

# IMPACT

June 2023

Dear Friend,

Welcome to summertime! We are happy to present you with another glimpse into what we're up to at NG. One thing we love to do is to provide a place of belonging for those who otherwise might feel left out, lonely, or without a healthy community in which to belong. What can this look like?

You will meet Qani (pronounced something close to "Chani"), a long-time Albanian "family" member of our Social/Medical Improvement (SMI) work in Pogradec.

We also give you a glimpse of the developments at our NG campus in Buçimas. The latest improvement, a new turf for the covered soccer field, not only brings new momentum to the school's physical education classes, but is also popular with social work groups and many others.

We are proud of the multi-faceted "impact" we have in the lives of our ever-growing family.

In gratitude for your partnership,

Your Impact team



## Finding a home with "the Germans"

We often talk about humanitarian help, financial help, difficult medical and social cases, education, and many others, but we forget to mention stories like that of Qani. Qani is someone who never had a home of his own that loved, accepted, and made him feel he was in the right place, until he came to "the Germans," (which is how many locals refer to NG).

Qani is a 78-year-old man, who comes from a small village close to Pogradec, together with his brother, who has since passed. His mother died when they were little and his father married again starting a new family, in which Qani wasn't accepted, and he was left alone in this world.

Opportunity came for Qani to create his own family, but it unfortunately disappeared quickly for him, as his brother didn't approve of his marriage and Qani divorced his wife and once more, he was left alone and with a broken heart. He left his village and migrated to Pogradec, where he worked for 17 years on the railroads until the 1990s, when everything was destroyed in Albania. But he didn't know that God had other plans for his life, as it was in this time of his life when he met NG Albania and found his new home with "the Germans." When you ask Qani about that moment, he replies, "Oh I've known NG since 1990. I have always found a home here, when no one loved me, and when I was left on the street, alone."

For over 30 years now Qani has visited us every day. He spends time at the Amaro Tan soup kitchen. You can find him most of the time there, eating a warm meal or playing dominoes and chess with his friends, or worshiping with Andy and Gian Paul Ardüser during spiritual meetings. We can gladly say that Qani is home, and he belongs somewhere he is loved and appreciated.



Students of Nehemiah High School have fun during physical education classes

## New Turf

The campus of Nehemiah Gateway Albania is a constantly evolving and ever-changing place, from departments changing locations, to the construction of new buildings. If you aren't seeing the campus on a consistent basis, things may be significantly different by the next time you return.

One of these frequently developing aspects of the campus is located in the northeast corner. While the main purpose of this corner has always been sport oriented, the look has adjusted over the years. What was just an open grass field, was given a semi-permanent covering in 2017 with a giant white tent.

Children at Shkolla NEHEMIA have spent the last five and a half years playing underneath this tent. But while a covering was great for shelter from the hot sun and rainstorms, it also prevented the grass from continuing to grow, leaving the sport field with a dusty, uneven surface. Because of this, pupils frequently had to return to their regular class schedule with their shoes covered in dust.

In late 2022, the process of renovating this playing field began. For a number of weeks, sport classes had to find another way to maintain their schedule without the use of their football field. However, everyone knew what was coming and the wait was well worth it. In January of this year, the brand-new field was finished. The playing surface had been leveled and covered with artificial turf, complete with field markings. Pupils no longer have to cover their faces while playing to avoid getting dust in their lungs.



Until 2017, athletes had to deal with dust and holes.



Clients of the Children's Learning Center celebrate with music and dance.

According to the sport teachers, the pupils come to sport class with a new-found excitement because of the quality of their new field. Before, with the uneven surface, the entire process of teaching sport classes could be rather difficult. Trying to learn technical football skills is far more challenging when children are trying to keep their balance and not breathe in dusty air.

Shkolla NEHEMIA is not the only part of NG to benefit from this new field. The campus now has a large indoor area to host events, if necessary. Not only that, but the Social and Medical Improvement (SMI) program has already been making use of the field as well. Having an open, sheltered space that SMI clients can spend time together and play games without having to worry about dirt and dust.

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