



FamilyLife® Global

News and information
from FamilyLife partners
around the world



Hope for Families Everywhere

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Romania—Loving and Serving Parents of Kids with Special Needs

by Jayna Richardson

When Eugen and Nicoleta Iordache began looking for materials and resources to build up their own relationship, they never dreamed that God would lead them to launch a vibrant family ministry in their area of Romania. What began with using FamilyLife's resources personally turned into sharing those resources and courses with others, including a focused effort to reach out to parents of children with special needs.

The Iordaches have spent the last three years as part-time FamilyLife staff serving couples through small groups and couples retreats. Having experienced the power of God working through FamilyLife's resources, they enthusiastically embraced the challenge of working together to reach families from Galati and the eastern part of Romania.

Early on in their involvement with FamilyLife, Eugen and Nicoleta began spending time with a young couple, Manuel and Catalina, who were going through a divorce. Manuel and Catalina attended an Art



of Marriage® course (which has been translated into Romanian) with the lordaches and experienced transformation and reconciliation. Their testimony provided confirmation to the lordaches of their calling to do FamilyLife ministry.

“From being people without God, they are now God’s children and are integrated into the local church,” says Eugen. “It is God’s work, and I understand that the Lord wants to use us for other couples as well.”

Their ministry took on a new component recently when they were approached by a grandfather who has two autistic grandchildren. His daughter had recently gone through a divorce largely due to the pressures brought on from parenting a child with special needs. The grandfather challenged Eugen and Nicoleta to think about how they could serve families like these.

“We started reading, asking, and looking for resources for these parents,” says Eugen. Not having special-needs kids of their own, the lordaches realized this was a group of people they hadn’t given much thought to previously.

“Until now, we were passing them by, not realizing they were among us. But since we started thinking about

them too, we see things differently.”

Now that God has opened Eugen and Nicoleta’s eyes to the needs around them and laid a burden on their hearts to do something about it, they’ve brainstormed ways to help parents who are raising and caring for children with special needs and disabilities (which could include conditions such as autism, delayed development, mental problems, medical challenges, Down’s syndrome, epilepsy, attention deficiency, paralysis, blindness, and other diagnoses).

Their goals are to develop small groups for these couples and single parents to develop a community of service and love, connect these parents with resources and other organizations, form a management team that includes people who have experience in raising these children and have a passion to help and support them, and facilitate childcare to allow these parents some time alone for dating.

The lordaches have already started one small group with eight families. The meetings are designed to acknowledge the struggles they’re facing and provide help with topics like understanding God’s character and heart for people with disabilities.

Although guilt and grief are realities for some of these families, they’re also learning together about the healing process and stepping into new hope.

The challenges facing parents of special-needs kids are many: time constraints, financial difficulties, isolation, worry about the future, and lack of help. But the opportunities also abound for families to learn of God’s love and provision, form supportive communities, thrive in marriage, and raise children who will have a special mission from God.

“We must not forget that these special children will have a call from God for their lives, and through them God will shape the lives of those around them,” says Eugen.

Future plans include marriage enrichment opportunities, a day of celebration on the International Day of People with Disabilities, an equipping conference in the spring, and a mountain retreat for parents, kids, and volunteers in June 2023.

“The parents of children with special needs or disabilities have a great need to receive and feel God’s love,” says Eugen. “They must be surrounded by love and be given special attention. Prayer, and both emotional and material support, will be clear manifestations of God’s care for them.”

Eugen and Nicoleta continue reaching out to new families who are feeling the strains of raising children with diverse special needs. They are praying that the families who are refreshed by the Spirit through their ministry would turn and strengthen other families as well.



Latin America: Built Up and Sent Out

by Jayna Richardson

“When I arrived, my cup was empty. I had no purpose. But with each session and workshop, God filled my cup to overflowing. I leave here with a renewed purpose. Families all around us are pleading for help. Let us not fail them. I leave here ready to fill the cups of others.”

This is a quote from a Venezuelan attendee at the FamilyLife Congress in Bogotá, Colombia, this past fall. Three hundred and twenty ministry leaders and volunteers from fifteen countries gathered for three days of training and fellowship. God used this event in a powerful way to energize, connect, and equip FamilyLife teams like never before.

