



The Don & Birdie Reeder Global Emergency Relief Fund

“What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.”

– Nelson Mandela

Annual Report 2017-2018

CERI
Children's Emergency Relief International

The Don & Birdie Reeder Global Emergency Relief Fund Annual Report 2017-2018



Foreword

For the past ten years, the Don & Birdie Reeder Global Emergency Relief Fund (Reeder Fund) has served as an instrument to uplift children, youth, and families in crisis around the world. Created in 2008, the Reeder Fund was an initiative created by the Reeder family, to honor the memory of their Birdie Reeder, beloved mother and wife. The story of how this fund came into existence is included in this 10 year anniversary report.

The Reeder Fund is administered by Children's Emergency Relief International (CERI). With eligibility criteria created with direction from the Reeder family, CERI identifies potential beneficiaries who are in a crisis or an emergency situation. Reeder Fund beneficiaries are then guided through their crisis by CERI staff, who provide critical support and counseling with a goal of reaching a state of stability and safety. CERI staff follow the Biblical principles found in Matthew 25:35-40, advancing the cause of CERI through a dedicated and selfless service to children, youth, and families in crisis.

Executive Summary

The Reeder Fund provides relief to children, youth, and families struggling with life crises. The fund's guidelines are set up to empower CERI employees to respond to the urgent needs they identify in their daily work and support the individuals being impacted. The fund provides for emergency aid, food, transportation, medical needs and some recurring expenses, such as education (tuition disbursements), emergency shelter payments, and on-going medical treatment.

During the 2017-2018 fiscal year, through the provisions of the Reeder Fund, CERI was able to assist 1,670 individuals. Over the 10 year lifespan of the fund, 11,206 individuals have received aid and assistance.

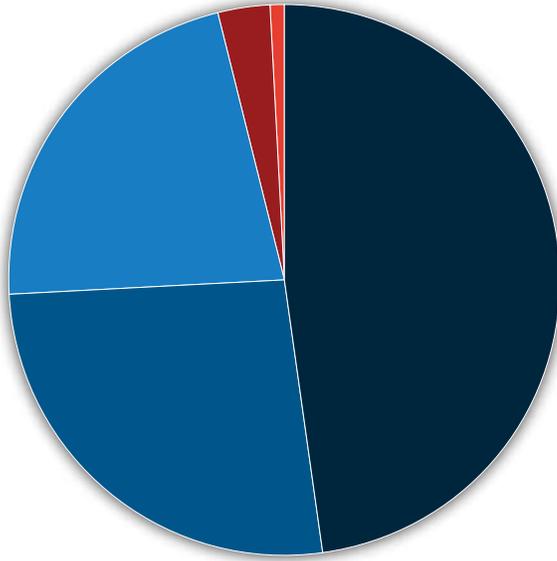
Revenue and Balance

Revenues received during 2017-2018:	\$ 44,224.28
Cumulative lifetime revenue 2008 – 2018:	\$ 343,52.97
Reeder Fund balance on August 31, 2018:	\$ 8,304.76

International Presence and Impact in 2017-2018

Moldova	311 individuals
South Africa	100 individuals
Sri Lanka	1231 individuals
India	16 individuals
Romania	12 individuals
Total Individuals Served in 2017-2018:	1,670 individuals
Total Funds Used in 2017-2018:	\$35, 919.52
Average Amount Disbursed per Individual:	\$21.66
Total Individuals Served from 2008 to 2018:	11,206 individuals

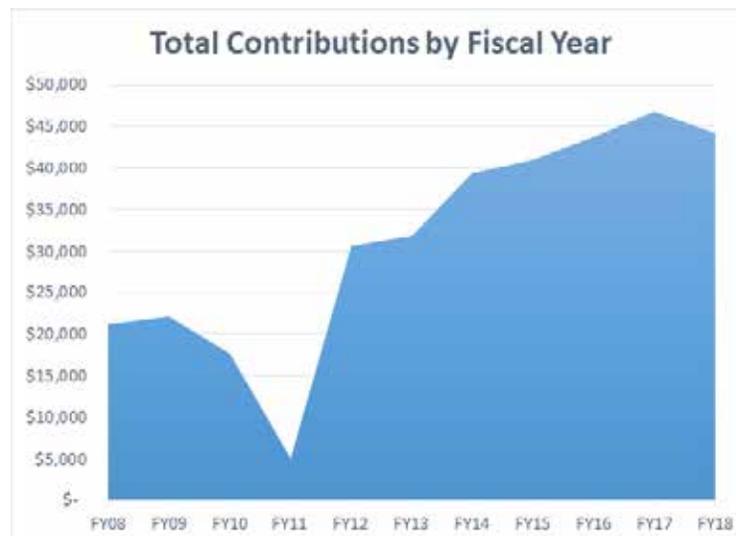
Expenses per Country in 2017-2018:



