

PRISMA

Prisma Newsletter No. 8
- January 2005 -



PRISMA

Prison Fellowship Germany

Youth Farm SEEHAUS

One year of the Youth Farm Seehaus

For the first time in Germany it is possible that young offenders can serve their prison term in a programme run by a NGO. On November 3rd 2003 Sven K. came to us as our first juvenile. Satisfied and grateful, we look back over this first year. In the different areas there has already been a lot of success. All of the young people successfully passed their elementary school certification and also the exams for the vocational preparation year. They are glad to grasp the opportunity to change their lives and get a grip on things even when everyday life is quite stressful and are preparing to live in freedom. The first teenager finished his period of detention in September and left the project. We are very glad that he was able to start a training course in industrial mechanics at Daimler-Chrysler right after leaving Seehaus. He is still in contact with us and a voluntary mentor is looking after him. His family situation is very difficult, please join us in praying for him.

Since mid-October we have five more young people here. For all five the new school year began. Two of them are taking a one-year course of vocational preparation, two are taking part in the first year of vocational training in the building trade. With the help of volunteer teachers, one teenager is working towards his high-school diploma.

We are glad about the good cooperation with the Protestant Youth Homes in Heidenheim and the Education Authority and the expansion of the Seehaus School as an acknowledged trade school.

Just before Christmas the concrete floor was laid in the new building, and on January 14th the juveniles moved into the new building. We can now take in two more. We are planning to finish the second floor of the new building in March. Then we will be able to take in up to 14 juveniles.

INTRODUCING THE STAFF

Irmela & Daniel Abrell, house parents

Daniel worked in Spain from 1994 to 1996 in a similar field - with drug-addicted delinquent adults. Since that time we have had the desire to share our life with people who have difficulties in our society.

After our studies – Daniel is a civil engineer, Irmela a social worker – we worked both in our respective professions. Irmela worked for two years at Ravensburg prison and Daniel in an engineering firm in Austria.

In July 2003 we discovered the vacancy as house parents on the internet and we applied for it immediately.

Since October 2003 we have lived at Seehaus and are sharing our life with the young people.

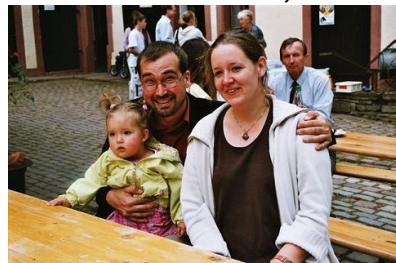
Beside the responsibilities as house parents, Irmela helps the young people in all areas of life, e.g. handling their debts or to planning their integration etc. Daniel teaches at the Seehaus School, is involved in construction planning and is studying the theory of technical education.

We are glad to be able to make our contribution, to give the young people a chance to reform their lives and to set an example of practical Christian living. It is nice to watch the young people changing and how we are growing together as a big family. We recognise how important it is for the boys to have a home. Beside the five boys, we are especially glad to have little Edith in our family since October 22nd 2004.

The whole Prisma-Team – juveniles, staff and leadership – is glad for you. Our warmest congratulations on your daughter!



Gabriele Seitz-Vetter, teacher at a special school in Stuttgart



Without support of many unpaid volunteers the work in the Youth Farm Seehaus couldn't be done to the present extent. We would like to introduce one of the volunteers.

Gabi, in which area are you working at the Youth Farm Seehaus?

As teacher in the vocational school, I give the young people extra lessons. The young people come at very different stages and with different school

qualifications. During the last school year I taught German, mathematics and English. This new school year I am teaching three young people maths.

Why are you involved in Prisma?

I already enjoyed working with young people before. In the Bible we find that Jesus invested himself in a special way with those who are on the edge of society. I am grateful to him that I find it a positive challenge to deal with difficult young people in both my job and the young people at Seehaus. I'm fascinated by the enormous hunger for knowledge the Seehaus students have. Never before in my professional life have I experienced such a willingness of pupils to assimilate new things and to strive for goals. They also often demonstrate this openness in conversations and towards the issue of faith. This is also very enriching for my family and me.

How do you balance this work with your family life?

Without the full support of my husband Stefan, the work at Seehaus wouldn't be possible for me. When I am at the Seehaus, he takes care of our daughter Aurelia. Even though this takes quite a bit more effort to organise, we nevertheless both wish to continue to be involved here in the future. Stefan gives precedence to me in this job, even he would also really like to teach here (he is also a teacher of children with special needs). Maybe there will be a change in this respect when our second child is born.

