

Polish Diakonia

Newsletter

September 2013



For health to Mikołajki

Provincial Integrative Convention of Milieu Self-help Homes took place in the Lutheran congregation in Mikołajki. The meeting's motto, "Sound mind in a sound body", was supposed to promote a healthy lifestyle.

The convention, with ca. 180 participants from the whole Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship, took place on the 11th June this year. Its purpose was to integrate the disabled, gathered in the milieu self-help homes in the Voivodeship. The participants represented facilities from Elbląg, Ełk, Giżycko, Górw Iławecki,

Kowale Oleckie, Mrągowo, Nidzica, Nowa Wieś Ełcka, Mikołajki, Pisz, Susz, Szczytno, Ukta and Wolnica. They presented themselves in different ways, referring to the motto. There were also cooking and art classes, connected with the main topic – a healthy lifestyle. During a party, the participants



had a chance to integrate better with each other. Voivode Marian Pudzewski assumed an honorary patronage.

At the Lutheran congregation in Mikołajki there is a very strong Diakonia Centre, consisting of two Lutheran nursing homes ("Arka" in Mikołajki and "Betezda" in Ukta), two milieu self-help homes (in Mikołajki and Ukta) and a rehabilitation equipment rental shop. Moreover, in Mazury there is a milieu self-help home lead by Diakonia of the congregation in Pisz, as well as many diaconal stations. *Photo: congregation's archive, trans. E. Sojka*

Diakonia at the Evangelisation Week

In Dzięgielów, a yearly event Tydzień Ewangelizacyjny (Evangelisation Week) took place. Polish Diakonia was also there to present its activity on a special stand.

The Evangelisation Week in Dzięgielów took place from the 6th to 14th July. Besides lectures, seminars, evangelisations and concerts, activities of various church organisations, including Polish Diakonia, were presented. On a special stand in Diakonia's

tent everyone could find information about diverse diaconal work. One could receive materials or talk to people engaged in diaconal work, e.g. representatives of the Evangelical Society "Maria-Marta", Evangelical Nursing Home "Emaus" in Dzięgielów, as well as with Halina and Korneliusz Glajcar, who are carrying out a project "Help to Bieszczady Children".

The Evangelisation Week's programme included seminars concerning diaconal issues, e.g. diaconal ministry, help to the

excluded, growing old, and dealing with aggression and depression. Also as part of children's activities a class on practical dimension of difficult life situations was prepared. (MK) *Photo by J. Pecolt, trans. E. Sojka*



Another edition of international voluntary service has ended

Final seminar for international volunteers taking part in voluntary work projects in Poland took place, coordinated by the Diakonia of the Evangelical Church Augsburg Confession in Poland. It was a time to summarise and share experiences.

The seminar took place from 13th to 16th June in Mikołajki. It was led by Agnieszka Jelinek from Polish Diakonia. In course of the meeting, the projects were evaluated. The volunteers summarized experiences and knowledge

gathered during their stay in Poland, as well as discussed their plans for the future. Many of them want to stay in touch with Poland – through their choice of studies or other projects and youth exchange programmes. Seven volunteers participated in the seminar: Nina Liesen, Johanna Block, Hans Georg von Zahn, Timea Sóos, Emilie Svane Bruhn, Jessica Kaminski and Michelle Barholz. During the past year they worked in the Evangelical Centre for Diakonia and Education in Wrocław, "Nasz Dom" Nursing Home of the Bap-

tist church in Białystok, Polish Diakonia's office in Warsaw, "Gaudium et Spes" society in Cracow and the Lutheran congregation in Cracow. In the autumn a new year of voluntary exchange begins. Starting in October, Polish Diakonia will welcome a new group of international volunteers – five young Germans and a Hungarian will come. This time Diakonia sends three volunteers from Poland to Germany and the Netherlands. (MK) *Photo by A. Jelinek, trans. E. Sojka*



Voluntary work in Poland – that's it!

