



I am an orthopedist living in one of the richest communities in the fourth largest city in the richest country in the world. I am also a box sitter. My wife is always encouraging me to look beyond the walls of the box and venture outside its walls. She tells me there are blessings outside the box but I argue, "I'm comfortable in my box". What I'm really saying is I can control what's in my box . . .

Then I went on a mission trip to Moldova. This country, rated by "World News" as the poorest country in Europe was once part of the Soviet Union but since gaining it's independence in 1991, it struggles financially, with the average salary far below the cost of living. Most Moldovans make less then a Starbucks latte for a day's labor and many adults have deserted their families to find a better life outside their country. Because of this incredible poverty and the high rate of alcoholism, many children are deserted or are dropped off at the state run orphanages. Many problems plague this small country of 4.5 million people that sits between Romanian and the Ukraine: poverty, deadly diseases such as TB, hepatitis and childhood illnesses, and the numerous state run orphanages with thousands of children make this country at the top of the list for human trafficking of children and young adults.

It is in these state run orphanages that my heart was captured. The children are beautiful, full of hope and eager to love those that come to help. I had stepped outside my comfortable box and I could no longer pretend. Suffering and abuse happens unfairly to the youngest and most innocent as well as the oldest and weakest.

I visited with the commander of the military hospital on my last visit and talked with him about the needs of the hospital. The physicians that I have met in Moldova are, in general, well trained but are lacking in equipment and supplies. The military hospital's work is about 40% civilian and they would help take care of the orphan's needs. They are in need of arthroscopic and laparoscopic equipment. We have very good equipment here and we are always updating and changing equipment, so I thought there could be some good second hand equipment that I might be able to take to Moldova. I have found a supplier who has a tower for \$15,000. I still need to get a few more instruments and get the equipment shipped to Moldova. I am asking for your help to fund this mission, or if you know of any equipment let me know. I will be taking the equipment there and training the physicians. If you find it in your heart to go to Moldova you are welcome and your skills and expertise is sorely needed.

My whole family has been involved with missions to Moldova and it has had a great influence on their lives. My 19-year-old son has delayed college to spend a year in Moldova doing mission work and growing as a fine young man. My wife has been going consistently for the last seven years and has impacted the lives of many there. My 16-year-old son has also been impacted by his trips overseas and has been comfortable being a recreational leader in a summer camp with the orphans.

If you feel you can help, please contact me.

Thank you for your time and your assistance. I have been so blessed as I have served the people of Moldova.

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