Walter Hornstein is a master butcher and hobby sculptor from a neighbouring town. He has a way of inspiring the young people through his job and his hobby. He has already visited us several times to carve sculptures with the young people. For many it's a totally new experience to take wood to be creative or even to think about doing anything in an artistic way. A close relationship quickly developed and Mr. Hornstein invited the young people for a special supper with sausages and meat being served by the butcher himself. They still talk enthusiastically about the meal, when that subject arises.



Events

We regularly introduce the Youth Farm Seehaus to church congregations, political groups, Rotary and Lions Clubs, etc. Often we have groups visiting the Youth Farm Seehaus to get to know the project and to conduct activities together with our young people:

Neuenbürg Deanery

20 pastors from Neuenbürg Lutheran deanery visited the Youth Farm Seehaus and found out about the possibilities of the parishes supporting the Youth Farm Seehaus.



National office for political education

"Come on, take part" is the slogan of a student competition of the Baden-Württemberg State Parliament to advance political education. The contest aims to get young people interested in politics and to motivate them to a critical and tolerant commitment to democracy. The prize-winners of last year's competition took part in a law seminar dealing with the open form of juvenile court sentences as practised at Seehaus.

Ejw/YMCA (Protestant Youth Association) Nürtingen



As part of a four-day basic and advanced course, 56 co-workers of a protestant youth association from Nürtingen came to the Youth Farm Seehaus. They played volleyball and baseball with the juveniles at the Seehaus and they tried the climbing wall in the temporary gymnasium. After a presentation of the project the guests warmed themselves up on a camp fire and we had a barbecue. All of the participants were totally enthusiastic about it.

Federal Police Böblingen

As part of an advanced training course, a group of 13 policemen from the Böblingen federal police unit held a discussion with the young people at the Youth Farm Seehaus. The policemen wanted to know what positive and negative experiences the young people had had with the police. On the other hand the policemen described their feelings as they go into action and how they see delinquent youth. Through the discussion and the getting to know each other in an other context, prejudice on both sides were put out of the way. Afterwards the sports programme organized by the young people called for practical trust: the young people provided the



safety backup for the policemen as they piled up boxes, swung from ropes and tackled the climbing wall. This event will not be the last of its kind. The next group of policemen has already announced its interest.

Support PRISMA

We want to thank for each support we have experienced until now – through donations by individuals, churches and companies, gifts in kind or sponsoring. In each newsletter we want to turn the spotlight on one of our corporate sponsors:



Schreyer Christmas campaign

The Schreyer GmbH is a medium-sized company in Metzingen.

Beside the paper processing (production of learning aids, such as exercise books, letter and sketch pads, paper and plastic packing material) the area of office materials and toys and the packing material play an important role. In all areas Schreyer GmbH also operates nationally as a wholesaler. The manager and the Schreyer family chose the Youth Farm Seehaus as their social project. So in 2003 the company gave no Christmas presents to their clients, but wrote in a Christmas letter to their clients:

“Our business will soon be interrupted for a few days. Instead of the tills the Christmas bells will ring. A good opportunity to turn our thoughts to more than the daily business. Amazing but true: there is life apart from business! And there are values that go far beyond sales, turnover and profit.

We at Schreyer are made aware of that quite practically when on our last official working day before Christmas we gather for our traditional Christmas party. We don't only thank our capable coworkers, but we read also the old

Christmas story that is as relevant to our time as it ever was. Instead of giving our clients Christmas presents, we made a donation to our social project, Prisma Youth Support. (...) This project gives young offenders the chance to escape the spiral of crime and violence.”

Schreyer mentions Prisma e.V. on their website, posting regular reports on the progress of the Youth Farm Seehaus. Last year Tobias Merckle was invited to the Christmas celebration and presented the Youth Farm Seehaus to the 200 coworkers. The management often talks about their social project at staff meetings and other company events.

Produktion und Vertrieb
Schreyer

Of particular help for Prisma e.V. is the ongoing support provided through donations of office and school materials. Thank you so much!! www.schreyer-net.com

With warm regards and blessings

Tobias Merckle and the whole Prisma-Team

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Prisma e.V., Seehaus 1 * 71229 Leonberg * 07152-33123-300 * Fax 07152-33123-301 * info@prisma-jugendhilfe.de
Spendenkonto: Kreissparkasse Böblingen * Konto 8176682 *BLZ 603 501 30 * <http://www.prisma-jugendhilfe.de>