As you’d expect at a large conference for missionaries and ministry leaders, the attendees were yearning for new ministry skills, best practices, and training. The 26 workshops included pertinent topics such as Discipling Key Couples and Launching City Movements. The sessions were designed to help



these couples not only take steps forward in their own marriages and in their relationship with God, but also receive inspiration and practical advice for growing their ministries and helping others experience God’s grace in their marriages and families.

This event came at a much-needed time. About 25% of the couples had been so discouraged and beaten down by COVID deaths and lockdowns that they planned to withdraw from the ministry. But God stirred their souls and resurrected their passion for blessing marriages and families, so much so that they are returning to their countries to launch back into action!

Following the event, God is already bringing new ministry opportunities to these couples. Three blended families in Colombia, Panama, and Ecuador formed the FamilyLife Blended Latin America team to reach stepfamilies. Their first project is to develop a micro-learning course around the 32 FamilyLife Blended video vignettes from The Art of Parenting®. The Love

Like You Mean It® video course also launched in several Latin American countries. And FamilyLife LAC (Latin America and Caribbean) has licensed several core FamilyLife resources and is establishing regional printing and distribution centers throughout the continent.

The Bogotá conference also provided fresh enthusiasm and encouragement for FamilyLife leaders who are overseeing new initiatives. In Argentina, Sebastián and Úrsula Díaz were invited to speak at a large provincial governor’s event in La Rioja. The organizers gave them the green light to present the ministry of FamilyLife and printed 3,000 FamilyLife fliers for the attendees. The Congressional Chamber decreed that hearing from FamilyLife at this event was a cultural imperative. Sebastián addressed the governor and vice-governess and prayed for them. And in Spain, the FamilyLife team is celebrating their first printing of FamilyLife’s The Art of Parenting®.

Perhaps the most significant

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2023 Events Calendar

Europe (Eastern)

Romania Mar 10-12, 2023 Weekend to Remember Predeal
Slovenia Jan 7, 2023 Men's breakfast Ljubljana

Europe (Western)

Germany Feb 4, 2023 Marriage Mentor Training (online)
Germany Feb 11, 2023 Marriage seminar Heilbronn
Germany Feb 14, 2023 Candlelight dinner Mücke
Germany Mar 4, 2023 Marriage Mentor Training Giessen
Germany Mar 11, 2023 Marriage seminar Würzburg
Germany Mar 25, 2023 Marriage seminar Hüttenberg
Germany Apr 1, 2023 Marriage Mentor Training (online)
Germany Apr 22, 2023 Marriage seminar Friedrichshafen
Germany Jun 3, 2023 Marriage seminar Friedberg
Germany Jun 15-18, 2023 Bike and paddle tour Spreewald
Germany Jul 28-Aug 3 Marriage Mentor Training Thuringia
Switzerland Jan 13, 2023 Marriage course Zurich
Switzerland Jan 28, 2023 Prepare/Enrich training Zurich
Switzerland Mar 11-12, 2023 Weekend Getaway Zurich
Switzerland May 11, 2023 Marriage course (online)
Switzerland Sep 8, 2023 Prepare/Enrich training Zurich

Middle East and North Africa

Due to sensitive nature of these countries, please contact global@familylife.com for further information.

North America

United States—Phone 1-800-358-6329 or www.familylife.com for a complete listing of conferences.

Canada Feb 10-12, 2023 Weekend Getaway Victoria, BC
Canada Mar 3-5, 2023 Weekend Getaway Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON
Canada Mar 31-Apr 2, 2023 Weekend Getaway Montebello, QC
Canada Apr 21-23, 2023 Weekend Getaway Waskesiu Lake, SK
Canada Apr 28-30, 2023 Weekend Getaway Lake Louise, AB
Canada May 5-7, 2023 Weekend Getaway St. Andrews, NB

From a recent event in Canada:

“I have a porn addiction that’s been in my life for a decade and it’s just great to hear that it isn’t too late for me. I’ve wanted to get help for a long time but didn’t know where to start.”

“This conference has equipped us with tools to move beyond our season of hurt and pain.”

“With three young kids at home it was an amazing opportunity to reconnect and spend time together. We attended seven years ago, and it was fun to go through it again and see the things we’ve been practicing in our marriage.”



New Podcast

Real Life Loading...

A Christian podcast for the next generation

In FamilyLife's newest Christian podcast, author and speaker Shelby Abbott discusses music, Scripture, and raising the bar for his young-adult listeners. Real Life Loading... is a mashup of biblical truth, personal authenticity, cultural awareness, and straight-up humor.

