



Inter-generational solidarity at Parc de Valency care home in Lausanne, Switzerland

The Parc de Valency residential care home is situated in Lausanne, Switzerland, and gives priority, despite a significant care burden (over 150 minutes of care per resident per day on average), to proposing social projects adapted to the real needs of residents, bearing in mind their stage in life.

Favouring inter-generational encounters enables us to provide a greater variety of activities by opening the home to its surroundings, enriching the residents' circle of relationships. In the context of the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, it seemed only natural to Aurore Permin, head of activities, to co-operate with the local school. The idea was to allow residents to maintain contact with the young, as they would if they had not been put in our care. In fact, care must be taken that institutionalisation does not isolate residents, in this case the elderly.

Starting at the beginning of the 2011 school year, 12 pupils aged 11 to 13 from various cultural backgrounds (Africa, the Balkans...) visited our home accompanied by their teacher, Annick Bidaud, and spoke with residents about their countries' customs and traditions. The group met to taste regional specialities from Switzerland and their countries of origin, but also for celebrations. Meetings lasted two hours and took place once a month over the school year, a total of ten times.

These young people were born in Switzerland to parents from other countries. Often their grandparents remained in their country of origin, and some of the children have never been back. Family ties are sometimes broken, and these youths may never have spent time with the elderly or faced issues surrounding old age and the last stages of life. Others live with their grandparents and are very close to them. They have a hard time understanding that the aged can be entrusted to a professional world. In all cases, dealing with issues of "ageing in institutions" is part of our role in expanding the education of these young people, who



European Year for **Active Ageing**
and **Solidarity between Generations 2012**



sometimes did not know that care homes or careers in elderly care existed. Through these exchanges new bonds have been forged, overcoming prejudices (about age, sickness, handicaps, language and culture), encouraging an appreciation for what each person has to offer (through workshops and discussions), and de-dramatising the youths' image of the elderly at an age (11–13 years) when physical appearances are so important.

The success of the project has encouraged the team to continue inter-generational contact with a new set of meetings focused on a type of artwork that is often unappreciated or misjudged by the aged. Starting autumn 2012 our new project will involve the conception and realisation of a mural situated on a wall of the home, providing the backdrop for meetings between the young and the not-so-young. In addition a new set of monthly discussions will commence at start of the school year, with a new class but the same teacher. Last year's programme showed us that notions of death and ageing must first be discussed with young people before they meet with the aged, so as to demystify them somewhat.

The result of these projects has been to give residents and staff another vision of the home. It is not only frequented by the aged, their families and professionals – all of them adults – but also by children who come to spend happy, joyous moments. In this way we have been able create different ambiances, filled with moments of intensity and gaiety. No doubt these young visitors also have a positive impact of the motivation of the staff.

To sum up, creating inter-generational solidarity in care homes is clearly feasible. Provided it is initiated by professionals, organisers and teachers (in this particular case) who make it possible for generations separated by more than 70 years to meet and share their views. After this, the stage is set for the development of spontaneous relationships, at which point the professionals may take a bow.

■ PARC DE VALENCY RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME

Aurore Pernin, activities manager

Sandrine Heuls, Director

E.D.E. Vision 29

This is the 29th issue of the newsletter. E.D.E. VISION. It will inform you about current developments in the field of long-term care services for the elderly in Europe as well as about projects of the E.D.E. and its member associations. The E.D.E. will also give its views on current questions of European policy in the context of long-term care.



Prof. Dr. Wilfried Schlüter

13th European Congress of the E.D.E.

Tallinn, 26 – 28 September 2013

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Happy ageing in the eyes of children



*"With grandpa",
Nikola (5 years old)*

In the context of the "European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations", the association of providers of social services in the Czech Republic (APSS ČR) organised in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry Education of the Czech Republic an art competition for children and youths aged 15 and younger. The goal of the project was to remove stereotypes and prejudices about ageing and to support the recognition of old age as a full-fledged stage in life. "We want to encourage children to use their pictures to reflect about ageing and understand more about how they view the older generation. In this way we

hope to foster ties between generations, because each generation has something to give the other in terms of energy and life experience," said Jiri Horecký, President of the Czech association.

The competition was inaugurated in March, and participants could submit their artworks until the end of July. After evaluation by the art jury, all winners in the various age categories will be invited to Prague in September, where they will receive their prizes from the Social Affairs Minister and other dignitaries.

■ Magda Dohnalová

Deputy Editor in Chief of the Czech association magazine *Sociální služby* (Social Services)

CURAVIVA Switzerland: Online test on inter-generational solidarity

CURAVIVA Switzerland launched an online test on solidarity between the generations on April 29, 2012. At www.solidaritaetstest.ch, users can assess their solidarity with the elderly in German or French until the end of the year. The test comprises twelve questions and takes between five and eight minutes to complete. In it, topics like "costs and finances", "politics and society", "values and tolerance" as well as the care home sector as a job market are addressed. The availability of respondents for volunteer work and their general knowledge of gerontological issues are also appraised. Every answer is backed up with detailed info texts. The result identifies what respondents know about the elderly, and how willing they are to demonstrate their solidarity. The test is evaluated immediately after the last question has been answered. The result can then be printed out and compared with results of other participants. In the first two months almost 350 people completed the questionnaire.

