

LATEST NEWS FROM THE LIVSLUST DZIVESPRIEKŠ VOCATIONAL SCHOOL FOR ORPHANED AND OTHER VULNERABLE TEENAGERS IN LATVIA

Longer adaptation period



During the 2-day September-excursion everybody gets to know each other in a good way. This year they went to Cesis, Valmiera and other places in Vidzeme. The theme for the trip was to encourage everybody not to smoke.

Until this autumn, every school year has started with an adaptation period of one month dedicated to social rehabilitation and motivation. Despite this, it happens that a pupil leaves already during the first six months. They come to Livslust of their own free will, and they can leave at any time, but our aim is of course that everybody shall stay until they finish school.

There are different reasons for leaving: Those who come from state institutions generally lack motivation to study, since they have not been taught the connection between education and a secure future. At Livslust everybody takes part in the housework, which comes as an unpleasant surprise for some. Others simply find life in the countryside boring and only want to return to city life in Riga. Most of the youngsters lack confidence in grownups after repeatedly having been let down since early childhood. This makes it difficult for them to trust any adult at all, and many even find it hard to relate to their class mates.

From September this year we have prolonged the adaptation period to last the entire first semester. Older pupils are assigned one newcomer each to care for. They demonstrate the daily routines and how everybody takes part in all kinds of work needed.

In order to break down barriers and establish contacts, the pupils and the school staff do fun things together. We also try to make the youngsters realize that it is worth while to use two years for education and rehabilitation in order to have a better future. During the adaptation period, the new pupils get a chance to try out the four different vocational programmes, something that will make it easier for them to choose before school starts in January. Together with the social pedagogue every boy and girl sets up a personal goal that they will aim for in the coming two years.

School was closed during July

This summer we tried for the first time to close the school during July when there are few pupils. Those who finish in June usually leave straight away, and the new ones do not arrive until August. The remaining pupils went on a camping tour to the seaside before they left to visit relatives or custodians. Some had summer jobs or trainee places at our business partners. Nine of them went to Sweden for a couple of weeks. This experiment worked out well and everybody was pleased.



On the seaside before everybody went away in July.

Livslust rests on five legs

We know that 80% of our former pupils are doing well thanks to the fact that we stay in touch with everyone for several years after they leave school – a result to be proud of. The purpose of our work is for all former pupils to be able to manage on their own. We want them to be socially competent and to face life with self confidence, based on general knowledge and vocational skills. Skills that will enable them to take a job or continue with further studying.



The five legs of Livslust:

1. Secure living conditions
2. Social rehabilitation to heal the wounds of a difficult childhood and to strengthen their self-esteem
3. Drug-preventive activities with an active spare-time
4. Vocational training in co-operation with companies and practical training at the school's workshops
5. Follow-up and support of former pupils

Key words of Livslust:

Trust, Knowledge, Self-esteem, Self-confidence, Initiative, Responsibility, Creativity, Co-operation



Kitchen assistants and painters finish school in June.

Trafficking-attempt ended with prison

Our youngsters live under risky conditions deprived of normal family support. They are at a vulnerable age and lack experience of life. This makes some of them easy victims for criminals exploiting them for different purposes. Trafficking is a serious problem in the Baltic States and Eastern Europe. One day one of our girls received a phone call. Beaming with joy she went to the headmaster and told him that she had got an offer to work in Greece. She did not know exactly who had called her, but the offer sounded fantastic to her and she was very happy. The headmaster became suspicious and in spite of the girl's protests he called the police. They took it very seriously and managed to track down a gang that worked with trafficking. They were sentenced to many years in prison. Young people often take warnings from adults as unnecessary nagging. Now we can use this very example when cautioning our pupils of dishonest people who give false promises of a fantastic future.

The story about Ilva and Janis

When young boys and girls live side by side, it is no surprise that there are also love affairs. Ilva Bekmane and Janis Levanovs met when they were at Livslust and have been together ever since. Now they live in Riga and have a daughter. Little Keita no doubt has had a better start in life than her parents. Ilva and Janis both come from poor and socially deprived families with many children in the countryside. Without Livslust they would have had little chance of creating a meaningful future for themselves.