- So far this has been the best five months of my life, and the next four can only be better – says Emilie Bruhn from Germany about her voluntary work in Poland.

Emilie is one of the several young people from abroad, who are working on their voluntary projects in various places in Poland. Polish Diakonia coordinates these projects.

- The first half of my voluntary service is over, and I recommend coming to Poland to anyone who has such an opportunity. It's a wonderful country, full of possibilities and nice people. You can experience a lot here – says Emilie.

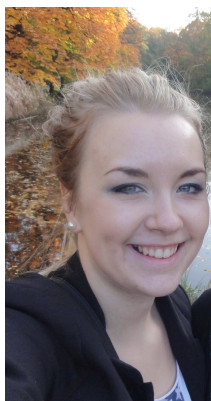
The volunteer works in the Warsaw Diakonia's office.

She helps with simple office tasks, as well as translations and preparing multimedia presentations. She does not consider her work boring. – *It's an ideal work for a young person who appreciates having contact with other people, but doesn't necessarily want to work e.g. seven hours a day with children – she explains.*

Additionally, Emilie spends one day a week in the Evangelical Diaconal Centre "Tabita" near Warsaw, where she talks to several older patients, practicing their German and her Polish. – *Pastor from the Centre suggested that I write down the life stories of these women. I think it's a great idea. I am working on carrying it out – she says.*

Emilie lives in a dormitory with twenty students, seventeen of whom study theology, and three – different subjects. She admits that she had always considered herself tolerant, and here she had noticed how hard it is for her to put up with somebody with opinions different to what she considers "right". – *Before coming to Poland, I thought it was impossible for someone, for example, with opinion on emancipation different than mine, to be a good person and become a good friend. Here I'm learning how to accept other opinions and attitudes – she says.*

Stay in a different country also means breaking the language barriers. Emilie learns Polish, but she also



Jubilee edition of Diakonia's project "Help to Chernobyl Area Children"

uses her hands, legs, English and German to communicate. Unfortunately, not everywhere in Poland people speak these languages. – *It's best to always have a small dictionary with you, as well as communicate what you mean using gestures* – she advises.

The volunteers who carry out projects coordinated by Diakonia know each other – from time to time they participate in seminars together; they also stay in contact via e-mail and facebook. They exchange experiences, share their problems. According to Emily, the best way to deal with a problem is to take initiative. – *If there is a problem at one's workplace, or there is something you don't like, it's best to come up with an idea on how to change it to make you feel better* – she convinces.

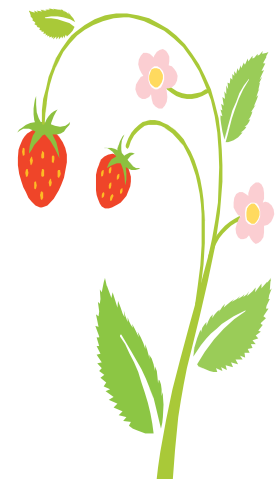
Emilie liked her trips around Poland. She has already visited several cities in our country, and has been to Slovakia. She enjoys travelling by rail. – *The trains in Poland have old-school compartments, like in "Harry Potter". There are comfortable seats and mostly you can meet some nice people* – she says. The volunteer speaks about her voluntary service in Poland with enthusiasm. – *So far it has been the best five months of my life, and the next four can only be better!* (MK) Photo by A. Jelinek, trans. E. Sojka

This year, for the twentieth time, a group of children from Belarus with their caretakers took part in a rehabilitation-holiday stay in Lutheran congregation in Sorkwity.

The Belorussian children's stay in Poland was a part of the "Help to Chernobyl's Children" project, conducted by Diakonia of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland, in cooperation with the "Chernobyl's Children" welfare society in Minsk and Swiss Foundation G2W Ecumenical Forum, financing the project. Each year Diakonia invited children from families evacuated from the Chernobyl area, whose parents or grandparents experienced directly the results of nuclear reactor's explosion in Ukraine, to come to Poland. Many of the diseases were genetically passed to the offspring. For some years the group included children from large or socially weak families.

