



**PER UN MONDO MIGLIORE**

Change your world

Annual Report January 2021

An overview of our activities in 2020



## 2020: a TRULY UNFORGETTABLE Year

January

As every year, we held a week-long **winter camp** for volunteers from December 31, 2019, to January 6, 2020.

We spent the New Year's Day **visiting families** around Karlovac area, bringing them humanitarian aid packages and New Year's greetings.



*Children and moms preparing greeting cards*

The following two days, January 2 and 3, we painted several **murals** in the children's hospital in Kantrida (Rijeka) as part of a project called "Happy Walls". In these two days we painted the whole upper floor of the building.



*The team that painted a mural in children's hospital in Kantrida, Rijeka*

We were 23 volunteers plus many more joined us from Rijeka, altogether about 40 people.

The project continued during the second half of January when remaining two floors were painted to add color to the hospital. This time a group of about 30 volunteers came from the island of Krk and some 20 more from Rijeka. The walls got transformed into a colorful world of happy animals and cartoon characters to make children's stay in the hospital more cheerful. The doctors and personnel working there were very happy with the results.

Early morning on January 4, we travelled to Bihać, a town in western Bosnia where various refugee camps are situated. We brought games, blankets and other basic necessities to Borići, a camp for families with children, and to Bira, a former factory, which is a camp for about 2000 people (all men, of which about 500 are minors). In both places we also did a clown show and some music and dancing.





*A show for children in the refugee camp*

included: five meetings in the elementary school, each one 2 hours long with about 40 students in attendance, with whom we talked about volunteering, about how to change their part of the world, and about peace and solidarity. We also introduced and played the “Game of Hearts”.



*Meetings in the elementary school*

▶ During this month we also did four shows in kindergartens and one in Lopača, a psychiatric hospital on the outskirts of Rijeka.

▶ We spent the last week of January in Travagliato (BS), Italy, taking part in a project organized by the local church, which the priest, Don Davide, and Camilla, called **“Love Breaks Down Every Barrier”**.

The project



*Painting a mural with the local youth group in Italy*

Another activity was painting an outdoor mural on the wall by the playground of the youth parish house. Thankfully the weather was favorable to this project and we could work outside.

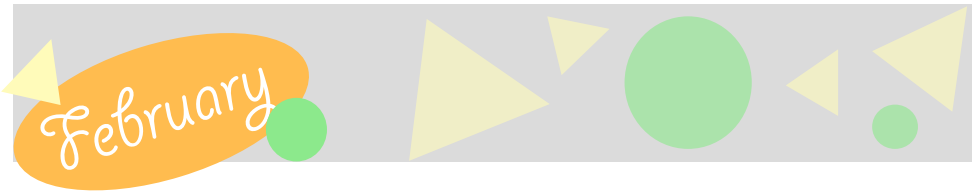
We also took part in three evening meetings, during one of them the young people told their impressions of their summer camp in Croatia.

One morning we visited a center for the disabled, called “Vomere” and improvised an animation with songs, and our legendary skit of the Good Samaritan. The actors were the beneficiaries of the center, and their version of the skit was one of the most original ones that we’ve ever seen!

*A show at the day center “Vomere”*







A team of seven **firefighters** came from Rovereto (TN), Italy to spend a weekend at our volunteer center. They arrived in two official vehicles filled with 700 kg of food and school supplies and they joined us in our activities with enthusiasm and generosity.



*Visiting needy families with the Italian firefighters*

We spent the last week of February with a group of volunteers in **Bihac**, Bosnia, in cooperation with an organization called IPSIA. In order to be able to fit in all that we wanted to do, we often had to divide in two to three groups. One group painted various **murals** in the Bira camp, helped by the young people residing there. Another group did a mural at the children's hospital. We also did **three shows**: one for children and their families in the Borići camp, another one for the families in the Sedra



*A mural at the Bira refugee camp*

camp, and yet another for 400 children in the cultural center for the 760th anniversary of the town of Bihac.

We also donated sleeping bags, socks and shoes to many migrants that didn't find place in the camps and had to find alternative places to stay in old abandoned buildings or factories.

it was an unforgettable experience for all the volunteers, and although at a distance, we kept having weekly meetings on Zoom with various individuals we met at the camp, and we sent donations to them and the volunteers working there.

*A show for children in Bihac, Bosnia*





## March

We managed to paint a **mural** in a kindergarten “Kvarner” in Rijeka, after which the Covid-19 era started, meaning most of our projects and activities were cancelled and we were under lockdown for about two months.

