



Would you like to volunteer to help us change the world?

You can contribute to this work by:

- directly participating in our projects as a part-time volunteer;
- donating needed materials or funds;
- supporting us through your prayers;
- advertising our products, shows or seminars to your friends and associates.

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Per un mondo migliore
Newslettero N. 49

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No. 49

Dear friends,

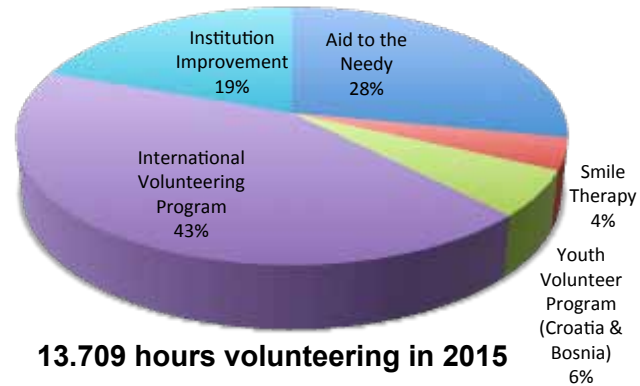
This year marks the 20th anniversary of our association! This has all been possible due to the contribution of thousands of good-hearted people who have dedicated their vacations, free time, years of their lives, resources, funds, andblood, sweat and tears to make this a reality!

The times have changed, and much of our communication is through the internet, but the first copies of our newsletters, which we have conserved in our archives, were simply run off on a gestetner machine. Then we photocopied them, and through time and necessity, we began to print, in first black and white, then colour. You can find these in the archives on our website.

As it would be impossible to innumerate it all here, by turning these pages you will have a small idea of the many projects we have accomplished over the past year.. Hopefully the photos will convey a small portion of the enthusiasm and joy which all involved have experienced -- not only those on the receiving end, but those that have volunteered to make it all possible. Naturally the best way to understand is through personal experience, either together with us, or in the situation you personally find yourself. As our motto says **"You can change your part of the world!"**

So let's celebrate together not only the accomplishments of the past 20 years, but those to come!

Anna, Michael and volunteers from Per un Mondo Migliore



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.." **Margaret Mead**

Kg. distributed: 6.314
People helped: 1.669
Visits: 199
Volunteers: 357
Hours: 3.848

Aid to the Needy



After 10 years of darkness (due to sickness) it's wonderful to wake again and start a new adventure! I accompanied Paolo twice to visit the poor and lonely in the Karlovac area and I discovered that I personally enjoy making others happy. I met senior citizens who were lonely and in poor health, particularly one family who live in worse conditions than my family. We are both war refugees who lost all and had to start anew from zero.

Thank you Paolo, Irene, Anna and Elena who made it possible for me to volunteer with you.

Ivan

(Ivan comes from a poor single-parent family we help regularly.)



Colouring the World

During 2015 we painted 30 murals in Italy, Croatia and Bosnia, comprising a total of 50 days of intense work. The result was an explosion of colour and warmth, due to the efforts of more than 300 volunteers who participated in the "Colouring the World" Project!

Also this year we were able to enhance a large number of schools, institutions, seniors' homes, hospitals and orphanages with vivid colours and designs.

The Italian School Project "*Murales della pace*" helped change 8 schools in the Verona area where we helped 1,150 children, together with 115 teachers and 14 volunteers brighten the ambience of their school.

A few comments: *"Today when I arrived at school, I was hit with a breath of fresh air. I now I feel*



Initiatives: 34
Institutions/Schools: 30
Volunteers: 390
Hours: 2.678



that my school is a happy place." (A student)

"Monday we painted a fantastic mural together with the volunteers of Per Un Mondo Migliore. The mural pictures the world within a heart, surrounded by children from every nation: a world full of generosity which says that if we find a person in trouble we need to help them even though they are different from us. In other words, the world should be a large loving family." (Giada)

This year the number of times that we have painted our "*Heart that Circles the Globe*" mural has reached a total of 52! Who would have thought that since that first mural was painted on a wall in Mostar in 1996, it would have travelled to so many places and countries!

