



Community of young
Malteser

Malteser Holiday Camp for handicapped Romanians
Project lead

Project Description

1. The Camps

A European team led by the Community of Young Maltesers of Germany travels to Alba Iulia, Romania, for two and a half weeks during the summer to host a holiday camp for handicapped Romanians.

The project started in 2006 when a group of 30 dedicated young adults decided to spend a part of their vacations very differently from the usual way. It was to become a time of unique experiences of friendship between handicapped guests and team members and had a lasting impact on all of them.

Since this first year the project has regularly taken place each summer in the surroundings of Alba Iulia (Transylvania). Two camps at 5 days each take place and host up to 30 handicapped guests per camp. Each guest has one dedicated person constantly looking after him/her. Thanks to this 1:1 relation it is possible to interconnect and to build a very close relationship between an handicapped guest and a team-member.

The decisive factor in shaping the camps is a straight orientation towards the individual abilities and preferences of the Romanian guests. Each day is organized a little bit differently with several group activities and time for individual activities, playing games, singing and dancing, a ride on a pony-carriage, sitting in the sun, a trip to the nearby swimming- pool...

2. The Guests

The guests are mentally and physically handicapped men and women of all ages and disabilities from a public home owed by the state of Alba. The authorities assure the necessary alimentation, maintenance and housing of the inhabitants. The staff puts a lot of effort into their relationships with the guest but there is a high shortage of staff which makes almost all therapeutically help impossible and a lack of personal affection and friendship is ubiquitous.

Due to this fact some of the guests have developed as well conduct disorders as unhappiness and hebetudes.

3. The Team

The team consists of more than 30 people in the age range of 20-30 years, and includes a doctor, a priest and three "mommies". Additionally there is a group of Romanian volunteers joining the camps for linguistic support. The team bears the complete responsibility for care, food and entertainment. The daily duties during the camp can be physically as well as mentally very exhausting, since some of the handicapped guests may be dependent on help with their daily rituals such as washing and eating. Dealing with the personal fate and history of the guests is also not easy to handle. Every night there is a changing shift of night guards.

For every team member a camp is a very demanding time calling for all his/her attention. Therefore in between the two camps there are days to relax and regenerate and also a trip through the whole of Transylvania for the last three days.

4. Our Principles

Fidelity, Dignity and Appeasement

Fidelity: Every one of the guests has one permanent companion who stays with him during the whole camp. That gives each couple the opportunity to build up a close relationship (1:1). The care-taker is supposed to stay with his/her guest all day long.

Dignity: Each of our guests is treated with full respect of his dignity, meaning that all team-members are to assure a dignified treatment of each one of our guests.

Appeasement: The idea of the project is to offer holidays to our guests. That is why it is fully up to their individual desires how to spend a day in the camp, and it is the team-members duty to accompany them on whatever they want to do. In case one of the guests wants to run around the whole day long the responsible team member runs around with him, and if somebody wants to sit on the terrace the responsible team member sits beside him...

5. The Prayer

The majority of our guests has experienced a lot of rejection and unkindness in their lives. We want to let them know, that despite of what may have happened to them they are precious and loved human beings. That is why common prayer is an essential part of our project.

6. The Requirements

The requirements for every participant of the team are high. The climate, limited space and the duty to serve our handicapped guests requires a high degree of endurance, tolerance and empathy.

If somebody decides to participate for the first time he should check him/herself and consider whether or not he/she feels capable of meeting these requirements. Nursing experiences are welcomed but not necessary.

Concerning the Christian orientation of the project, the participation doesn't depend on the degree of your "holiness", nevertheless a certain openness and also willingness to also get engaged with the christian dimension of our project is important.

7. Financing

To cover the costs of our project (approx. 30.000 Euro) we are dependent on a huge amount of donations.

We therefore ask every team member to donate a small amount of money. The money we raise by asking every team member to pay barely covers the costs for our flights, the house and the meals for the team. The rest (meals for our guests, equipment, pharmaceuticals and transport) has to be covered with the help of donations.

DONATION ACCOUNT

Bank Transfer from Germany:

Pax-Bank Köln

BLZ: 37060193

Ktnr: 30147057

Verwendung: "Behindertencamp Rumänien"

Bank Transfer from abroad:

IBAN: DE10370601930030147057

BIC: GENODED1PAX

Usage: "Behindertencamp Rumänien"

8. Leadership/Contact

The team is led by Agnes Boeselager

(Agnes@Boeselager.de or Rumaenienprojekt@gmail.com, 043-650-2002664)

The project leader is Benedikta Behr

(benediktabehr@hotmail.com, 0049-176-70582366)