

nehemia

nehemia NEWS gives a brief update on recent developments in the regional and international projects of the *nehemia team* and the *nehemiah international network*. We are grateful to all individuals - staff and friends - for their ongoing practical and financial commitment to partner with us in helping others grow.

NEWS 2017
NOV

THE NEHEMIA TEAM, 30 YEARS STRONG OR: WHY JESUS NEEDS YOUR FISH ...

It really is true: the *nehemia team* has been around for thirty years now.

If you've been sharing our journey from early on and still can't believe that number, just take a look in the mirror! Time hasn't stood still at all. It's been 30 intense years full of challenges, adventures and encounters.

At special times like this, it's tempting to shine and showcase all the best successes and accomplishments – and there would be a lot to show; all the projects, trainings, „Celebrations of God's Glory“, camps, concerts, retreats and more.

For me though, it isn't the great projects and events that come to mind first when I look back over these thirty years in gratitude. Above all, it's the encounters with all different kinds of people – in our metropolitan area and in the more than 50 countries on this earth.

Perhaps these lines bring to mind some encounter you've had with the *nehemia team* or one of its members: I hope you had an encounter that left you encouraged and inspired, not disappointed.

Let's share these memories with one another:

New things often spring forth from the fertile ground of grateful remembrance where we cherish the old and the bygone!

THANKS!

I'd like to take this opportunity to send out a great big Thank You and "God bless" to all our friends and fellow travellers, supporters and co-workers.

Thanks also to our more critical companions who were always there challenging us to question our actions, seek out new paths, expand our vision and stretch our limits.

Some of those fellow travellers are no longer among us. Especially John

MacFarlane, a co-founder of the *nehemia team*, deserves a special mention. The mark he made was deep and good.

And above all, a special thanks goes to Jesus, who continues to inspire, motivate, and empower us to love the people of this earth.

A STORY TO GUIDE US

Over all of these years, a story from the New Testament has held special meaning to us. It's the story of the feeding of the 5000 (Mt. 14:13-21).

Vor dreißig Jahren ...



Like the disciples in those days, we are constantly confronted with challenges that are way too big for us and sometimes seem downright impossible. We wonder, "Why should I bother if it's just not enough to begin with?" or „I'm one drop in the bucket; how should I be able to change the world?"

This world's lesser and greater needs seem so pressing, constantly reminding us of our weakness.

WILL I STILL ACCEPT A CHALLENGE?

"You feed them!" This the seemingly impossible challenge Jesus gave his disciples. It seems just as impossible, even senseless today when Jesus challenges us not to turn our backs on the needs of the people in this world, but to face them instead.

Facing, or encountering something normally starts there where I no longer look the other way, but allow myself to feel others' pain.

WE'VE GOTTEN USED TO IT....

So many people have simply grown accustomed to human suffering. News from around the world doesn't move us anymore. War, terror, hunger, catastrophes, violence, abuse, plundering, slavery, child mortality, and waves of refugees have become just another news item to us. They scarcely touch us unless they threaten our own financial comfort and convenience. We withdraw into our comfort zones.

Oh, we might fret over some countries that are building walls and fences, but we aren't likely to notice how we've already built walls of the heart to protect and encapsulate us from the needs of this world. Many avoid meeting refugees, inviting the poor, speaking with lonely neighbours, and spending time with the ill and the dying.

Thus, we are in danger of sinking further into our resignation and weakness rather than bravely speaking out against injustice and violence and sharing our gifts, skills and resources to benefit those in need.

FEELING TOUCHED IS NOT ENOUGH

When something touches our emotions, it can either paralyze or move us to act. As with his disciples back then, Jesus challenges us today to "see what you can give them". I'm convinced that anyone who looks will find a few "old loaves" and some fish, such as time, love, ideas, abilities, compassion, interest, money, empathy..... Am I ready to offer Jesus the little I have, even if it doesn't seem like enough? Wherever the *nehemia team* was willing to take this step, we've experienced how the little was multiplied, and through all those years up to the present we've seen again and again how literally thousands of people have been "fed" through our efforts.

TAKING THE FIRST STEP, OVER AND OVER AGAIN

What happens when we give Jesus what "little" we have? He accepts it gratefully, then sends us out with it to the world's "hungry" and "lost." He sends us to people who are lost in the anonymity of our cities, forgotten, hurt, abused, disappointed. Most often, it's young people the *nehemia team* works with, and have the privilege of helping them to find a new perspective on life. We still like to call them "God's VIPs," because to God they are important and are not forgotten. Whenever our hands come up empty again, we can go back to Jesus for more, and are once again astonished at how our little offering is multiplied.

