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Romania: Breaking the cycle of abandonment

Thanks to support from a World Vision social worker and our Gifts-in-Kind program, a teen mother is able to reunite with her family after facing numerous personal trials.

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By Karen Kartes, World Vision Advocacy & Communications



Sabrina, 17 (pictured center), and her baby girl, Alexandra, sit with Sabrina's grandparents. With the help of a World Vision social worker and our Gifts-in-Kind program, the family was reunited after Sabrina left home and had nowhere to go when she became pregnant by a boyfriend who later abandoned her.

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Sabrina, 17, does not know her parents or where they are – neither one was willing or able to care for her. She was raised by her grandparents, Aurelia and Florian Deac, in Romania's capital city of Bucharest.

Two years ago, Sabrina left her grandparents' home and became pregnant by a boyfriend who then broke up with her. With no job, support, or place to live, Sabrina had no idea what to do next. She says she was nervous about whether her grandparents, 75 and 85 years old, would take her back after she had run away.

"I felt like I had made a big mistake in my life, and I had no shoulder to cry on," recalls Sabrina.

Helping young mothers and newborns

In crisis situations like the one Sabrina faced, World Vision works to prevent new mothers from having to resort to desperate actions, such as giving their children to state-run 'placement centers' or institutions. As part of its comprehensive work to prevent child abandonment and neglect, World Vision strives to reintegrate mothers and infants with their families whenever possible.

Sabrina's case became known to Florina Paun, a World Vision social worker who works inside maternity wards to counsel new mothers at high risk of

abandoning their children. Florina met with Sabrina and helped her to bond with her baby, to learn of available services and support, and to envision a positive future as a mother.

At the same time, Florina began the challenging task of reuniting Sabrina and her newborn with her grandparents – a task that required caring and careful mediation in a short period of time to ensure the best possible outcome for little Alexandra, Sabrina's baby.

'A second chance'

One particular World Vision initiative played an unexpected key role. World Vision's [Gifts-in-Kind](#) program – which collects and distributes surplus consumer products donated by American corporations to children and families in need – helped to bring the family together again. Sabrina's grandparents feared they were too poor to add another person to their household. Florina explained to them that if they brought the mother and child back into their home, they would qualify to receive essential goods at no cost to help support the family's basic needs.

Given their meager household income, the availability of Gifts-in-Kind products was a critically important contribution. It helped convince the Deacs that they could handle the new situation financially.

The social worker's help also has opened the door to emotional healing in the family and the welcome of new life. Since Sabrina's return, World Vision has provided infant clothing, diapers, and other products to help the family care for

Alexandra, as well as personal care and hygiene products for the family's use.

"World Vision saved my child and me," says Sabrina. "I now have a second chance."

Tangible measures of hope

With Sabrina's parents absent from her life, she herself is a reminder of the reality of child abandonment – and what can happen when a teenage girl looks for love too soon. But one gets the sense that her hardest days are behind her now and that she has broken the cycle. She has a ready smile and an easy laugh as Alexandra babbles and reaches for toys while sitting on her lap.

"My wish for the future is to go back and finish school, and someday, to have a place for me and my daughter to live," she says confidently in English instead of Romanian, reflecting her language studies and a mature courtesy toward her guests.

Thanks to the dedication of World Vision staff and Gifts-in-Kind for infants, youth, and adults, Sabrina and Alexandra will be pursuing those dreams together.



Florina Paun (left), a World Vision social worker, sits with Sabrina and little Alexandra.
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Two ways you can help

>> Thank God that Sabrina and her newborn baby, Alexandra, were able to reunite with their family through Florina, the World Vision social worker, and through the Gifts-in-Kind program. Pray for the Lord's blessing and protection upon young mothers around the world like Sabrina, whose desperate circumstances put them and their children at risk for neglect, abandonment, and abuse.

>> [Donate now](#) to help World Vision ship and distribute clothing items acquired as donations from generous American manufacturers through our Gifts-in-Kind program. Your contribution will multiply 14 times in impact to provide warm, clean clothing to children around the world who need it most during the winter months.



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