Ilva studied to become a seamstress at Livslust. Unfortunately, in the last couple of years, many of the textile factories in Latvia have moved production to countries like China and Vietnam, and Ilva could not find a job as a seamstress. Luckily, she had good contact with some representatives from our collaboration partner Oriflame. They liked her and wanted to give her a chance. After



Ilva and Janis with their daughter Keita.

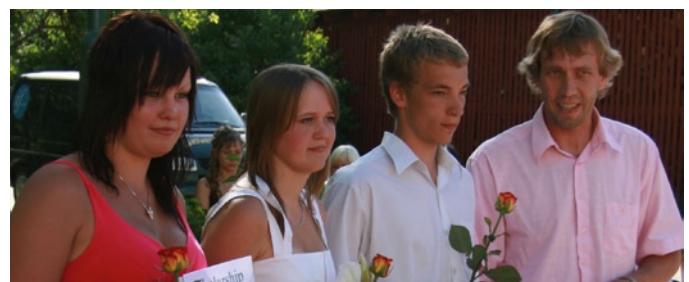
a successful trial period they employed her. Janis has also succeeded thanks to his education at Livslust. He finished school as a painter and was employed by a railway company. They both get on well with their work and are highly appreciated by their employers. From the start they had great difficulties in finding a place to live. This is a common problem in Latvia of today, where prices for apartments as well as rents are only going up. At the start, Oriflame helped them temporarily until they found a flat. Soon they realized that they could not afford to pay the rent and they were very worried. At that point they met an American-Latvian lady who had a small flat for rent at a reasonable cost. It was in a bad state though, but that was no problem for Janis with his professional skills.

All former pupils are invited to Christmas and Easter parties and other events at the school. Ilva, Janis and Keita are always found among those who come, and sometimes they come just to spend a weekend. They never forget that this is where they found the first adults that they could trust.

Scholarships and micro-loans

Two scholarship funds and a micro-loan fund offer financial support that makes it possible for our pupils to continue studying or get some help to start their own business.

Baiba Belova is supported by the Roger Laavola Memorial Fund in her studies of clothes-design. Liga Lice has been able to take her driving licence thanks to a micro-loan from the Hans Stråberg Startfund. At her second attempt, the very talented Elina Meksa was accepted at the prestigious Art Academy in Riga, something that makes us very proud. She has been granted a micro-loan to learn French, which she will need for the studies that take place in Paris. The Oriflame scholarship Fund has existed for many years. Usually the studies are free of charge for orphaned students, but they have to pay for travels, cost of living, study materials etc. At the moment, there are five students receiving support from the Oriflame fund.



This year's recipients of the St. Laurentius scholarships: Best pupil girl Evita Bogdanova, Best friend Baiba Ivancikiva and Best pupil boy Edgars Jekabsons. To the right headmaster Edijs Petersons.

Livslust-pupils in Athens

When Oriflame-consultants from the whole world gathered in Athens in August for the annual Gold Conference, our pupils Baiba Ivancikova and Modris Eglitis were there to help out at the event. After a couple of days we received a mail from Oriflame's Peter Kropp, responsible for the conference: "I just want to say thank you for our two interns! They are amazing! Everybody just loves them!" A fantastic experience for Baiba and Modris, who tell us that at first they felt insecure but everybody was so nice that all their worries vanished and everything was just fun. Us working at Livslust feel like proud parents. As it worked out so well this year, two new pupils will get the chance next year. In order to be chosen, you should be able to communicate in English, which gives the pupils extra motivation to study. We are also proud that Oriflame entrusted us with making 4970 (!) bags of textile fabric for the conference, and that they were very pleased with the high quality.



Modris and Baiba with Angie Brown from Oriflame

American ladies on an activity visit

The chairman of Livslust, Eva Christensson, tells us about an uncommonly successful visit at the school:

"On September 24-26 I was in Latvia together with nine American ladies. We spent two and a half days from morning til evening at the school. We took part in all kinds of school activities, and worked with the pupils in the workshops as well as in the kitchen. After dinner we joined the theatre group, were at the sports field or just sat on the stairs talking with the youngsters."



Maggie Hayes and Arvids admire a nesting-box they just made.

For the woodwork in the joinery, the idea was that we should make butter knives, considered easy enough. One of the ladies found that to very boring, and inspired everybody to make nice art objects with material from nature instead. In the kitchen it was chaotic, to say the

least, when the pupils should learn to cook American dishes. It was hard for everyone to transform cups and ounces to decilitres and grams. But the result was delicious and we had great fun.

