

Report of the 2013 TOH Summer Camp

Seebenstein, Austria, 5. – 9. August 2013

(Lisa Janssen and Maria Pammer)



This summer for the second time, we were able to welcome about 48 brothers and sisters in Seebenstein for our TOH summer camp. The set up wasn't easy though - as late as in June we nearly didn't have any applications yet. Thanks to continuous support and encouraging each other we decided to go on - and finally things started to speed up. When the camp started, there were 7 families (with 8 TOH children/ youngsters) and a lot of volunteers, who helped to make the WS a great success!

The staff all arrived on Monday the 5th to discuss the program and the participants' special situations, to assign the volunteers to specific TOH participants, and to spend time to bond with each other.

During this day and the next, the families arrived, and the WS started with a nice dinner on the 6th and a welcome meeting in the evening. Already then we could feel a very happy, free and supportive atmosphere that made everyone feel at ease.

The next two days were dedicated to a youth program of dancing, creativity, games and swimming (due to the unexpected heat wave!). Our 2nd gen buddies were taking care of their protégées in a most dedicated and responsible way, which put the parents at ease and gave them the freedom to enjoy their own program. Most valuable for the parents was sharing with each other and experiencing the warm embrace of a WS atmosphere that for many has not been accessible due to their special family situation. As for the TOH participants themselves, this is often a first time experience of a workshop and we were all inspired by their joy and enthusiasm!

Two 1st gen sisters were lovingly volunteering to take care of 3 toddlers (siblings of a TOH participant, and a 3rd gen daughter of volunteers). The kitchen staff spoiled us with wonderful food, and 3 trained therapists offered their knowledge: a sister from Italy, art therapist, guided the creative activities (such as painting and modeling); two others were available for personal counseling (mainly for parents and volunteers) - and there was much enthusiasm for the "dance therapy" of a 2nd gen dance student.

For our young generation this kind of investment is a wonderful journey to discover their own inner strengths, to experience the joy of living for the sake of others, and sometimes their very first personal encounter with the special needs and inner beauty of a TOH child. For some, this is a healing experience in itself....

The spiritual atmosphere at Seebenstein and the loving care of Eckhart and Maja Riehl provided a very warm and safe surrounding for our workshop - truly a unique place!

We finished the workshop with an incredible barbeque dinner and a campfire, and a graduation ceremony on August 9.

I especially want to mention the financial miracle that happened after we sent out our donation request to our Church communities: from all over Europe we received donations from individuals or communities that enabled us to cover the travel expenses of the volunteers, give a 30% workshop-fee discount to the participating families, pay for workshop materials and some extra outings (like swimming and taking the parents to an ice-cream/coffee treat), and even save some money for other meetings or our next year camp. We were truly overwhelmed by the love and support of our brothers and sisters!

The next big project we're investigating on is the possibility of offering Dolphin Therapy to our Treasures Of Heaven children / youth, which has proven to be very effective especially in cases of autism....it's so amazing and "principled" --- God has created these highly sensitive creatures for the healing of His children! (you can find a lot of information on internet!)

Once again a great Thank You to everyone who helped to make this WS possible and a success!

God bless you,

Lisa Janssen and Maria Pammer

