

CALIN'S STORY

MY STORY THUS FAR

Calin Rezmuves

March 2014

Hi

My name is Calin Rezmuves and I would like to share my experience when I was a child.

I was born in Northern Romania in a small village call Coltau in Maramures. It is a nice place to visit. I was born in a small house and my grandmother was happy, and my grandmother looked after me because my parents were alcoholics. They were divorced and my mother and father lived separately. It wasn't good for me and my family. My grandmother was married and her husband passed away. I don't know how old he was when he died, but I know he lost his leg. My grandmother has some photographs with him. I stayed 2 or 3 years with my grandmother but my father decided to put me in a small orphanage in Baia Mare where there were many children the same age as me. It was terrible for us. My grandmother let me go because she didn't have good conditions to look after me. I stayed 2 years over there in a small orphanage. It wasn't good for me because we had very bad facilities inside. We did not have good food, and we slept 2 in one bed and it was cold.

The staff in the orphanage were very bad. They punched us and we had the same food every morning and evening. The shower was cold and the staff hit us to have a quick shower. After 2 years, the staff decided to move me and four children to another orphanage where there were 300 children. Children were from 3 to 30 years old. I remember we went by minibus and the minibus was dark.

When we arrived in Ocna Sugatag, I cried, and I was scared by how many people I saw over there. I didn't know where I had to go and what I had to do. I did not know where my friends had gone. I remember when I went in to the canteen, I saw many adults and children who were very nasty to me and my friend.

On the first day in the orphanage, I was very badly beaten by the other adult who lived in the orphanage with us. He was 19 years old and I was 3 years old. He beat me most of his time in the orphanage when he was inside. The education was very bad and I didn't know many things about my education. In the orphanage, there were 150 girls and 100 boys. There were two buildings - one for the boys and one for the girls. There were 10 children to a room. There were three levels in the building. In every level there were five rooms and 10 people stayed in each room. Their ages were from 3 - 27. It wasn't a good idea. Every morning we had to go out to run for 10 minutes. The education in the school was not so good because the teachers didn't teach properly. They thought we were nothing. We had 2 meals per day; one in the morning and one in the evening. Sometimes we had three meals per day.

When I had to go to school, I had to take some food with me because in the school we had nothing to eat. In the orphanage we have 3 sittings and I had to wait to get in the canteen. In the canteen, there was space for 100 people. We had four people around the table to eat. The starter food was soup and the main course was the same every day. Sometimes the food was the same every day. I preferred to play football rather than eating because I was not happy with the food. The staff who worked in the canteen stole the food from us. We had a shower every two weeks. It was not good. When I had a shower I had to wash quickly because the adults beat the small children. When I was 15 years old it was a bit better because in 1990, people came from Germany to help the orphanage. They were very good. They changed a lot of things in the orphanage from the bottom to the top. They worked 10 years in the orphanage.

When we had a holiday, some children went home and some stayed. Some parents came to pick up the children. I wondered why my parents did not come for me. I cried as I was not happy to stay there. People were starting to come from Germany, Italy and France. They were families who took children on holiday. I was not lucky enough to go.

When I was 19 years old, I went to the college in Baia Mare and I studied construction but I didn't have a choice. I would have liked to be a plumber. I did 3 years in the college.

When I left college, I was 23 years old and I got a certificate from the college. I was still living in the orphanage. It was 2003 when I left the college. I decided to go to find my parents as I wasn't sure where they were.

I found detail from people who work in the orphanage, because they have the Certificate from my birth. It was very difficult for me to leave the orphanage where I had lived for 23 years. I was 25 years old when I saw my father and mother. They were very surprised to see me and how I looked. They were drunk, and they said to me, "Do you read or write?" I said, "Yes I do". They were surprised.

They thought that where I grew up, I didn't know anything. I saw my 2 brothers and one sister. I am the youngest in the family. I lost one brother because he killed himself when his wife went with another man. He worked hard in the family. He had four children and my other brother has two. My sister has one daughter.

When I saw my family for the first time, I wasn't very happy because I grew up in the orphanage. I stayed all day with them. They were happy to see me and to talk about the orphanage. I went back into the orphanage. It was winter-time February 2003, and I had to leave the orphanage, so it was a difficult time for me. I didn't know where to go and in which direction. The staff from the orphanage said "Go and find work". After that, I slept on the street for 2 or 3 days. I found somewhere to stay.

Temporarily, I stayed in a small house. It was terrible. After 5 months, I found work in the village. I worked in a small factory for 2 years. The factory made windows and doors. It was good for me but the manager wasn't good to us. He didn't pay very much and he stole money from the workers. I decided to leave and to work in the village. I had work, but not every day.

In 2004, I left Romania, because the mentality was bad for people who had lived in the orphanage. There was discrimination in that period. I decided to go to find a better life. There nobody helped me at all. I went with my passport and one

rucksack, and in the rucksack I had five apples to eat. I went by coach to Spain to Zaragoza. The journey took two days and was long for me. When I got to Zaragoza, it was 2 o'clock in the morning and heavy rain. I didn't know where to go. I slept on a bench. Next day I looked for a job but I didn't speak Spanish or English. It was hard for me. I stayed two weeks on the street. I went begging for food and money, because work was impossible to find.

After two weeks I went back to Romania, and in Romania I didn't have a place to stay. I stayed one day in one home and then one day in another home. Nobody helped me - just God. I stayed 8 months in Romania and after that I have money to go into another country and I went to Italy. In Italy, I looked for work and I found four months' work in agriculture. It was very hot. I had to work in a poly-tunnel where the tomatoes grew, and I had to pick tomatoes and clean the area. I had to look after 10 or 15 poly-tunnels per day. The temperature was hot in the morning. It was 26 degrees at 11 o'clock.

I worked there for 3 months. Then my work was finished. After 3 months I went to Romania and I rented a small house to stay for the winter-time. In 2005, I went in France to look for a job. I went to Paris but it was not a good idea for me because in the city it was too difficult to find work. I had to speak French or English, and I didn't speak either. I stayed one week, and I went back to Romania.

In the same year, I went to Holland to look for work. I had a friend over there who told me to come. He offered to find work for me. He found a temporary job for six months in a small factory. The work that I did was with plants, preparing for the market. I worked 6 months, and after that, there was no work for me. I went back to Romania.

In 2007, I went back into Holland where I had a little work to do. I was looking after one older person but that work was again temporary for me.

One day, I met a person on the street and I said to him,

"Are you from England"?

He said "Yes I am".

I didn't speak good English but he spoke very good English. I understood him. He said to me, "What are you doing in Holland"?

I said, "I tried to find some work here".

"Did you find work"?

I said, "Yes, but not every day".

This person was Dave Pope, and Dave talked to a good friend of mine who spoke good English and who could explain my situation to him. In 2008, I came to England. It was a rainy day but I was excited about how it would be. I stayed in his home, and I met his mother and brother. I was happy to see that someone could help me. His mother was a fantastic mother for me because I didn't have a mother when I grew up.

I started to go to Dudley College in 2008. The college was good for me because I met many people from other countries. I studied English for four years, and every year I got a certificate for every level that I did. After 4 years, Dave gave me the opportunity to stay in England. I worked part-time with Flame while I studied, approved by the Government. Now I am still working part-time for Flame.

I am happy that God has given me a family. Dave is good to me and to other people. In England since 2008, my life has been changed in a better way.

I would like to say "Thank you" to God because he has looked after me.

He is looking after me every day.

Thank you for reading my story.

God Bless you.

Calin