The test is richly supplied with family photos from the era of black and white photography. The questions are entertaining and amus-

ing, and serve to sensitise respondents to the need for solidarity in their thoughts and deeds. Here is one example question from the "politics and society" section:

What does "care drain" mean?

- Fatigue felt by a care-giving family member resulting from the burdens of care and supervision work at home (burnout from care work).*
- Expert terminology for a silicon tube to drain a surgical wound (formerly known as "redon").*
- A lengthy railway trip accompanied by a volunteer care-giver for disabled or infirm people in need of assistance (e.g. getting into their bunks or changing trains).*
- The trend by which medical and care personnel migrate from economically poor countries to more developed ones.*

The corresponding info text addresses respondents directly: *Solidarity can also be demonstrated by attentively following health policy and social issues. "Care drain" refers to a new sort of "brain drain". "Care drain" denotes the migration of medical and care personnel from economically less-developed countries to first world nations. In this way poorer countries not only lose the benefit of training investments and care personnel, but also mothers, daughters and sisters, who – like everywhere in the world – bear the largest burden of unpaid care work. For example Bulgaria: around 26,000 nurses currently work in the country, compared with 65,000 in 1992. In Bulgaria there are 425 nurses per 100,000 inhabitants, compared with 750 in Western Europe. Every day two doctors and three nurses leave Bulgaria for Germany, England, France, Ireland, Denmark, Sweden or Switzerland. CURAVIVA Switzerland is dedicated itself to helping well-trained management, care and supervision staff to find attractive jobs caring for the infirm and disabled or working with children and youths with particular needs, in the context of domestic recruiting and basic groundwork and measures in the HR area, further education programmes and development and vocational training projects.*

■ Bernadette Keller, CURAVIVA CH.,

project manager (vocational education)



EY 2012 – assess your knowledge and willingness to show solidarity with the elderly with CURAVIVA Switzerland's solidarity test: www.solidaritaetstest.ch

Belgrade Gerontology Centre focuses on active ageing

The Gerontology Centre Belgrade was established several decades ago by the government of the Republic of Serbia. Today it is a modern establishment with over 1,300 employees, providing care services for more than 11,000 people. Four residential care homes belong

to the centre with 600 residents, including people with dementia. We also provide around-the-clock primary health care as well as social protection and home care assistance for about 2,100 people. In addition, 22 clubs and day centres in Belgrade cater to the social, integration, cultural and spiritual needs of 8,000 elderly users.

Our institutional care provides all-round services for residents, with the goal of enabling them to remain active for as long as possible. Supporting "active ageing", whether in care homes or in elderly circles outside of residential establishments is the prime goal of our work, not just in 2012, the European Year for Active Ageing.

Depending on their needs, abilities and interests, residents can take part not only in the entertainment provided, but can also be active and carry out tasks in other areas. Our care homes regularly organize concerts, visits from cultural and artistic societies, choirs, singers, actors, children from primary schools and kindergartens. All of this fosters intergeneration communication. Exhibitions of handicrafts and paintings, fashion shows and competitions are organised for the residents, who can also do garden work should they wish. Also worth mentioning are organised visits to other homes, trips and tours of various sites, visits to museums and theatres. Residents can socialise with people, books and ideas, engage in recreational activities or hobbies, they can walk, travel, receive relatives and friends, and share with others both the beautiful and the difficult moments. Our Centre has an Internet café, since there is growing interest among the elderly for computers, a cinema hall for about 300 people as well as gymnastics facilities. Every year in October, we organise a "Golden Age" Creativity Festival for elderly people from all over Belgrade. A variety of activities are carried out during one month, such as visits to the theatre, concerts, painting exhibitions, contests etc.

It is important to stress that an Information Centre for the elderly was established by the Gerontology Centre Belgrade with support

from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The Centre is located in the heart of Belgrade and is easily accessible, since most of the elderly population lives in that part of town. The main role is providing relevant information on different areas of importance for senior citizens and their families, such as social protection, health care, pension and disability insurance, services provided by local governments, utilities and other educational, cultural or banking services. The reason for opening the Centre was demographic, with the increase in the elderly population in Serbia. This development requires a new approach to creating and providing essential services. Difficult access to information and the inability to cope with a large quantity of different information can make it difficult for the elderly to access the information they need. The elderly can now get most of the information and advice they need through a special toll-free telephone line, or by visiting the Centre. In addition, special counselling is organised every Thursday in the Information Centre, offering advice and information by telephone or in person from lawyers, doctors, dieticians or other experts.

Our institution will continue its efforts in all areas in order to improve its overall functioning and the quality of services provided. At the moment, a reform in the area of social protection and the implementation of international standards has priority for us. With more understanding and support for increasing the level and variety of services for the elderly, positive results can be achieved.



