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Keine Stimmen

Swinging together



A week in which young and old, mothers and fathers, Kids Treff and Jungschar successfully pull together.

Young and old together?!

Old and young are known to bring momentum. We experienced this momentum for the second time. Through our great project and a lot of personal commitment from seniors, mini leaders and many old hands from the youth work, we experienced an enriching, successful togetherness of old and young.

At last it is time again

We held our first "own" Kids Days in 2008. Overjoyed, a little tired and yet already with new ideas in mind, we looked back on "Go West". We were happy that many people from the community could be involved in this project of children's work

"Let's go to Egypt" was the motto in 2009. 70 leaders and helpers from the FMG Thun-Steffisburg were looking forward to this week. Many of them had already invested a lot of time and heart and soul in the preparations. Without the great commitment of all these people, the Kids Days would never have come about

Once again, it was to be a project that took place on our own doorstep and was noticed by the public. Friends, colleagues as well as children from the surrounding area were given an insight into our Jungschar work.

In addition, we welcomed parents to the bistro and thus established relationships.

We had planned and prayed for 150 children. Over the course of the week, we saw 145 different faces. Most of them signed up in advance and were there every day. They stayed overnight at home, which was a great relief to many. About 70 kids came from our youth group, about 55 friends and colleagues probably had no church background and the rest of the kids came from other churches in the area.

Young Seniors and Seniors

Last year we had twelve older ladies and gentlemen between the ages of 58 and 83 as workshop leaders. These individuals were always on duty in the afternoon guiding the children in hammering, sawing and other hands-on activities.

Seniors are top

The images that presented themselves during the week are unforgettable to me. A grandfather and his granddaughters were building a board wall. A gentleman in his 80s brought his tool kit to the construction site on his bicycle trailer. Full of zest for action, laths and boards were prepared so that the children, according to their age, could get to work. Cables were laid and jigsaws rattled away. With temperatures of 30°C in some places, even the seniors sweated profusely in the summer heat. After the work was done, they sat at the "regulars' table" and treated themselves to a cool beer.

In the community, these experiences were a topic of conversation among the seniors for a long time to come. Through the intergenerational togetherness, completely new relationships were formed between the children, the mini leaders and our old men, as they like to call themselves. For our community these moments were and are something very precious. Where else do such contacts take place in today's society?

When it comes to craftsmanship, nobody could fool the seniors. At the sawing competition at the closing party, the oldest showed everyone the master. No one was as fast and used the saw to its full length as he was

Challenge Seniors

In addition to all these great moments, we also experienced challenges. For the seniors, everything had to be a little more precise than absolutely necessary. The few millimeters and the strict look at the spirit level would not have mattered. For the kids, this perfectionism sometimes understandably hit motivation.

Even during the preparations and during the week we tried to counteract this. But the success was modest. Among the children and the seniors, the wishes and demands for the little board house were far apart.

The children were very happy

During the stress of the week, this became a real test of endurance, which was only defused thanks to a lot of negotiating skills. Towards the end, things eased up. Joy in their own western city spread. Looking back, these tensions are almost forgotten. For sure, young and old learned a lot from each other, even if they polished each other.

The Second Try

This year we only had five seniors on the team. However, this had nothing to do with the aforementioned experience, but much more to do with the reduced building activity. In keeping with Egypt, we built an imposing pyramid. Here the kids sorted and glued thousands of tetra-packs together. For this diligence work we therefore needed fewer seniors.

For the Kids Days 2010 we would like to bring in more know how and senior power again.

Our conclusion

It remains important to inform the seniors very thoroughly and in time, so that they know what to expect. Because last-minute information and spontaneous, Jungschimässiges improvising do not suit them. We recommend making a prototype or something similar together with the seniors in advance. This way, it quickly becomes clear what it's all about and that even a slightly crooked hut will satisfy the children's demands for a long time.

Mini-leaders in Action

Our teens enjoyed home camp this week. Most of them were under 16 and serving as co-leaders of a small group. Each morning we trained these budding leaders in an entertaining, hands-on lesson. In the afternoon they put what they had learned into practice in the small groups and workshops. In consultation with the group leader, the teens took on small tasks in the group. Some of the 17-year-olds already led their own group with eight to ten children.

The afternoon was no bed of roses, but our mini leaders were fully on board and did an excellent job. It was brilliant to see so many former mini-leaders in action

In the evening, as a compensation and reward for the home campers, the extra sausages were on the program: trips to the swimming pool, enjoying the camp life and the community in the group, laughing, playing, hanging out until the main leader mouthed the unpleasant words: "It would soon be time for bed.

Young and elderly



Voices of Seniors

1. **How did you experience Kids Days?**

Max (67): I was surprised and delighted by the all-round commitment of the youth.

Hans (82): In part, the construction work on the pyramid was too challenging for the kids.

Beat (66): I experienced a general enthusiasm and motivated kids, leaders and seniors. By the way, visitors were also excited to see that there were old and young working together like that.

Walter (82): When in each case all the staff hammered, it was a fun listen. For my ears a perfect and spontaneous drum orchestra. There I grinned for myself.

2. **What was the best moment for you as a senior?**

Max: Collaborating with the kids.

Hans: A boy came up to me this year and asked, "Do you remember me?"

Beat: As the kids each ran to their assigned locations after the "theoretical" introduction. I saw each other being eagerly and enthusiastically helped so that the set goal was achieved.

Walter: There was a good camaraderie among the fourth generation men. We were able to do the heavy lifting for the half-growns. But even so, the children were able to do their share. One boy in particular, who was assigned to me as a mini-leader, I grew fond of. He was skilled and learned quickly.

3. **Where were the challenges?**

Max: Prepare - demonstrate - be a role model.

Hans: When cleaning up, the kids would disappear all of a sudden if we didn't stop them in time.

Beat: They lay in the fact that everyone pitched in, even when not everything was always processed quite precisely.

Walter: The responsible leaders did not want to listen to our expert advice in advance.

Swinging together_YW

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- **Content and image:** Forum Child Issue 1/10, pages 26 + 27. A week of children receiving the help of several senior citizens in building their hut or a pyramid. © Copyright www.forum-kind.ch
- **Author:** Curdin Strasser

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