Moldova	\$17,189.01
Sri Lanka	\$9,456.64
South Africa	\$7,913.65
India	\$1,087.00
Romania	\$273.22
Total Expenses	\$35,919.52

■ Moldova ■ Sri Lanka ■ South Africa ■ India ■ Romania

Lifetime Contributions to the Reeder Fund 2008-2018:



Moldova



Vasile, Ion and Iurie talk about their lives at the CERL boys shelter (Chisinau, Moldova).

Safe shelter is a basic human need. For children who grew up in orphanages or in dangerous homes, a safe shelter can be the difference between a successful transition to adulthood or a lifetime of poor educational, social and health outcomes. The Reeder Fund knows how important safety is and valiantly provides safe shelter to young men in Moldova, who grew up in institutions and are currently working towards independence.

Vasile tragically lost his father at a young age and was abused by his stepfather throughout his adolescence. He ran away from home at 12 and was placed in an orphanage. In 2014, at the age





of 16, he was discharged from the orphanage and joined CERI. Remarkably, despite his unfortunate past, he has made great strides and is studying and working towards a college degree.

Ion sadly was abandoned by his parents as a baby. After spending his childhood in an orphanage, where he experienced emotional abuse and loneliness, he came to CERI in 2013 and is now learning about personal worth and responsibility: *“I went through many hardships and at times, I get discouraged but CERI helps me overcome... I am grateful to them for being by my side all this time.”*

Iurie too experienced the heartbreaking loss of his parents at an early age. Due to his personal resilience and the services he received at the CERI shelter, he developed into a self-confident young man and a real fighter for his goals. He is pursuing college education and currently looking for a part time job.

The Reeder Fund has provided emergency shelter services for vulnerable youth in Moldova since 2010.



India



Afiya, her mother and her aunt, learn about sounding words (New Delhi, India).

When she was six months old, Afiya's parents realized that their daughter was not responding to sounds like a child her age should. They knew something was wrong. In India, in circumstances like this, most families would have institutionalized their child. But Afiya's parents went against the norm and refused to abandon her. Disability is stigmatized in India and with their decision, her parents found themselves hopelessly fighting against oppression from members of their own community. Afiya was a little girl with two strikes against her – one, she was female and two, she was deaf.

Afiya's extended family and community shunned





them and urged her parents to carry on their lives without their daughter. They were relentless with their comments, *“why would you do anything for that child? She’ll never amount to anything”* they were also adamantly against treatment, saying, *“you can’t afford it and it is useless.”*

To earn a mere \$220 a month, Afिया’s father has to work 10 hours a day, six days a week. The money he earns then goes toward the family’s joint expenses. They currently live with 12 other family members in one small shack, unable to pay for a place of their own.

After six long years of fighting this cruel social stigma and struggling with their financial burdens, Afिया’s parents were able to start meeting her needs. At age six, they managed to save up enough money for her hearing tests (\$600). The test revealed that she was born with profound hearing loss in both ears. Her parents were frightened, as they did not know what to do next. Luckily, a local nonprofit offered their assistance and paid for Afिया to undergo surgery and be fitted with a cochlear implant. A blessing, they would have never been able to afford. In addition, CERI, through the Reeder Fund, paid for her therapy. After six months of therapy, she progressed developmentally at a fast pace, from the level of a one year old to the level of a three and a half year old. Afिया had received a chance to thrive.



Sri Lanka



Mrs. Jeyakumar and her three daughters in front of her home (Naripulthotam, Sri Lanka).

Mr & Mrs. Jeyakumar and their three daughters live in a small hut that measures eight feet by eight feet. There is no electricity, running water, plumbing or other facilities. Mr. Jeyakumar is a day laborer and has a speech disability. His wife is a stay at home mom. After they married, they lived with their in-laws until their first child was born. At that time, the family asked them to leave.

