

PORTRAITS OF **PROMISE**



Beloved: The Lives of Cosmina and Carina

The word “beloved” often refers to someone who is deeply loved. In a small village at the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains in Romania, the Vesa family is living proof that love does not require words. Meet two women whose lives display this kind of love.

**These are the stories.
These are the souls.
These are the portraits of the
lives we’re changing.**





A FAMILY FOR COSMINA

Cosmina enjoys many things. She loves when her adopted mom kisses the top of her head, the rhythmic movement of a rocking chair, and playing with colorful, shiny toys that light up.

This young woman is autistic and nonverbal. Her father died when she was 6 years old. After four years of struggling to support Cosmina and her nine other siblings, Cosmina's mother was unable to take care of her. So, Cosmina was put in a state orphanage. Romania has a horrific history of child abuse and neglect within its orphanages—particularly for children with disabilities. *The Guardian* reported that “the most horrific abuse took place in homes for disabled children, who were taken away from their families and institutionalised.”¹

Fortunately, after a year in a state orphanage, Cosmina was moved to an organization that partners with Orphan's Promise called Romanian Christian Enterprises (RCE). RCE was established to serve at-risk children and children with disabilities in Romania—one of the most overlooked, underserved communities in Romania. Most of the children who come to RCE are from the Roma community. They are a minority group in Romania and often face severe discrimination and racism.

With the help of Orphan's Promise, RCE provides support for vulnerable children that includes recuperative group homes, special education, speech therapy, physical therapy, and help from psychologists. The ultimate goal is to place children in loving Christian homes, which is the heartbeat of what RCE does. But if finding a family for a child isn't possible, RCE also provides a place on their residential campus that gives marginalized kids a safe place to live at a group home within a Christian community.

By God's grace, Cosmina went to live with the Vesa family: Florentina, Vasile, and their two biological children, Raluca and Richard. Cosmina began to experience life within a stable, loving environment where she has access to the care and support she needs.

TWO YEARS LATER

Two years after Cosmina joined the family, the Vesa's opened their home to another girl who was in desperate need. Her name is Carina.

Carina's favorite colors are pink and red. She loves to color and do puzzles. She also enjoys helping in the garden and taking care of animals.

Carina's biological family was severely troubled. After being abused by her father, Carina braved the freezing Romanian winter and ran away. She was found outside by a neighbor the next day, almost frozen to death and curled up next to a dog. The authorities believe the warmth from the dog kept her alive. As a result of the abuse, Carina suffered multiple injuries and severe brain damage that left her nonverbal. After being treated at a hospital, she was put in a state orphanage just like Cosmina had been. She moved from orphanage to orphanage for several years—until she finally came to RCE and was welcomed into the Vesa home.

UNICEF reports that “the most vulnerable children in Romania regarding access and participation in education ... are: children from poor families, Roma children, children living in rural areas and children with disabilities.”²



A MOTHER'S LOVE

Florentina has cared for Cosmina and Carina for more than 10 years now. The individual care and attention that are possible in a family setting like this is extremely important for young women like Cosmina and Carina.

With help from Orphan's Promise partners like you, RCE helps Florentina have an income so that she can stay home and take care of the children. The program also offers ongoing counseling, emergency financial help as needed, and special education support, as well as a summer camp program where children with disabilities are cared for by volunteers so that their families can enjoy some much-needed rest once a year.



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Virginia Beach, VA 23463

Thanks for your generosity.
We look forward to making a difference together.



Both Cosmina and Carina have made a lot of progress. Occasionally, they still struggle with mental and emotional breakdowns, which can cause them to act out violently. Yet, Florentina perseveres, and her husband and family support her day after day and year after year.

LOVE BEYOND WORDS

In his book *Adam: God's Beloved*, author Henri Nouwen describes his friendship with a nonverbal young man named Adam who had disabilities. He wrote:

“[Adam] was a person, who by his very life announced the marvelous mystery of our God: I am precious, beloved, whole, and born of God. Adam bore silent witness to this mystery, which has nothing to do with whether or not he could speak, walk, or express himself, whether or not he made money, had a job, was fashionable, famous, married or single. It had to do with his being. He was and is a beloved child of God. It is the same news that Jesus came to announce.”³

Just like Adam, we see God in the hearts of Cosmina and Carina. Again and again, the Vesa family bears witness to their innate value as children of God. Even though Cosmina and Carina cannot communicate verbally, they are enjoying life as God's beloved daughters.

When you see the safe and loving space that has been created for these girls who have suffered so much, it is a beautiful picture of God's love for us. It is not based on what we do. We are called God's beloved because He simply loves us.

1. Shaun Walker, “Thirty Years on, Will the Guilty Pay for Horror of Ceaușescu Orphanages?” *The Guardian*, last modified December 15, 2019, 5:46 EST, World, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/15/romania-orphanage-child-abusers-may-face-justice-30-years-on>.

2. UNICEF, *Country Office Annual Report 2019*, <https://www.unicef.org/media/90171/file/Romania-2019-COAR.pdf>.

3. Nouwen, Henri J.M., *Adam: God's Beloved*. Ossining: Orbis Books, 1997.





give us a call: 1-800-818-4016

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Orphan's Promise, a children's ministry of The Christian Broadcasting Network, Inc., serves orphans and other vulnerable children around the world, taking them from at-risk to thriving through the transforming power of God's love. CBN is a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization and your contributions to our ministry may be tax-deductible.

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