

Mustard Seed [Jersey]

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Mustard Seed Jersey Newsletter ~ January 2026



THANK YOU SO MUCH to everyone who helped make those 3437 shoeboxes a joy-filled reality in Ukraine and Romania ~ especially to our amazing volunteers and all those who donated goods, shoeboxes, money, etc. And to all those who helped us get them there especially DFDS, the Parish Halls, Morvan Fils in St Malo, the Romanian and Ukrainian haulers, Manche Pest Control (for carrying out the required sanitisation procedures), Raul Freitas Landscapes, and the Romanian and Ukrainian in-country volunteers and many more.

We have been giving to Romania for 25 years and we can see huge improvements, but still a helping hand is needed for some.



This shoebox is special as one of volunteers recognised it from the photo and knew she had packed it.



We are inevitably short of shoeboxes for teenagers.



Going home from kindergarten with her shoebox.



Approximately one fifth of the shoeboxes were for adults. Some live in very poor conditions – this man (centre in photo) lives near the city rubbish dump and survives by scavenging among the rubbish.



Also living close to the city rubbish dump we visited and assisted this family – the adults were out trying to earn money for the family to survive. The older children looked after their small siblings. We gave them loaves of bread and also some waterproof footwear as well as Christmas shoeboxes for each family member.

Three people from Jersey went to Romania in December. What did they find most rewarding / challenging?



Rewarding ~ Seeing the money from Jersey turned into what was needed – whether loaves of bread at the distribution or food parcels or winter fuel.



Rewarding ~ seeing some of the wonderful hand-made blankets from Jersey given to people who needed them.

Rewarding ~ witnessing the joy of adults and children as we gave.

Rewarding ~ to hear how Mustard Seed's projects like the kindergarten and homework club have meant a real opportunity for a number of disadvantaged young people to escape the poverty cycle



Rewarding ~ seeing the aid given to the neediest people like this boy near the rubbish dump collecting shoeboxes for his siblings and seeing their joy on receiving the boxes.



Challenging to see the living conditions of the poorest. Rewarding to know our help makes a difference, but sobering and challenging to see the depth of poverty and need that is still there.

Ukraine follows the Orthodox calendar so celebrates Christmas on January 6th and 7th.

Half of the 1445 Christmas shoeboxes we sent to Ukraine were given to refugees in the Chernivtsi area ~ this is close to the Romanian border and often people there speak Romanian. There is comparatively little war damage in the area. A number of the churches of different denominations have worked together, sharing buildings and resources to offer support to the refugees. There are a large number of displaced people in the area who have fled from their homes in the war zone and are now living there. This is where the volunteers from Jersey visited in April/May 2025.



It worked out that most of the Jersey shoeboxes sent to Ukraine were for children, with a small number for adults. Special gatherings were arranged to give out the shoeboxes and food for those in need



When volunteers from Jersey visited in early summer of 2025 they were very impressed with the organisation of the aid and saw items that clearly had come from Jersey at the warehouse being distributed.



The remaining 700+ Christmas shoeboxes were driven across Ukraine for distribution in the war zone. One of the vehicles used was Toader's trailer that thanks to a generous donation Mustard Seed raised sufficient money to purchase in March 2024.

We understand it was bitterly cold when they set out to drive approx 1100 kilometers to the war zone to distribute Christmas shoeboxes, food, warm clothes and whatever else was available to give.



For safety some distributions were in basements. Some photos are not clear, the light not good but we saw evidence of repairs having been effected.



This distribution was in Kharkviv



But wherever it was the depth of gratitude was very real coupled with a sense of disbelief that people who live so far away care enough to give. (This same attitude had impressed the Jersey volunteers earlier in the year when meeting displaced people, originally from the east of Ukraine, now living in Chernivtsi).

Message from people in Kharkiv:
*We thank you so much for the gifts you send through our brothers in Chernivtsi. We thank the organisation Mustard Seed Jersey. It is a huge blessing that you stay alongside us & support us in the country.
May God bless you.*

WHAT WERE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF 2025?

It has to be **PEOPLE'S GENEROSITY** & what it made possible



In the spring we raised sufficient money to purchase a refrigerated trailer to help safely distribute donated fresh food to the neediest in Oradea, Romania. Above photo shows 2 volunteers from Jersey using the trailer to help distribute to those in need.