The Jeyakumars do not have permanent or sufficient income to support their family. Moreover, their living facilities are unsafe and they are forced to evacuate every year during the monsoon season, leaving them homeless. Often times their only option is to seek shelter with neighbors. When Mr. Jeyakumar works outside the village, during the harvest season, his wife and three young daughters are left extremely vulnerable and without protection. Both parents have only elementary education and do not have the skills or ability to advocate for their family's needs. Local authorities referred their case to CERI, in hopes of finding a program that may help provide them safety.

CERI staff were able to determine the family's eligibility for the Samurdhi allowance, a Sri Lankan law that would provide them with a new, modest home, if they owned the land. Through the Reeder Fund, CERI bought a small piece of land for the Jeyakumars, making them eligible for the Government-aid which provided them a home. The family is now on the pathway to safety and self-sufficiency.

South Africa



Zama with four of her sons in front of their mud house (Ladysmith, South Africa).

Zama and her five children live near the city of Ladysmith, South Africa. As a single parent, Zama struggles with poverty and has found it increasingly difficult to feed her children and keep the family together. Zama collects plastics from the town landfill to sell at a nearby recycling plant, but the income is not enough to feed her family.

With a good understanding of how to meet needs in communities struggling to survive, a CERF team, led by Dr. Dearing Garner, utilized the Reeder Fund to plant sustainable gardens for six families. Zama's family was one of the six families selected. They received a fenced-in garden (to keep





animals out), water tanks, gutters that direct water into the tanks during rainy seasons, seedlings and trees. The gardens are transformational for local families. They contribute to the families' economies and livelihoods which, in turn, gives our beneficiaries hope.

In addition to building gardens for families, CERI volunteers strengthened their communities through prayer and home visits. Each family received a two-week supply of food and were encouraged to use the social services and programs provided to them by CERI partners in that area.

Planting gardens and sharing Christ blessed South African families and volunteers from the United States alike. Looking at her completed garden, a resident of the Ezakheni community exclaimed: *"Thank you very, very much. It's amazing. You've done a great job. May God bless you! It's like I'm dreaming now. Thank you, thank you, very much!"* Team members shared: *"It was a life changing event that will bless our lives for years to come."* A college student responded, *"... I am praying expectantly that the gardens we planted and all of the people we encountered would ...blossom. I am very thankful for (our leaders) and what (they) taught us along the way as well!"*



On Birdie's Wings - A Legacy of Service

By Leonard Favela



Don and Birdie with their three sons.

The Reeder Family name has become synonymous with service around the world. Don and Birdie Reeder have devoted their lives to supporting the progress and improvement of children in challenging circumstances across the globe, in some of its most remote corners. For more than 30 years, the Reeders have lived to make the world more reflective of Christ's love by lending a hand, initiating a legacy built upon help, hope and healing — a precious gift with an immeasurable wingspan.

Married in 1960, Don and Birdie Reeder had three boys: Chris, Ronald and Stephen. The Reeders raised their sons in Kingwood, Texas,





and were active members of Kingwood First Baptist Church.

For many years, Birdie directed the Mother’s Day Out Program at Kingwood First Baptist. Each day, she dedicated her time and effort to the early education program, implementing a curriculum that helped children develop a foundation for learning while exploring God. Birdie focused her directorship on serving families in her community. When the Reeders became involved with CERI, Birdie’s influence would begin to transform into legacy.

It was 1978 when the Reeders embarked on their first international mission trip. Led by church pastor and CERI Executive Director Emeritus Dearing Garner, it was the beginning of a vocation that sent the Reeder family to some of the poorest areas of the world in countries like Romania, Brazil, and Transnistria — a small, semi-independent land in Moldova in Eastern Europe. There, they brought relief in the form of food, clothing, books, fellowship and—most importantly—love, Christian ideals and educational opportunities.

Birdie lived with cardiomyopathy for 30 years, a medical condition about which she told very few people outside of her family. One fateful day in 2007, she died unexpectedly from the disease that had been gradually weakening her heart. Birdie was 67. Her sudden death left her husband, three sons, and the entire Kingwood First Baptist Church family without one of its most active and beloved members, and for communities around the world, one of their most ardent and vocal children’s advocates.

“My mother had an unbelievable gift to touch and connect with children,” said Chris, the Reeders’ oldest son. “She would meet hundreds of children during her trips and would have something for each of them: shoes, hugs, love, affection, smiles.”