Mural in the kindergarten in Rijeka



At the same time, **Michael**, one of the founding members of the association, became unwell and soon was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor. The following three months, April, May and June we were busy taking care of his needs until mid June when he was transferred to a hospice in Verona, Italy. There he passed away on July 4.



During these months we kept in touch with various volunteers and supporters of the association **online**. We were giving a listening ear and a word of encouragement to people who called us, as many have been battling fear and loneliness - collateral effects of the Covid-19 restrictions.

## July

As the restrictions started easing up, we went back to Karlovac and Vojnić to **visit families** that we have been helping for years.

We had had 10 volunteer summer camps planned for this summer, but we managed to do only two. However, we did have a flow of **volunteers** and friends pass by our center, who came to help us during the summer months, to do whatever the restrictions would allow.





Distributing humanitarian aid, at grandma Anka



“Mini camp” Travagliato (BS), Italy



▶ From August 5 to 8, we held a **mini camp** for young people from the parish in Travagliato (BS), Italy supervised by Don Davide and Camilla. It was the second year in a row that they came, besides the activity in their place “Love breaks down every barrier” at the end of January.

▶ The following week we held the **Family Camp**, from August 10 to 16. Mothers and fathers with their children joined us in various volunteer activities, adjusted to their level: painting a mural, visiting and distributing humanitarian aid to the needy families, the Game of Hearts, as well as games and fun times together.



Family Camp

With other volunteers that managed to come during the rest of the summer we painted **murals** in two other schools in Rijeka.





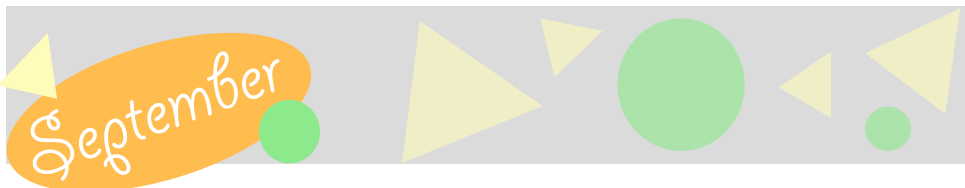
Murals and volunteers



Pizza Party



Three days with friends from Dom Turnić



- ▶ We closed the summer season with a **pizza party** to which we invited the beneficiaries of Dom Turnić, a Home for people with various degrees of mental problems in Rijeka.
- ▶ Following the party, we had 14 of our friends from Dom Turnić, supervised by Alenka and Andrej, join us for a three day **workshop**, during which they practiced their new “Kuc Kuc Kabaret”.
- ▶ On September 24 we returned to the **needy families** in the Vojnić area to visit them and bring them food aid packages.



Visiting Danica in Gejkovac, Croatia



October

▶ Since almost none of our local croatian friends was able to attend Michael's funeral in Verona, Italy, on July 8, we organized a **memorial** for him in our volunteer center "Home" in Veprinac, Croatia. On the 3rd of October we held a simple commemoration to remember his life.



*During the memorial*

November

▶ As in previous years, we joined in **local initiatives** of cleaning the neighborhood, this time focusing on cleaning and maintenance of local forest paths.



*Working together with Manuela*

▶ We also continued to distribute food to needy families, give support to the refugees, and provide encouragement via telephone calls and messages. We have been keeping in touch with other likeminded people via various weekly Zoom meetings.



*With Stipe, near Rijeka, Croatia*



# December

Thanks to the good weather, we managed to paint a mural in the kids playground in Veprinac, a place where our center is located. After three days of work, joined by various volunteers, we managed to transform a big wall from a plain cement grey to a joyful play of colors. We will continue with painting the remaining wall in the spring.



Working on the mural in Veprinac

The Christmas period had always been a very busy time for us, but this year we were not sure what the Covid-19 restrictions will allow. The idea was to put together a Christmas show and visit the many institutions and homes that Michael used to visit with his yearly performance. Unfortunately, this was not possible and so we decided to record a short video with a Christmas skit and greeting which we sent out to all.

During the month of December we continued to distribute aid packages to the needy families, and one of them even joined us for a Christmas lunch at our house. On the same day we also went to the center of Rijeka to distribute Christmas wishes and chocolates to lonely people and the homeless. The day after we went to sing Christmas carols to the beneficiaries of the Soup Kitchen in Rijeka.



At the soup kitchen

On December 29, an earthquake of 6.4 hit central Croatia, leaving thousands of people without a home, right during a cold spell of winter. The government eased up some of the travel restrictions in order to facilitate the rescue and humanitarian operations. This threw us, too, into a new humanitarian venture.

Thanks!

**Thank you for your help and friendship that make our projects possible! Together we are changing our part of the world!**

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