

Latest news from the Livslust-Dzivesprieks vocational school for orphaned and in other ways exposed youngsters in Latvia

Prepared for new challenges

Ten pupils have graduated this year. All of them have either a job, a trainee position or will go on with further studies thanks to scholarship grants. The possibility to apply for grants is of great value for the students. For the time being five students study with support from the **Oriflame** scholarship-fund. This year there is one more fund with means from **The Roger Laavola Memorial Fund**.



This year's graduates and their teachers.

Former students are doing well

More than 80% of the former Livslust-Dzivesprieks pupils lead a "normal" life providing for themselves, which is a very good result. It would not be realistic to expect all of them to succeed considering the bad start they have had in life. We would like for other schools to copy our concept, in order for more young people to receive the same good preparation for life as is given to the Dzivesprieks pupils. We do our best to spread information by newspaper articles, TV and radio. In addition the school arranges information seminars for directors of social welfare services, headmasters of school institutions and social workers with special responsibility for exposed children. Local government commissioners visited the school not long ago. They were very pleased and said that their municipalities will pay for the stay at the school for "their" students. April 25 was the annual "Open Door"-day when those who are interested of studying at Dzivesprieks have a chance to see the school and meet teachers and present pupils.

Some curiosity: A proof that Dzivesprieks is becoming well known in Latvia, is the fact that Dzivesprieks appeared on the Latvian version of the TV-show "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" One of the questions read: A Queen visited the Latvian vocational school Dzivesprieks – which one? Margrete, Silvia, Elisabeth or Beatrix? The contestant did not know the correct answer, but yet....

Demands promote development

The purpose of Dzivesprieks is to prepare the students so that they will be able to manage on their own in society. Except for demands of professional skills, in working life they will be expected to cooperate with their colleges, be punctual and to take responsibility. It seems that many young people of today don't understand what is waiting and they find it difficult to live up to even the most basic demands. At Dzivesprieks, we have created what we call the "step-by-step" system, with the purpose of teaching the pupils to be responsible and to establish good relations with other people. During their stay at the school the pupils are moved up along a scale with five steps. Three times a year, the pupils are valuated according to a list of criteria such as hygiene, tidiness, punctuality, how they handle the studies and how they relate to other students and grown-ups. There is also a time aspect, meaning that you can only reach the highest step during the last school year. The evaluation is done by the staff together with a representative of the students. For each step you move up you get more responsibility, more independence and your weekly allowance is increased. There is no automatic advancement, you have to fulfil the criteria.

In the film about Livslust-Dzivesprieks, former students tell that at first they were very sceptical and that it was hard to follow the rules and take responsibility. After leaving the school, however, they are grateful, as they have discovered that in working life they benefit from what they learnt in the process. *(The film, which is 10 minutes long, can be borrowed or bought from the Livslust office in Stockholm.)*



*The St. Laurenti award consists of a diploma and EURO 150. The awards this year were presented by **Kaj Bergström** to **Igors Katans** "Best Friend", **Baiba Belova** "Best Pupil Girl" and **Sergejs Katans** "Best Pupil Boy".*

Dzivesprieks substitutes family support

Dzivesprieks provides the support normally given by parents. Social pedagogue **Gita Priede** and her colleague **Juris Mazurs** continue their important work to stay in touch with former students. It is of great value to know how they are doing and to give advice and help if needed. A common problem is to

find a place for them to live and some stay for a period in one of the two flats rented by the school for this purpose. The youngsters pay the rent and manage on their own. In this way they get good training for independent life.

Nordic Week in Riga

April 30th was the start of a Nordic week in Riga. On the last day, nine restaurants introduced Nordic food at Berga Bazaars. One of them was our cooperation partner **Vairak Saules**. Kitchen pupils from Dzivesprieks helped to serve typical Swedish food in the form of meatballs with lingonberry jam, crispbread with egg and Kalles Kaviar and hot dogs. Among the many visitors was the ambassador for Sweden **Göran Håkansson**, who stayed for a while and had a nice talk with headmaster **Edijs Petersons** and the pupils. Taking part in this event gave us a good opportunity to inform about the school and our work.



Inga, Liva, Dainis and Sergejs served Swedish food at Berga Bazaars.

Sponsors with their families in Aizupe

Many guests came to take part in the annual sponsor event. This year it was on Saturday June 2nd. In addition to the traditional playful sports games, there were special games for the children and a creative workshop with pottery, painting, sewing and crochet work. The school's workshops took the opportunity to show their work and sell products. The film about Livslust-Dzivesprieks was shown. The guests were served a delicious dinner cooked by the kitchen pupils together with **Vairak Saules**. At the end of the day, the pupils gave a concert with song and music. Seven teams took part in the combined tournament of street-ball and darts. The winning team came from **Laikmeta Sports** with **Krasu Serviss Riga** and **Vanes pagasts** in second and third place. The other teams were from **AT Serviss**, **Krasu Serviss Liepaja**, **Lustigais Blumizers** and **Dzivesprieks**.

The prizes were donated by **Laikmeta Sports**, **Vairak Saules**, **Husqvarna**, **Oriflame** and **Dzivesprieks**.