To listen, go to wherever you find your podcasts and follow Real Life Loading... Or listen on the FamilyLife app or at www.familylife.com/podcast/real-life-loading.

New episodes are released each Friday.

Latin America: Built Up and Sent Out continued...

results are in the hearts of those who attended the FamilyLife Congress in Bogotá, as shown by their responses:

“God melted my frozen heart. He solidified our marriage and resurrected our passion for the ministry.”

“We are going to reactivate and strengthen our ministry and amplify our mission field to include other churches in our area.”

“We were deeply challenged as a couple to continue building our unity, trusting God for all that He

commands as we live for His glory. These are among the best tools we have ever seen for the church. The greatest effort we can contribute to the expansion of the gospel is to strengthen families.”

What's happening in the Latin America/Caribbean region is something FamilyLife is working and praying to see happen in every area of the world: local movements of passionate couples who are obeying God's calling to bring hope and help to all families.



India/Bangladesh: Lighting a Fire in South Asia

by Jayna Richardson

This past fall, dozens of key couples in South Asia attended a FamilyLife training event to help them take their marriages to the next level and to equip them for family ministry. These couples were from India—where FamilyLife has a thriving ministry—and from Bangladesh and Nepal, where staff and volunteers with FamilyLife are just starting brand new family ministries. Although these are challenging areas for Christians to reach with biblical truths, the sparks for FamilyLife ministry have ignited, and the flames are slowly spreading.

Jim and Judy Burrows, FamilyLife Global representatives from the US, led the trainings along with a sharp and creative Indian couple (names withheld for security purposes). New laws going into effect in India will make it very difficult for Christians to share the gospel there, but FamilyLife is catching on as a strategic (and safer) way to spread the good news.

Their first stop was New Delhi to serve couples from the northern regions of India, where there are over 600 million Hindi speakers. They organized a two-day FamilyLife seminar followed by two more days of training. They built into the marriages of the attendees first, then taught them how to speak at FamilyLife events and lead small groups.

This training process was repeated as the team journeyed south to Bengaluru (also known as Bangalore). One wife said, “We needed this weekend so much. My Dad died one month ago; two months ago we found out that our son is autistic. I have not been making my husband a priority.” Another said, “Our marriage is struggling. I learned about expectations. I can’t expect

[my husband] to know what I want.” The couples expressed enthusiasm to take what they’ve learned and pass it on to others.

Next the training team traveled east to the country of Bangladesh, where FamilyLife has never had a ministry presence. The country is 99% Muslim.

A pastor and his wife came to the training feeling unsure if this content would be applicable for Bangladesh. But after the first day, he was convinced the training was 100% applicable! He and his wife said they are ready to promote the material in their country.

The training team again taught how to launch and facilitate small groups using HomeBuilders® studies and The Art of Parenting®. At one point, Jim and Judy Burrows had all the couples divide into groups to go through a HomeBuilders lesson together for practice.

“At first, they were sharing in English to the group, for our benefit,” said Jim Burrows. “But seeing some of them struggle with English and knowing that not everyone there understood English, I called an audible and said to them, ‘Please share in Bangla.’ It was as if a switch was turned on. Not that there was not energy and excitement before; there was. But when they all switched to Bangla, it was as if gasoline was poured on the fire of their excitement and their laughter. If any of them had doubts about using the material, all doubts vanished during that sharing time.”

A key couple from Nepal also traveled to Bangladesh to attend the training. They have been tasked with starting FamilyLife in their country.



They will likely start with a small-group strategy and will continue to be mentored by the Indian couple who helped lead these training events.

Attendees were encouraged to take what they learned and put it into practice in their own churches and communities. The volunteers in New Delhi and Bengaluru were challenged to write out a Weekend to Remember® talk and submit it to the training team for review, then present that talk in a live presentation. They were also encouraged to start a HomeBuilders or Art of Parenting small group. One of the key volunteers in India has already hosted a Weekend to Remember in their church and started small groups, and others are launching groups soon. This is evidence that the attendees heard loud and clear the message to “pass it on.”

And this is our prayer and hope, in South Asia, as in the rest of the world: That families would see their marriages and families redeemed by the work of Jesus, and with God’s help fan the flames of faith in their corners of the world.