

# MINISTRY IMPACTS LIVES OF MOTHERS, FAMILIES IN SLOVAKIA

By Abby Hopkins



In Slovakia, the Roma are a minority known for living in poverty. Education barriers create challenges for individuals to finish school and break the cycles of poverty.

Roma Health & Hunger, a Texas Baptist Hunger Offering partner, is meeting this need by providing resources within the education system. Hunger Offering funds are specifically used for higher education scholarship funds as well as for lunches and snacks for a preschool program.

## Scholarship Funds

Roma Health & Hunger provides scholarships to Roma women who wish to continue their education. In the Slovak system, anyone wanting to return to school must pay large fees to do so, which prevents many from pursuing the opportunity.

The scholarship program allows women to return to trade school or university-level studies to eventually attain a higher-paying job and further provide for their families.

Shane McNary, who runs the ministry with his wife, Dianne, said a woman receiving an education impacts her whole family, not only financially, but also because she is able to set an example in her studies.

“If you help a male, you help an individual,” Shane said. “If you help a female, you’re going to impact an entire family.”

## Preschool Program

Funds also go toward the Jekh Drom Children’s Club at Samuel Center preschool. Lunches are provided every day for 15 students, and children who attend the afterschool program receive snacks. Shane said the Club has seen exciting results.

“Now (the children) have a place to do their homework, and they’re thrilled they get good grades on tests now,” Shane said. “A piece of that is the healthy snack they get at Samuel Center.”

## Ministry Impact

When the McNarys first arrived in Slovakia, Shane said they wanted to provide assistance but quickly learned the best way to begin was to build relationships.

“If we don’t come in first and see people, we’re getting off on the wrong foot,” Shane said. “From that position you can provide assistance in a way that honors their strength instead of taking away the strength they do have.”

Shane said he has also seen God working in details and bringing everything together for the bigger picture.

“This is God at work, not through only me, not through only Hunger (Offering) funds, it’s all of us together reflecting the image of God,” Shane said. “That’s what makes my job so cool. I can never give testimony to all the things I’ve seen God do.”

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