*The smallest children also got a chance to try out pottery under the supervision of recreation leader **Juris Mazurs**.*

Interesting visit to Aizupe

*"We were 22 persons, who took the chance to experience Livslust-Dzivesprieks with our own eyes on the spot. After a little more than an hour on the bus from Riga, we were almost there. In the yard we were received by headmaster **Edijs Petersons**. A charming man, who in spite of his young age, has been involved from the start of the operation. The youngsters welcomed us with a song- and dance-show. It was the girls who performed, the boys were more shy and stayed in the background. We were touched by the commitment of the girls and by the director/music teacher. Afterwards the girls showed us their rooms, which were very clean and tidy – I'm sure it was not only due to our visit. The girls sought contact and were happy to tell us about what they do and their plans for the future. We know that they had a bad start in life and we got more and more impressed by the work done by the school. The boys were coming closer. It was easy to imagine what many of them might have been doing had they not come to Dzivesprieks.*

We spent the night at a local guesthouse and the following day the pupils showed us what they learn. We looked at the carpentry and the sewing workshop and the agriculture machines. We got the impression that small resources are well used. Of course it is important for the pupils that their products are sold – it means that you are contributing yourself. We waved "good bye" with a warm feeling and we were all thinking that the support given to Livslust is well used. On our way back to Riga, we visited the Dzirciems orphanage, which in different ways co-operates with Dzivesprieks. The children here are mentally disabled and several have a grave disorder. For many of the others it is hardly noticeably. For the students at Dzivesprieks the contact with the orphanage means an opportunity for them to help other young people, who also need support, but in another way. It is obvious that the authorities' resources for social aid are small. There is however plenty of human feeling from the staff.

Thank you very much for an interesting trip."

Peter von Löbbecke



*Waiter-training is new in the kitchen programme under the leadership of professionals from the Latvian restaurant-chain **Vairak Saules**.*

Micro loans - an opportunity for the pupils

In connection with his 50th birthday, the MD of Electrolux **Hans Stråberg** initiated a fund-raising in the benefit of Livslust. The result is a fund from which Livslust-Dzivesprieks pupils can apply for micro loans for needs after they have left the school. It could be for a driving licence or to start a business of their own. At a ceremony on May 28 Hans Stråberg handed over this gift to the chairman of Stiftelsen Livslust, **Eva Christensson**. Present were the ambassador for Latvia **Elita Kuzma** and representatives of the staff organisation "**Friends of Livslust**" at **Electrolux**.

Garden furniture from the carpentry

In May the first shipment of garden furniture was sent from Aizupe to Sweden. **Thomas** and **Cecilia Skróder** at the Skärva estate outside the town of Karlskrona, got the idea to produce a series of outdoor furniture for the Scandinavian market. The models are park- and garden furniture found in storehouses of Swedish castles and country estates. Thomas means that there is a real treasure hidden around the countryside and that many people would like to decorate their country houses with appropriate outdoor furniture, but they are simply not for sale anywhere. Thanks to a presentation made by the founder of Livslust **Kerstin Nordin** Thomas learnt about the school in Latvia and there the process started. In co-operation with the carpentry teacher of Dzivesprieks **Normunds Pilnieks** the first model was created under the name "Tromtö". *"It feels really good to be able to market both Livslust and old Swedish handicraft tradition at the same time,"* Thomas says.

Sales of Livslust-Dzivesprieks products

The sewing workshop has delivered several special orders of tailor-made products: Aprons and potholders for **Electrolux Home Products**, aprons for **Snickers Workwear**, blankets for **Oriflame**, aprons, potholders and oven-gloves for **Slottsboden**, lavender bags for the **Hallwyl Museum** and cat blankets for **Kattkoja.se** In Latvia, orders of aprons and museum slippers have been delivered. Spring markets and raffles have been held at **Electrolux** and **Vattenfall** in Sweden. We would like to thank our faithful volunteers **Christina Bonde**, **Birgitta Persson**, **Eva Martinsson**, **Anette Keiler-Arvedson** and **Eva Ribbing** for all their hard work to keep up the sales in Sweden.



The sewing teacher **Anta Birkensteina** sells products from the Dzivesprieks sewing workshop at an **Oriflame** conference in Jurmala.

New collaboration partners in Latvia

LMT - Latvian Mobile Telephone, **Nordea Latvia** and **Knauf**, a company producing building materials, have all chosen to support Livslust-Dzivesprieks through considerable donations. In addition, Knauf is donating building materials for the painting/building programme.

Changes in the Swedish and Latvian committees

Kerstin Nordin, the founder of **Stiftelsen Livslust** and chairman since 1994, has handed over the chairmanship to **Eva Christensson**, a member of the committee since 1995. Kerstin remains on the committee. **Laila Freivalds** has resigned. Laila has been a member since the start and thanks to her Latvian origin and many contacts she has meant a lot during the building up of the school. **Carl Johan Smith** is a new member of the committee.

