

Shirley's Citation for the award's night in Vienna. It was read out by Adriana Tontsch (Romanian Association for Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus) who nominated her for the award.

"Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,
Cead mile failte romhat,

I have the great honor and pleasure in this evening to hold a speech about a woman who she impresses many people in Ireland and Romania with her compassion, kindness, courage and vitality.

She was born with spina bifida and she is dependent on dialysis for nine years. With the support of George Kennedy and Edel Brown, staff member of the Association for SB / H Ireland I visited families and learned and used their experiences. Shirley was one of the first hosts. I met her at the beginning of this year, at her home in Athy, County Kildare, about 60 km from Dublin. (Coming also from the same county Arthur Guinness, founder of the famous beer). She was curious and surprised about the visit. She asked me about our work in Romania. We got along very well from the beginning in spite of the language barrier that we have identified, it does not need many words to make themselves understood- it is enough friendship, understanding, kindness and love. All this I have seen in their eyes during our conversation. She was very concerned about the situation of people with SB/H in Romania. Her words were: "we should be very happy! We live in a country where we have the possibility to exist, to go to the doctor and to treat us and many, many other services, we can live like everyone else.

She was very open and told me about her life and experience with spina bifida: She showed me many pictures. "Adriana you know, the beginning was very difficult for me": she lived with foster parents, a school where they were not wanted because of their disability, "we had no wheelchairs like today, we were not able to move us from one place to another." She showed me a picture of her childhood- she was sitting on a mobile object, constructed from a wooden board with four wheels. She told me very proudly "it was important for all of us that we could move, with what, played no role. Today the life is much easier, we have wheelchairs, we can have a dialysis, have social workers who care for us, we can live independently, have our own income, nutritionists, psychologists and more.

Furthermore, she described her activities at the Sports Club 2000th. The club was founded in 1999 and she is one of the founding members. She made all aware of how necessary is that the people with SB / H have to do sport. Most athletic disciplines can be performed. Each family member takes part in it, whether he uses a wheelchair or not. This creates a great sense of unity among all participants. Based on this idea, the club has grown steadily each year and will be even greater. Now more than 50 people of all ages are members.

I asked her for support for our children in Romania, regarding sports and exercise, which would be for us, as the first step in this regard.

They also promised to write a book "Living with Spina Bifida" for people in Ireland and Romania, their experience will benefit people who are born with this disability. She asked me: Adriana do you want something to drink? I said, yes a coffee please, can I help you? She answered: Why? Do you think that I can not make a cup of coffee for you? At this moment I realized that she is not a person that doesn't need compassion or pity. She wants to be what she is -a woman who is married, mother of a son(23 years old, sorry, from today 24 years, Happy birthday Brendon jr.) who fulfilled their tasks at home and in the Sports Club 2000th. In addition, she collects clothing, furniture, toys for poor people and together with her family distributes all.

She is also active as a fundraiser for the Irish Association for Spina Bifida / Hydrocephalus.

Because that's not enough she together with other club members and made a video with instructions for sports activities for people with SB / H in Romania.

The dedication for us I do not want to deprive it " It has been a privilege and an honor to make this DVD and to contribute to others who we hope will take as much motivation from it as we do at Club 2000, every week. "

Dear Shirley, you are loved and respected by many people, may this love give you strength.

You had a big dream - to see Vienna. Today your dream is coming true. The Tara from Vienna and this wonderful evening will be a recognition and tribute to your valuable life and work.

"The Tara in the category Special Award goes to Shirley Keogh"