The whole experience was entirely new to my fellow-travellers. They were so taken by all this that they still mail me about it, how impressed they were by the warm and open contact between staff and pupils, and how interesting they found Livslusts' methods and pedagogy. It was extremely rewarding to work together with the youngsters. We came very close. I am sure we will do this again with new groups of visitors."

Golf in co-operation with SEB

This year the Livslust-golf was arranged for the third time. It took place at the Täby Golf Club on September 16 under the management of Eva Martinsson. 104 golfers gathered for a cannon start in the cool morning, which turned out to become a beautiful and exciting day of golf. The lunch and prize ceremony with prizes donated by many of Livslust's collaboration partners and sponsors, took place in the club-house, once everybody was back after their golf tour. Livslust would like to thank all players who in this way contributed to our work.

A special thanks to this year's main sponsor SEB.



The pupils have also had a chance to try out golf. They were invited by the British Chamber of Commerce in Riga to the Saliens golf course on September 6.

Miscellaneous:

- 197 former pupils are now part of the Latvian society. Most of them work, some study and many have formed their own families. This year we have 18 new pupils and 20 second year pupils.
- On June 18-19 the school staff went on a team-building and recreation trip to Tallinn and Helsinki.
- September 11 was a sad day, as pupils and staff attended the funeral of Ieva Zarina. Ieva, who left the school two years ago, died suddenly and unexpectedly from a heart-disease. Three of her sisters, Laura, Baiba and Ruta are also pupils at Livslust.
- On October 8 Krissy Pavelson, manager of Krissy Craft and Catering, came to the school to introduce her business and her catering to the kitchen pupils. Together with Vairak Saules she is now a collaboration partner, and will take on kitchen pupils as trainees.
- On October 14, it was time for this year's running competition around the territory of the school. 3.6 km for the boys and 1.8 km for the girls.
- On October 24 the traditional Harvest Party took place with a lot of decorations from nature, good food, music and dance.
- The PR and communication company Hauska & Partner has agreed to give us consultations free of charge with the aim of making Livslust-Dzivesprieks better known in Latvia.

- Our German organisation, Livslust- Lebensfreude, chaired by Monica von Schierstädt, is very active in engaging more supporters. They collect money by different events. On June 6 they arranged a golf tournament at München-Riem followed by a dinner in the evening.
- IKEA Stiftung in Germany has given a grant to cover the costs for one pupil during a three year period 2008-2010.

GOOD NEWS! Do good by shopping on the internet!

Now you can support a charity of your own choice by shopping on the internet. More than 200 shops co-operate with engodsak.se. For each purchase you make, the shop will donate to charity without any extra cost for the customer. The purchase is made through AidMaker, a programme that you download from www.engodsak.se where you also will find more information.

The Annual Report of Stiftelsen Livslust for 2007

can be ordered from our office at livslust@telia.com



We have received this mini-bus from the Latvian company Dzintars Sia.

Thanks for all support!

Especially we would like to thank our faithful volunteers, collaboration partners and sponsors. And thank you to all who have contributed during 2008 in many different ways.

How to support Livslust-Dzivesprieks

You can become a **COLLABORATION PARTNER** with a long-term commitment, a **LIVSLUST-SPONSOR** and pay a monthly amount of your own choice or you can make a **SINGLE DONATION** in connection with Christmas or other events. You can **HOST** a couple of our youngsters in the summer. You can **BUY PRODUCTS** made in our workshops. Contact us for more information.



Several times each year we invite other schools and orphanages to much appreciated sports events.

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Collaboration partners 2008: Colorex, Electrolux, Essen, Knäuf, KPMG, Krasu Serviss, LMT, Länsförsäkringar, Nordea Latvia, Oriflame Cosmetics, SEB, Snickers Workwear, TeliaSonera, Tikkurila-Vivacolor, Vairak Saules, Vattenfall
Major contributing organisations 2008: EUs Strukturfondet ESF, Helge Ax:son Johnsons Stiftelse, IKEA Stiftung, Johanniterorden, NVO, Petrus och Augusta Hedlunds Stiftelse, Radiohjälpen, Sigrid Buchs Stiftelse, World Childhood Foundation