Service to children in need became Don and Birdie’s true calling after their inaugural voyage in 1978, as they spent much of their lives and energy preparing for and traveling on mission trips abroad as instruments of goodwill. While Don preferred a more hands-on role, like driving a van full of supplies, providing transportation for people or handing out shoes; Birdie provided a warm welcome upon meeting someone, offering encouragement and support to those who needed some positive reinforcement, and bringing an energetic, loving spirit to the mission trip team. Birdie also served children in institutions and children’s homes abroad, lifting the spirits of all those she encountered.

According to Garner, the Reeders went on countless mission trips with Kingwood First Baptist Church and CERI, leaving an everlasting impression on the children, families and communities they visited.

“Don and Birdie went to San Andres Island in the Western Caribbean,” he says, “to work in a Vacation Bible School conducted by the San Andres First Baptist Church. We went to Sao Paulo, Brazil, and had revival meetings at night and visited homes in the poor communities during the days. The Reeder went on several of these trips.”

After Birdie’s death, the grief that the family endured subsided to reveal the selflessness that she and Don had instilled in their children.

“I had never thought about starting a fund before she died,” says Chris Reeder, recalling those difficult days after his mom had passed. “I realized that the loss of my mother affected a lot more people than just myself. It affected thousands of children that she could have helped if she were alive. I thought we could do something in the spirit of her legacy, something that would have been done if she were here.”

In 2008, just one year after Birdie’s passing, the Don & Birdie Reeder Global Emergency Fund was born.

“The Reeder Fund’s primary focus is to help children during the toughest times in their lives—emergencies,” explains Chris. “These are unplanned, unbudgeted situations that are hard to anticipate and require immediate attention.

“Emergencies leave children unserved and underserved. The Reeder Fund provides for medical expenses, temporary shelter, food, skills training and any expenses related to protecting children and keeping them safe.”

Since its inception ten years ago, the Reeder Fund has helped children, youth and families in crisis gain access to critical medical care, shelter, education, food and aid that would otherwise have been lacking. Since 2009, the Reeder Fund provides sustainable gardens to South African female-led households affected by HIV/AIDS struggling to feed their children. In March 2010, when a Moldovan foster family lost their home in a fire, the Reeder Fund provided for all the repairs. When catastrophic flooding struck Sri Lanka in 2014, leaving many struggling to survive in an unstable aftermath, the Reeder Fund provided food and temporary shelter. In 2015, Ruslan, a Moldovan orphan diagnosed with tuberculosis, received professional care and life-saving medicine that set him on the path to a full recovery. The Reeder Fund paid the school tuition for a young lady in Romania who was at risk of falling prey to the perils of human trafficking. In 2017, the Reeder Fund provided emergency medical care and mental health services to 15 girls living in a short-term shelter in India.

“Due to the Reeder Fund, we have been able to respond immediately and compassionately to the most urgent needs of the people we served,” says Connie Belciug, who at the time the Reeder Fund was created, served as CERI’s National Program Director in Moldova.

Since 2008, the Reeder Fund has made a difference in the lives of more than 11,000 children and families in Moldova, Sri Lanka, South Africa, India, Romania, and Latin America.

“The Reeder Fund,” says Belciug today as CERI Executive Director, “advances the Reeder Family’s legacy of genuine love for humanity.”

With support from the Reeder family and other generous donors, the Reeder Fund has generated and spent more than \$340,000 for the safety, wellbeing and stability of children, youth and families around the world.

These were the critically important humanitarian challenges with which Birdie Reeder concerned herself and her family. She considered helping those less fortunate around the world her duty as a Christian, and her family shares her same sense of responsibility. Today, Christ's message of service toward others guides the Reeder Fund into its tenth year.

“The Reeder Fund is operated very responsibly, and with love,” Chris Reeder says. “It helps children and adolescents grow as children of God—the best kind of legacy we could have for my mother.”

*Birdie lifted the spirits of all those she
encountered.*



Thank You

CERI is proud to carry on the Reeder family's legacy through

The Don & Birdie Reeder Global Emergency Relief Fund.

Since its inception, the Reeder Fund's gifts to CERI have touched thousands of lives, healed thousands of wounds, and brought comfort to thousands who were suffering! This annual report, in addition to quantifying the Reeder Fund's impact on CERI's outreach and programming, is our way of saying "thank you" to all the individuals who gave to The Don & Birdie Reeder Global Emergency Relief Fund.



1506 Bexar Crossing | San Antonio, Texas 78232
Phone: (210) 801-7300 | Web: www.CERIkids.org | Email: info@CERIkids.org

