

Winter Events In Iceland, Ireland, and Austria

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Iceland Christmas gifts for the Homeless in Reykjavik

The country of Iceland has a well developed social security system. Nobody should be homeless, never the less, some are. Because of this the Women's Federation for World Peace enlisted the 2nd generation children, to do special Christmas project for the homeless men and women in the downtown Reykjavik area of Iceland.

The project had 4 phases:

- An explanation of the of the homeless people's situation by Halldór Einarsson



- Making handmade Christmas greeting cards
- Cookie baking and decorating
- Delivering the cards and the bags of cookies

Halldór explained how people in Iceland become homeless. "There are 3 main reasons for this," "mental disorders, alcohol and drug abuse and sometimes a combination of these." Reflections were given on the situation of each of these groups and how it impacted on their families and friends and what was being done to help.

In an interview with Halldór after the talk he explained, "We talked about why people start using drugs, what happens to those individuals, how their families suffer and how it is usually their families that suffer the most.

"Our conclusion was that nobody wants to be homeless or left alone, especially around Christmas when others were celebrating the holidays with their loved ones. The Christmas season is the time that most suicides take place so our letting these people know that someone cares can be very meaningful for them," he explained. "The children all listened very well and had something to think about."

The cookie bags and cards were brought to two homeless centers for both men and women. This center is run by the Salvation Army. Rannva, the woman running this center wrote the names of each person

receiving the gift on the envelope and placed them under the Christmas tree. In this particular center men and women can get a ride from downtown Reykjavík here where the clients can shower, eat a warm meal and socialize. There are plenty of books to read, movies to watch and people to talk to. There is even a pool table for those who care to indulge.

Some of the people working at the center are strictly volunteers and amongst them some are highly trained. As Rannva explained, all of the workers receive special training and all of them have to demonstrate love and respect for the homeless people regardless of their condition. We hope that the message of Christmas and the love of the children will fill the hearts of all the homeless people who receive them.



Organized by Lenka, Thormar and Traudel

Ireland An Art of Sound in Time

From years of observation and participation, I can confidently say that our small Irish community is a miscellaneous bunch, to say the least. With such beautiful diversity within one small community, a universal language is sometimes needed. Undeniably, music has that immense ability to be all-embracing and all-inclusive. Our musical sister, Elinora, understood this well and began organizing professional musical evenings a few months back. With the focus on allowing the young children to present their personal, musical repertoire and to gain confidence in their performing abilities. Quite impressively, almost every youth in the community has music running through their veins, whether it be expressed through an instrument or through their voice.

The first musical evening, was hugely successful and was received very well from the parents and the rest of the community. And so, with everyone eager for the second installment, preparations began to take place. On the 18th of December 2010 the HARPies were back with even more gusto. Ready to show off their musical prowess, they took to the stage with confidence. The night was filled with charismatic and enchanting performances, and finished off with a group performance that really created the magical atmosphere. Thank the Lord for sweet, sweet music.



Austria Intergenerational Meetings

The "Intergenerational Meetings" is a series of get-togethers with the aim of bringing together Unification Church members of different generations. Wherever you go in the world, you can find clash of generations. The differences between the young and the old don't need to be an obstacle though, but are a part of "three generations living in harmony". So the idea was to create a bridge of communication that all of us can benefit from.

The meetings are planned to take place every two months and have previously decided themes. The location can vary, but most of them have been at the Youth Center or the Church HQ.

Some themes that we had so far:



- "Sushi-night" - competition in creating a miniature of famous buildings of the world from sushi/maki
- "Fitness of the back" - doing exercises together which can prevent backpain
- "Prayermarch" - a longer walk through nature, to the top of the mountain.
- "Christmas" - baking cookies and handicraft of christmas-decoration

Short description of the "Christmas" - meeting, which took place Dec. 11th 2010 at the Youth Center:

Everyone met at 15:00 at the Youth Center and was welcomed by some previously baked cookies. The meeting took place in three different rooms, as there were three different stations: cookie baking, handicraft and making cold cookies.

So the group divided into three subgroups, which then rotated from station to station. It was an open end timewise, so people were able to take their time, talk with each other, and relax. The cookies which were made there as well as the decoration (Christmas-stars/-ornaments) were then used a week later at the big Hee Won Hwe Christmas celebration at the Church HQ.



by Paul, Halldór, Joy, Ewald