This year's stay, which took place on the 1st – 30th June, was not only a jubilee, but also the last edition of the project for children from Belarus in the current form. On this occasion, the group of children in Sorkwity was visited by Franziska Rich, head of the

project department from the Swiss foundation G2W, Uladzimir Baravikou, head of the Consular Department of the Republic of Belarus in Warsaw, and Wanda Falk, Diakonia's general director. On Sunday a thanksgiving worship took place, with participation of local authorities, including Otolia Siemieniec, Mrągowo's mayor, Henryk Pędzich, local entrepreneur, Antoni Karaś, president of the district branch of PSL (Polish People's Party), as well as employees of the Community Council in Sorkwity. For the general director Wanda Falk this project *has always been very important: first of all, because we are developing work among children in Poland, and on the other hand we can also support children in Belarus this way. Children are truly our future, and that is why we have to take responsibility for them.* Franziska Rich believes that *this is our greatest achievement – the children know that they*



Fundraising training

are experiencing something that is not self-evident, and that will forever stay in their memory, which will also encourage them to help other people who need help – this is a very important aspect of this project. The director of the Belorussian social society "Chernobyl's Children", Prof. Giennadij Gruchewoj, in his congratulatory letter to Diakonia, writes that this special energy of mercy and kindness was the best support for our children and their families. During these 20 years of cooperation and friendship we have endured difficulties together, as well experienced fortunate development. We have managed to achieve a lot.

Although the project will not be continued in this form, both sides: the Belorussian and that of Diakonia are strongly convinced and willing to seek new forms of cooperation and work for the children. (DL), *Photos: congregation's archive, trans. E. Sojka*

As part of the Project Department in the Office of Polish Diakonia, a series of trainings in raising funds and financing the activity of church's organisations was organized.

One of the trainings was organized on the 20th May in Ryn by the Masuria Diocese's Diakonia. Among the 15 participants there were pastors, vicars and trainees from the diocese. The coach, Aneta Makowska, works as a fundraiser for Caritas in Elk. During the training, sources for public financing were presented, including projects and grant competitions relevant to the needs of church and diaconal work. The participants also discussed the NGOs' side, as well as private funds. Training with the same topic was also organized by the Lutheran congregation in Ustroń. The training for 14 participants was conducted by Robert Kawałko, fundraiser and chairman of the Polish Fundraising Association. It contained elements of lectures, as well as workshops concerning successful fundraising.

Katowice Diocese organized on the 18th and 25th May training entitled "Forms of employment of the social projects workers", which took place in the Lutheran congregation in Katowice. 15 people participated in this training, lead by Arkadiusz Follert and Bożena Polak.

All trainings were co-financed by the donations gathered by Polish Diakonia. Altogether, in the years 2009-2012, nine trainings took place. The condition for receiving financing for this kind of workshops was the topic, which had to be connected with fundraising for diaconal work or realisation of social or diaconal projects. (DL) *Photos: Diakonia Office archive, trans. E. Sojka*



Publication after the Polish-German Congress

A book containing materials from the Polish-German Congress "Strategic Basis for Development. Challenges for Social Policy in Poland and Germany", organized by Polish Diakonia and Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has been published.

The congress took place in October last year. Its participants included representatives

of organisations and institutions connected with the area of social policy in Poland and Germany. The issues discussed during the sessions concerned Polish and German experiences with social policy and possibilities of cooperation on this field. Mainly, the question of activation of senior citizens was discussed.

The publication contains texts of the speeches presented during the congress and statements from the

panel discussion. All the texts are available in Polish and German. It was published by the Polish Diakonia, with financial support of the Foundation of Polish-German Cooperation. *Trans. E. Sojka*

