

WOW-Day 2012 builds international bridges

Students support underprivileged children in foreign countries

Berlin, 21/3/2012 - KK. On 27 September 2012, Waldorf schools worldwide will set everything in motion to ensure that children and young people from financially disadvantaged families in foreign countries may receive vital support. The intend of the campaign for this single day is to bring people together and have them actively unite under the slogan Waldorf One World. That fosters the international cooperation between Waldorf schools and in recent years has built many bridges between young people.

To bridge the gap between their own world, e.g. their school and students from another culture, that was the strong wish of the participating classes, back then as well as today. In 1994, the first WOW-Day took place with the aim to provide students from financially disadvantaged families with improved educational opportunities.

“For many students, it is still astonishing that students abroad do not have the same opportunities and educational conditions as they do,” says Olivia Girard, campaign manager of the Friends of Waldorf Education. “This moves students to actively participate not only in Germany but now also in Portugal and even in India.” Waldorf schools abroad often do not receive any government support and are therefore dependent on donations.

The positive responses of the schools and supported initiatives in the past year show that this commitment of Waldorf students is extremely important. In 2011, 230 schools from 25 countries have jointly collected more than 320,000 €. As a result, disadvantaged children from more than 50 initiatives in 27 countries can benefit from important support. Financial assistance was for example given to the Waldorf initiative in Shfa’ram. Since 2004, there is a kindergarten in this Arab town in northern Israel. There, Bedouin, Muslim, Christian and Druze children play and learn together. An example of successful cross-cultural collaboration between students, parents and teachers.

To support schools, kindergartens, curative education facilities and social initiatives, is essentially the international role of the Friends of Waldorf Education. Together with the German Federation of Waldorf Schools and the European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education we motivate the students at home and abroad to participate on WOW-Day in September. Since the beginning of the WOW-Day campaign Waldorf schools have donated a total of two million Euros, which were forwarded at 100 percent to various Waldorf initiatives abroad.

In addition to their commitment to young people around the world, the participating students will be aware on this specific day that they are part of a common world. A world, which is strongly dependent on voluntary contributions due to the growing imbalance between rich and poor. It will be interesting to see how the young people will unlock their creative potential in this year’s campaign to build this important international bridge. From colorful street music, circus performances, competitive sponsor runs, to large benefit concerts, anything is possible.

The Friends of Waldorf Education

The Friends of Waldorf Education assist more than 600 Waldorf schools, kindergartens, curative education facilities and social projects worldwide and support them in financial and legal issues. In addition to WOW-Day, they promote educational sponsorships, emergency pedagogy campaigns and voluntary services. Donations will be forwarded at 100 percent to the intended institutions. The association is not financed through the donations, but through its sustaining members and donations that are specifically intended for this purpose.

German Federation of Waldorf Schools

Currently 230 German Waldorf schools have joined together to form the Confederation of Independent Waldorf Schools, based in Stuttgart, where in 1919 the first Waldorf school opened. The federal union leaves the autonomy of the individual Waldorf schools untouched, but rather works on common tasks and interests.

European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education (ECSWE)

The European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education includes 26 national associations and represents more than 680 Waldorf schools throughout Europe with over 147,000 students.

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