They also went to Chernivtsi in Ukraine visiting the church based charity that Mustard Seed has been giving to since the war started. The picture above shows the pharmacy which is set up to benefit the refugees. The Jersey visitors were deeply moved by what they saw but impressed with the charity's organisation and compassion.



Almost 3500 shoeboxes ~ unless you buy in bulk the cost is likely to be £30+ per box.

Generous donations meant we could provide school materials for displaced Ukrainian children and young people near Chernivtsi.

Also we could bless 4 Ukrainian refugee families in Romania with help for heating costs for the coldest months. One of the Jersey volunteers was moved by the look of relief on the parents' faces when it was explained what we were doing.

Over 80 needy Romanian pensioners were assisted each month in 2025 and young people's education supported.



WHAT ARE OUR PLANS FOR 2026?

Maybe we could best answer that question about future plans by saying “More of the same as last year but hopefully better”.



We plan to collect and pack relief aid to send to both Ukraine and Romania. We intend to send 3 aid consignments in 2026 obviously dependent upon sufficient aid and funding being donated:

The 1st will be a test one with pallets for both Ukraine and Romania on the same trailer. If this works well, we would plan to send the Christmas shoebox delivery to both countries in the one vehicle rather than in two separate consignments as in 2024 & 2025



We hope our amazing knitters and crocheters will continue making blankets, hats, mittens, scarves & adorable soft toys. Some individuals quietly deliver their goodies to our packing loft; others like the knitters at St Martins Church work as a group.

In April we plan a visit to Jersey for Nelu one of the Romanian social workers – please watch the media for details ~ we do hope you can have the opportunity to meet him.



In the autumn we hope to offer our annual Christmas shoebox appeal and we hope to send to both Ukraine and Romania.



Throughout the year we plan to continue our ongoing sponsorship programmes for pensioners, families and children or young peoples education.

As funding and resources permit we hope to continue to reach out to meet needs in Ukraine among displaced people and war victims. And to meet other needs if they should arise if we have the opportunity.

To one and all who give THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH

HOW CAN YOU HELP MUSTARD SEED JERSEY IN 2026?

DONATE your surplus good quality clothing, bedding, footwear, toiletries, writing materials. Our drop off point is the packing loft at Cardiff House, La Ruelle du Coin Varin, St Peter JE3 7EJ.

We plan to accept **general aid from January – August.**

During September we will stop accepting general aid to focus on the Christmas shoeboxes. We will advise on Facebook & the loft door as to the cut-off date for general aid.

Give us your **UNWANTED JEWELLERY** - this is a valuable source of raising funds (we raised over £5000 through the jewellery sales in the autumn ~ we used that money to purchase food).

Save **USED POSTAGE STAMPS** for us.

Put your **LOOSE CHANGE** in a collecting box for Mustard Seed

SUGGEST or **ORGANISE** a fundraising event so that Mustard Seed Jersey can benefit. (Please inform us of your plans before the event!)

SUPPORT our book stalls at Rozel Bay and St John's Village.

If you shop at the **CoOp** please use our divvy number **321340**

JERSEY GIFT SUPPORT ~ as a registered charity we can claim a refund on income tax on donations over £50 from income tax payers.

CONSIDER OUR SPONSORSHIP SCHEMES: pensioner or child

KNIT blanket squares or hats, etc for the Christmas shoeboxes.

PLAN to **PACK A CHRISTMAS SHOEBOX** (leaflets available by September or follow our monthly suggestions on Facebook))

Really important ~ remember Mustard Seed Jersey and especially the poorest people in RO and UA in your **PRAYERS** – to receive an occasional prayer update by email, please contact Rose.

If you need more information on **VOLUNTEERING** or **FUNDRAISING** or to receive occasional prayer update or any queries please contact Rose either by phone (01534 482637 or 07797 776468) or email rose@mustardseed.org.je or mustardseedjersey@yahoo.co.uk

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through our website www.mustardseed.org.je

SO VERY MANY THANKS to all who support in any & every way: **practically, prayerfully, financially**

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