

ROMANIANS RETURN HOME TO HELP SAVE ORPHANS

TWO Romanian tradesmen have made a purpose filled, emotional trip back home from Ireland — inspired by a Dubliner — determined to improve living conditions in the post Ceausescu era.

The inspiration for the trip back home came from Paul Traynor, a plastering contractor from Clontarf who set about fundraising after meeting James Dillon from Tereure who runs the Irish charity Health Action Overseas.

Ovidiu "Ollie" Sauciuc, who has been working as a plasterer in Ireland for the past three and a half years and Dan Hegyi, who works as an electrician, have spent the last few weeks building a house in Galati to give independent lives to orphans who were institutionalised from birth and faced bleak futures.

RAISE

Paul Traynor fundraised furiously to build the house. He stood in the rain outside the Shelbourne Hotel, with buckets outside rugby internationals and ran golf classics to raise €50,000.

With the money raised, he went out and picked a site in Galati in February 2005 and a local builder was employed to build the structure of the 4,000 square foot, four bedroomed house. Last month Paul led a team of 10 to Galati, including Ovidiu and Dan to work on the house.

"We went around looking for people to come out for nothing to give up their time to come a work from eight in the morning until seven at night for eight days," said Paul.

The group of 10 was made up of three carpenters, three plumbers, two plasterers, a builder and an electrician and their flights and accommodation were paid for by the Irish Government.

"Pat Healy from Lefarge Ireland sup-



plied us with all the plaster boards and plaster for this house in Romania. The likes of that saved us €2,000," said Paul who returns to Romania next month to see eight teenagers move into the new house that will change their lives.

"The plight of children in Romanian orphanages shocked many Irish people following the widespread publicity in the post-Ceausescu era," said Paul.

"I heard how James' charity opened a Group Home with the aim of taking eight teenagers who had been institutionalised all their life, and put them in a Group Home where they would get the support they needed," said Paul.

"It has made such a difference to their lives and now five of the eight teenagers are working and amazingly, they are leading normal lives.

"One is working as an apprentice carpenter, one is working in a shop and three are working in a garage. This would have been unimaginable before," said Paul.

However another €10,000 is needed in order to finish off the home in Galati.

Anybody who feels that they can help with a donation can get details at the Health Action Overseas website at www.hao.ie.

— FIONA DILLON



BUILDING FOR A FUTURE: Paul Traynor with Ollie Sauciuc and Dan Hegyi who have worked hard on the Galati site (above) in Romania