■ **Brankica Jankovic**,
director of the Gerontology Centre Belgrade

Brankica Jankovic

European Year 2012 in Prienai care home, Lithuania



There isn't autumn in our hearts

Prienai care home, founded in 2010, belongs to the Lithuanian association ARG, or "Careful Guardianship". All sorts of sessions, conferences and meetings take place here. Colleagues from different European countries come and share their experiences. Our methodical centre provides training programmes for social workers and their assistants who work with the elderly and the disabled. Here they can improve their professional skills.

The goals of Prienai care home are to provide various social services for residents, taking into consideration their needs, likes and interests. We help them to be useful for other residents and to gain more knowledge and skills, and involve them in activities in the home and the community. During this European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between

Generations, we continue to work with our residents in accord with the project's various goals, encouraging them to participate in social and medical rehabilitation so as to enhance their physical and mental health and develop their opportunities for self-expression and self-realisation. We seek to make their lives as active and full as they can be. One of our residents, Professor Carol Rimtautas Kašponis, still works and is always in the focus of events. He is a pioneer of interdisciplinary and comparative musicology in Lithuania. Mr Kašponis will take part in the 11th World Congress of Semiotics, which will be held October 5-9, 2012 in Nanjing, China. There he will give a lecture on Algirdas J. Greimas (a famous Lithuanian semiotics expert). Mr Kašponis is happy with his living and working conditions in our care home, and satisfied that he can pursue his research work and exchange his ideas with friends and colleagues here.

"Warm relations, a friendly environment and great employees' team – that's what keeps me coming back to Prienai care home," says Vytautas Baranauskas, a traveller and photographer from Vilnius who regularly presents pictures and tells his impressions from other countries. In this way, our residents have been able to "visit", Israel, Germany, England, France, and Egypt, among other destinations.

It is important for our residents to participate in various activities. They need to feel useful. They can become involved in our "Kvietkelis" ("Flowers") folk ensemble, and the popular song group "Širdy dar ne ruduo" ("There isn't autumn in our hearts"). An innovative approach is behind the original, interesting programmes presented not only for our residents, but also for guests.

Elderly people's experience is a great social asset to younger generations. Communicating with the older generation offers young people a special opportunity to expand their social and emotional relationships, and to understand who "old people" are. We have organised some unconventional lessons in our care home with pupils from the Prienai "Revuona" secondary school and Birštonas gymnasium. Mr V. Ibianskyte, one of our residents, told beautiful stories from his life, while other residents explained what values are the

most important for elderly people, and not only for them. They gave their views on tolerance, forgiveness, respect, support and empathy, and reflected together about what should be done to keep these values alive.

■ **Angele Bajoriene**, director of the Prienai care home and president of the Lithuanian association ARG

EY 2012 in Hungary



Health Day in Budapest on June 7, 2012

The Ministry of Human Resources in Hungary has implemented a national programme on Active Ageing and Solidarity between the Generations. This programme listed the long-term policy objectives related to support for the elderly. In the opinion of our association, the most important are:

- creating old age financial security
- synchronizing different services (medical, social, cultural, educational etc.) with the needs and interests of the elderly
- encouraging active ageing and maintaining physical activity
- changing the social and economic approach to ageing.

During this EY 2012, various programmes have been launched on the national and local levels. On the national level we can report on the following initiatives:

- The Path of Life competition allowed the generation over 60 to present an event of their personal history, their path of life or how they lived a historical event. Competitors could prepare their presentation with the help of a grandchild or young acquaintance. The results were announced in April.
- The Day of Generations was a large-scale outdoor event at Millennium Park in Budapest. Its aim was to strengthen ties between family members by focusing on solidarity, the compatibility of family and work, the benefits of the older generation's experiences and caring for elderly people in the family.
- The Ten Thousand Steps programme: Twenty walking events will be organized in 2012 to encourage physical activity, in addition to the Nordic walking programme for older citizens.

Besides, Fővárosi Önkormányzat Idősek Otthona, a communal care home in Budapest, held a Health Day and a Cultural Day to promote active ageing. The Health Day was organized on June 7 by the institution's physiotherapists who demonstrated the importance of physical activity and how it helps to maintain a longer, healthier and more relaxed life. The residents were split into two groups and participated in various sporting and concentration activities.

Rounding things off, the programme of the July Cultural Day consisted of Transylvanian folk dancing, a violin concert and an opera performance.

■ **László Bakonyi**, director of Fővárosi Önkormányzat Idősek Otthona and President of the Hungarian Association for Providers of Social Services

The Save Age project detects several best available techniques

Implementation of best available techniques (BATs) is the key to improving energy efficiency in residential care homes. With the help of literature reviews, recent projects in the area of energy auditing and new experiences with energy monitoring in residential care homes, Save Age partners have gathered a vast range of BATs for individual categories of technologies such as air conditioning, ventilation systems, heat systems, combined heat and power systems, insulation, elevators, washing and drying machines, refrigerators and freezers, stoves and ovens, office and entertainment equipment, lighting, and energy management.

If you want to check the most effective solutions or review the advantages and drawbacks of individual technologies, please visit www.saveage.eu. In addition we invite you to show your support for our project and sign the memorandum of understanding, also available on our website.