Thanks to all of you who have given a hand with this project, which many times has been tiring, but it has been a great satisfaction for all who have participated.





Tony & Friends in “Change the World”

Our new show this year is taken from the story “The Man Who Planted Trees”: a true story about a very deserted and barren area in the south of France. A young man was traveling through the area which was void of trees, animals and full of abandoned houses.

He learned that there was still an old shepherd living there, who nightly would sort out nuts, and during the day while watching his flock of sheep would plant trees one by one. The man was astonished at his perseverance and wondered if the man would live to see his dream fulfilled.

Twenty years later he returned to the area only to find that it was covered with a forest of young trees! The animals had returned, and even the villagers had begun to fix up their houses and move back in.



Shows: 39
Clown Therapy: 22
Seminars: 2
Volunteers: 302
Audience: 4.058
Institutions: 55
Hours: 541

Much to his surprise, the old man, now in his seventies was still alive and continuing to plant trees, changing his part of the world!

So if sometimes we are discouraged with the world and the way it is, and wonder what we can do to change it, remember the story of that old shepherd who faithfully did his part day in and day out to change his part of the world.

And in his own words, *“Of course the world can be changed. Start today with yourself, your family, your neighbors. Change the world one heart at a time!”*

Smile Therapy



Youth Volunteering Program

The Flash Mob is one of the many events that occur throughout the year as part of Per Un Mondo Migliore's youth program. It's an activity in which young people are encouraged to let go of their insecurities and their pride to enjoy the moment. The dance is fairly simple, nothing fancy or elegant, but the point is for everyone to have fun and experience the incredible sensation of being part of a group of people working together towards a common goal. I believe it's a wonderful activity for people, especially youngsters, to forget about themselves in the act of bringing joy to others, often returning from the experience feeling happier and more fulfilled than the people they've reached.

Every Flash Mob we perform brings with it a message; this last one speaks out against the absolute unnecessary of war. More a play than a dance, it portrays soldiers who are marching off to war—one Flash Mob, we had two little girls playing the parts of soldiers, which is sadly a very realistic reflection of real-life situations. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the carefree

hippies start dancing in between the soldiers, pleading with them to lay down their arms and live in peace, which the soldiers eventually do, and the two groups dance together in harmony.

One time—it was the Flash Mob with the two little girls—the sound system gave out in the middle of the song. Instead of stopping, everyone continued dancing, taking over the singing in the process. After a few moments, the entire audience joined in, continuing the song until the very end. Moved by the experience, some young people who did the Flash Mob with us were inspired to do something similar in their own neighborhoods, bringing them one step closer to changing their parts of the world for the better.

Youth Volunteers: 315
Initiatives: 56
Other Events: 13
Hours: 6.642



Sport With a Heart



It started off as a hobby of one of our members, Paolo, but as often happens, it developed into something more....

From the first half-marathon in Rijeka with Rolly (a dear friend and neighbour who suffers from spinal dystrophy) in April 2014 it continued the following year with 6 of us: 3 wheelchairs pushed by 3 volunteers.

In November 2015 we ran the half-marathon in Verona with 4 wheelchairs pushed by 4 volunteers. In April 2016 we will once again run the Rijeka half-marathon, and we expect a larger group of participants.

Sport with a Heart doesn't include only running. We have taken Rolly several times up into the nearby mountains, carrying him in a special backpack. By the end of 2015 Rolly had "conquered" 5 peaks.

The end of June we plan to take him together with a dear friend, Andrea to a peak called Punta Almanca near Brescia, Italy

In June 6th, 2015 Rolly completed his first triathlon on the island of Rab. A big thanks to Benny (who swam with him), Chiara (bicycle) and finally Daniel who pushed him to finish the race. On the 9th of July 2016 we plan to take Rolly on his second triathlon.

A New Trail of peace and solidarity



During 2015 we were able to walk our "Solidarity Course 3 times.

- In April we went with a group of 6 from Italy we completed 215 kms of the course by mountain bike.
- In July we walked for 7 days in 4 people, a total of 150 kms from Karlovac to Bihač.
- In October we added another 70 kms to the trail by foot from Bihač to Martin Brod.

