I moved to Indiana and never dreamed that I would be here for 10 years! It has been a wonderful 10 years working at Camp Tecumseh and being a part of a nurturing community here in Indiana. And now after many years of preparation, the Lord has opened a door for me to work as a full time overseas missionary.



In the spring of 2005 I began preparations for a move to the mission field. I accepted an invitation to be a missionary teacher in Africa. Little did I know that the Lord had something else in mind.

Months before I was to depart for Africa, the Lord revealed to me that my first missionary venture was not to Africa. As I took this unexpected turn, the Lord assured me that I was indeed going to the nations – but He had His own plans in mind.



The plan that He has begun to unfold is a plan that He began years ago on a sunny March day on a country road in Indiana.

Close to my home lived a girl who enjoyed playing with hula hoops in her front yard. She would throw them up in the air and catch them. She enjoyed it so much that there always seemed to be at least 3 hula hoops stuck in the tree. One day I had an inkling to bring her a hula hoop. Little did I know that a single hula hoop could grow into a ministry to the nations!

Her name was Lynda and the day I gave her the hula hoop I also met her sister Stephanie. We quickly became friends and they began to come to church with me. Soon I met their younger cousins who also wanted to come to church, the cousins invited their friends who invited their neighbors and soon we were picking up kids we met in the apartment parking lots.



These children had not heard about Jesus and as they learned about His great love for them, many put their trust in Him, publicly professed their belief in Him and were baptized. As friends invited friends, this circle of friends beginning with a hula hoop grew into a group of young followers of Jesus.

This small band formed around a hula hoop was dubbed "The Circle of Friends". I knew that The Circle of Friends was something that the Lord wanted to do and I just happened to be the person standing there at the moment willing to hand off the hula hoop, bring the kids to church and introduce them to my wonderful Friend and Savior Jesus Christ. It is the work of the Holy Spirit that I have been privileged to be involved in. And what a blast we have together!



As of July 2006, The Circle of Friends has begun its international expansion as I become a missionary in Bucharest, Romania working at Casa Shalom, a Christian home for orphans. There I will learn about the ministry, teach violin lessons, help out as needed and seek the Lord as to how long He would like me to remain in Bucharest. After my initial commitment of three months is finished, with the Lord's guidance it will be decided if I should stay at Casa Shalom or if the Circle of Friends will expand to another place!



Casa Shalom (<http://misslink.org/casa/>) is a Christian home to about 30 orphaned children. The director, Rebecca Dan-Walsh is an American who has been working in Eastern Europe for 25 years. I have included a compelling story in this brochure of how Rebecca Dan-Walsh *rescued two children who were living among a herd of sheep*. There are thousands of orphans and street children living in Bucharest, Romania, I am trusting that God will lead me to reach out in love to these children with His life giving gospel.



Circle of Friends is in the process of becoming a non profit organization under the umbrella of Community of Hope Lutheran Church in Rosemount, Minnesota. Over the years I have been connected to this church through my father who is the church's worship leader. Community of Hope will be sending me out as a missionary to the nations with my first step being to Romania and then beyond as the Lord expands The Circle of Friends

I have told the Lord that I will go where ever He would like me to go and do whatever He would like me to do – *now comes the time for me to put those words to action!*



Would you prayerfully consider also joining me in this new harvest field? If you would like to financially support me as I move to Bucharest as a full time missionary, tax deductible gifts may be sent to:

Circle of Friends
c/o Community of Hope
14401 Biscayne Avenue West
Rosemount, MN 55068

Please write checks out to "Community of Hope" and write "Heidi Olson" in the memo line.

Electronic Funds Transfers possible, contact:
dennisristvedt@cohlc.org

To Directly Contact Heidi Olson:
heidionson@cohlc.org

For Heidi's Missionary Updates:
www.cohlc.org/missions

Taken from David Wilkerson's World Challenge, Inc. website
Casa Shalom – Rescuing Orphaned Children

In 1998, Rebecca Dan-Walsh, director of the Casa Shalom Orphanage in Bucharest heard a story that was astonishing even to her veteran missionary ears. In a remote region, a five-year-old girl and her two-and-a-half-year-old brother were sleeping among sheep on the open ground of a hillside. Food was scarce, and all the children had for shelter was a tiny, rickety shack nearby where their elderly, diseased grandfather lived. Using a crude map the director had drawn for them, Rebecca and an assistant set off to find the children.

As the group made their way down a steep hillside, Rebecca saw a herd of about one hundred sheep next to a little shack. On the ground outside the shack lay a thin layer of rags where the children slept. An elderly man greeted them, his body covered with sores. Peeking inside the grandfather's shack, Rebecca saw no sign of any food. Finally, two small children appeared – five-year-old Mirela and her little brother, Sorin. Both were filthy, their faces badly burned from the sun. Little Sorin was naked, his hair and body caked with sheep manure.

Rebecca then carefully explained to Mirela that she was going away to find a home for her and her brother in Bucharest. After three weeks when Rebecca returned to the little shack on the remote hillside, the grandfather greeted her with teary eyes. He said, "Every day since you were here, my granddaughter has come to me excited, saying, 'Grandpa, maybe this is the day the lady will come and take us to a nice house.' I didn't think you would come back, but I see you kept your promise. We don't meet people like you everyday."

The children grew to love their new home. But the adjustment was difficult, especially for little Sorin. One afternoon as Rebecca heard a strange sound coming from outside the orphanage: it was the sound of a lamb's cry. She found an upset Sorin, crying as he only knew how: by bleating like the sheep he'd grown up with. It was the only way he knew to express himself.

In fact, when he and his sister first arrived, Sorin still hadn't learned to talk. Rebecca slowly began to teach him a few words, including "Hallelujah." Their first Sunday at church, little Sorin was bewildered, hiding underneath Rebecca's dress. But the next Sunday he recognized the word "Hallelujah" being spoken in the service. Suddenly, the little boy began shouting, "Hallelujah!" with a great smile.

Sorin and Mirela are older now, and have been thriving at Casa Shalom. Both love going to church, where they look forward to a special hug from their pastor. From the pitiful bleat of a lamb to loud shouts of "Hallelujah!", God's praises are sung from the mouths of babes in his house. It is a joyful sound heard regularly at Casa Shalom.



Sorin happy and healthy



Heidi Olson Ministries

Circle of Friends

Within His circle each holds an equal place!



Expanding a world wide

Circle of Friends

who's focal point is Jesus Christ through evangelism, teaching, service, mentoring and friendship.