Sarma Upesleja, has resigned from the chairmanship of the Latvian sister organisation **Asociacija Dzivesprieks** which she has held since the start in 1994. She will stay on the committee. New chairman is **Maria Cakste**, a young Swedish-Latvian economist. Together with her family she owns and runs the **Hotel Valdemars** in Riga. **Kerstin Nordin** has left her seat in the Latvian committee in favour of **Elisabeth Melin**. **Janis Strazdins** has resigned. New on the committee is **Kristans Gabalins**, who is part owner of the painting company **Krasu Serviss** and the restaurant chain **Vairak Saules**. The headmaster of the school, **Edijs Petersons**, has also been elected to the committee.

Livslust in Germany

Monica von Schierstädt, a Swedish lady living in Munich for many years, has founded the new organisation **Livslust-Lebensfreude** together with friends. The purpose of the organisation is to raise funds to the Dzivesprieks school in Latvia. They have printed an information brochure in German and there is a German version of the website on www.livslust.de The first donation from Germany was used to buy a professional sewing machine for the sewing workshop.

Golf for Livslust at Kungsängen GC

On Monday September 3, a charity golf competition will take place at the **Kungsängen Golf Club – Kings Court** outside Stockholm, a Scandinavian Masters court. There will be a gun-start for teams of four. The fee of SEK 950 gives free balls and clinic on the driving range before start, a start-kit, refreshments along the court and advice from the professionals of the club. Lunch is served after the golf. The sponsors of Livslust have donated the prizes.

The proceeds will go to **Livslust-Dzivesprieks**. For more information, please contact **Eva Martinsson** by e-mail eva@tima.name or the Livslust office by e-mail livslust@telia.com or telephone +46 8 6607784.

Miscellaneous

- The **Christmas** celebration went on for several days. First **Oriflame** arranged one of their popular "Beauty-days". Both boys and girls lined up to get their hair done and try different face treatments. The big surprise was that Oriflame's official face in Latvia the singer **Ladybird** turned up in Aizupe and spent the day with the youngsters. Everybody got a present-bag filled with hygiene and beauty products. The next day the pupils went to Riga for a **Christmas concert** at the Daile theatre. Two days before Christmas Eve the traditional **Christmas Party** took place with presents, games, music and lots of good food. **Handelsbankens Fadderbarnsfond** sent their usual Christmas gift and the staff at **Förenade Liv** sent clothes and presents from their annual collection for the Dzivesprieks pupils.

- A few days before Christmas matron **Mudite Neimane** and twelve of the pupils went to the orphanage **Dzirciems** for mentally handicapped children. They came to celebrate and to hand out presents. **Stig Edelman**, former MD of Electrolux in the Baltics, handed out toys from the “**Friends of Livslust**” at **Electrolux** to the children of Dzirciems. Thanks to financial support from **Axera**, the pupils of Dzivesprieks will be able to continue this mutually valuable aid activity for the children at Dzirciems.



Arturs Ulbiks a Dzivesprieks student hands over a Christmas gift to a boy at the Dzirciems orphanage.

- In January the pupils all went on an excursion to places with relation to Latvia's fights for freedom. The last one in 1991 and the one that took place during World War 1 and which led to a short period of independence. During World War 2 Latvia was then invaded by the Germans and after that the country was occupied by the Soviet Union.

- On one occasion a policeman from Tukums came to the school to talk about juvenile crime.

- **Eva Christensson** presented Livslust at an event arranged by **SWEA Marbella** in Spain. The money that was collected will be used to rent a swimming pool during the coming winter.

- Livslust received a generous donation from **Taxi Kurir** when **Christer Magnusson** was thanked for his services on the board of the company.

- In connection with the **SEB Christmas Concert** in the Jacobs Church in Stockholm the collection was donated to Livslust.

- Last winter the staff at **Vattenfall** collected lots of winter jackets, trousers and other items to the Livslust youngsters.

- In January **Amalia Lorenzo** and **Lovisa Melander**, pupils at the Viktor Rydberg Gymnasium, arranged a successful fund-raising event in the benefit of Livslust.

- We still have the privilege to borrow a room for the Livslust office in the head quarter building of **Länsförsäkringar** at Gärdet in Stockholm. We have just moved into a larger nice room with a more space.

- The **Annual Report** of the Livslust Foundation can be ordered at livslust@telia.com

- The website is displayed in four languages at www.livslust.com - Swedish, English, Latvian and German. **Philip Johannessen** at Studio CA, Stockholm, has constructed the website and provides technical support.

Thank you to all faithful supporters !

Different ways to give your support

A gift to Livslust-Dzivesprieks is a gift to exposed children in Latvia. You can be a **partner** with a long-term commitment, a **Livslust-Dzivesprieks-sponsor** and pay a monthly amount of your own choice or you can make a **singular donation** in connection with Christmas or birthdays. You can **host** a couple of our students in the summer. You can **buy products** made in our workshops. Contact us for more information at livslust@telia.com or +46 8 6607784.

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Collaboration Partners 2007

Electrolux, Essen, Knauf, KPMG, Krasu Serviss, LMT, Länsförsäkringar, Nordea Latvia, Oriflame Cosmetics, SAGA, Snickers Workwear, TeliaSonera, Vairak Saules, Vattenfall

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