The trail is now finished, and soon you will find the GPS coordinates and various technical info on Internet. Whoever is interested will be able to download the details and follow the route. We highly recommend this experience, as you will be passing from Croatia to Bosnia, and given an opportunity to meet people from all 3 ethnic groups, Croats, Serbs and Muslims.

Please do contact us for any info or suggestions. If you'd like to come with a group or individually, we can arrange a guide.

PS: During our exploration in October, Toni (who we owe a lot to for the inspiration and footwork for this project), has come up with the idea to extend the trail from Martin Brod to Mostar, ending up at the "Stari Most." This would extend the walk by about 300 kms. For now it is still in the initial stage, but he tried it by driving his Panda and said it's an incredible trip.

Volunteer Center "Home"



Volunteer camps: 13
Other events: 4
Guests: 640



The Home continues to be a real "Home of hearts" as everyone that passes through our place adds another "brick" of love, friendship and camaraderie to this structure. In 2015 we housed 192 volunteers and welcomed in another 448 friends and visitors. Everyone's positive comments on their time spent here are a continual proof of how important our center is for others. We can only imagine how far-reaching are the echoes of the encouragement and benevolence people absorb here, as everyone carries it back to their homes and lives.

Here are just a few comments:

"Finally after 3 long years, I returned to your new center "Home." I am very happy that my girlfriend came and that you extended to her the same happiness and desire to help others. These few days will also enrich our life as a couple. Thank you!"

(Nicola)

"HOME... that's how we feel in this magical place. It is a home because it's made up of people, friends, of intertwined lives and stories lived by those who enter this HOME!"

Places are special because they're made up of special people. The seeds of your richness and love are planted within our hearts. God's blessing on you is reflected by the good you do for those you

help (not only materially).

This is what HOME means to us, and what you are to us!!

(Tiziana e Gianni)

"...Here we breathe a vision of the world and life that is contagious...and we need to breathe this vision! This is why I will continue to feel the need to meet you all."

(Ferruccio)

"Home is MY "home". Here I am able to recharge my batteries by immersing myself in the wonderful humanity that I meet. Every moment is special and always rich. Thank you for being a part of my life. Thanks to Jesus who made it possible for our paths to cross

(Serena)



News and Projects

*The Project "Murales della pace" will continue this year in 9 elementary schools in the Verona area. This has proven to be a great success, as it involves students, changes the look of the school, brings a message of peace and volunteering, and creates a bridge of solidarity with other needy schools.

* From March 25th till April the 1st, we will be busy with a Youth volunteer camp with 80 participants from various countries in Europe, some of whom came a few years back.

*From April 9th-16th, together with a group of young people and adults from the Trento area, we will travel to paint our peace mural "What Everybody Needs is Love" in Srebrenica, Bosnia, a city which still bears the wounds of one of the most tragic genocides since WWII.

*During the months of May and June we hope we hope to be able to extend our center another floor and 1/2 to be able to host the many people that come to stay with us during camps and throughout the year.

*On April 17th we will again participate in the half-marathon race in Rijeka with Rolly, his sister Ivona and other disabled friends. On the 28th and 29th of May we will participate in the "Ultrabalaton" race in

Hungary. 12 friends will take turns pushing Rolly for the full 200 kms...

Later will take Rolly and other disabled friends for an excursion in the mountains to Punta Almana near Brescia, Italy.

*July and August will, as every year, be full of volunteer camps: 2 international camps, a Family camp, and other camps with groups from Milano, Trento, Hungary and Bosnia.

*On occasion of our 20th year as an association, we are writing a book of our adventures and will hold a special "festa" in September for friends, and supporters. Don't forget to visit us in Piazza Brà in Verona for the now famous Festa del Volontariato.

* On the 9th of October we will participate in the March for peace from Perugia to Assisi, pushing Rolly and other disabled friends.

* We are in the process of fundraising to buy a new van for our association. Our dear Mercedes has almost arrived at the 500.000 km mark!

* Throughout the year, and particularly in December, we will be busy with our Tony and Friends show. If you would like to host a show in your school, institution or local theater, please do book in plenty of time.