WE'RE SURROUNDED BY HUNGRY PEOPLE

Some people are literally hungry and thirsty because they live in an area of drought, or there simply isn't enough food. Others are hungry to learn, be loved, experience affection, be valued and accepted, treated with respect and dignity.

And TOGETHER, we can help meet these needs. I especially appreciate the TOGETHER part of the *nehemia team*. Older and younger, with different gifts and from different cultures, with mutual respect, together on one team we can do so much more than any of us could achieve on their own.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

As a team, *nehemia* is stepping into the next leg of the journey. We're grateful for the past 30 years full of life, but aren't satisfied with just looking back. We expect many, especially young people to join us with their new ideas and efforts to help meet the hunger in this world. Young people who aren't content to live and believe just for their own sakes, but rather offer their "bread and fish" gladly in hopes of changing the world.

If you're convinced that your life is meant for more than just withdrawing and living for yourself with your head in the sand, we'd be glad for you to join us. We're looking forward to a new generation of "*nehemias*" who want to enhance our team with their ideas, talents and efforts.

NOT EMPTY POCKETS, BUT TWELVE BASKETS SPILLING OVER

One goody is left for the end of this story. Jesus didn't overlook his disciples, who were also hungry and had given what little they had. Each of them got his basket back, spilling over. Is that a return on investment, or what!? If I don't keep my gifts and talents, my love, time and money all for myself, but share them with the needy in my neighbourhood and around the world, I won't come up short. This is a mystery that the *nehemia team* has been partaking of for 30 years. And that makes us hungry for more!!!

Hans Heidelbergger (nehemia team)



New Nehemia Staff Introduce Themselves

Hello there! My name is **Miriam Becker**.

I'm 25 years old and have been happily married for a year now. Ever since I was little, my faith in Jesus meant a lot to me. After I graduated from school, I spent several years working for an international Christian organization, first as a student and later as staff.

In the course of my studies of „Dual Childhood Education and Upbringing“, I am now doing an internship with the *nehemia team's* „GoTeens“ for special group exercises. I am super excited to support the teenagers and hope to learn a lot from the *nehemia team*. The opportunity to combine my studies with my faith is a big privilege for me.



Hello! My name is **Florentina Kuhs**, you can call me Flori.

I am a media designer and originally come from a tiny village in Franconia where there are more cows than people and way more trees than phone connections. One thing you really learn to appreciate when you grow up in the middle of the endless woods are stories and tales – and the people telling them.

Up to this day, people and stories are my passion and I have the vision to pass on those amazing stories God is writing with us. My main job in the *nehemia team* is public relations and I am excited to use this opportunity to tell the world about the team's unique adventures around the world!

My name is **Maren Zielke** and I am from Bad Hersfeld in Hessen. After I graduated from university with a degree in special needs education in Würzburg, I lived in Peru for 1,5 years to teach children from missionary families. After that I worked for another 1,5 years in an institution for youth welfare (in-house residential groups for children and teenagers displaying behavioural problems) and for over 6 years in a Christian youth community.

After a time of orientation and working at a house for sabbatical breaks, I moved to Nürnberg in March 2017. Here I work as a school assistant and I am looking forward to supporting the *nehemia team's* „Exploring Life community“. I love supporting and encouraging young people on their way through life. Community is very important to me.



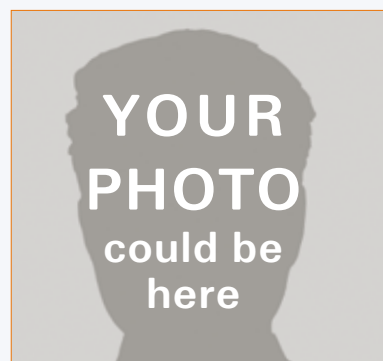
My name is **Ingrid Edelhäuser**, I am from Rothenburg/odT and I am a nurse and speech therapist. I have worked for an international Christian aid organisation in the Balkans and am now taking root again in Germany. The many precious experiences and encounters I've had still move my heart towards our fellow citizens from different cultures and religions. That's why I see the current „refugee crisis“, as an opportunity to share the love of Jesus with the migrants and to support them.

I got to know the *nehemia team* through their newsletters and last summer I met them personally for the first time. The vision and work style appealed to me and now I am excited to join hands and meet many new people!

The *nehemia team* Is Looking for Volunteers

- **Kontakt Café** (passion to work with people from different cultures)
- **Coordinating and dispatching the *nehemia NEWS*** (once a year, for people who enjoy organising)
- **Technical support of the *nehemia Website*** (Experience with Wordpress)
- **Editing *nehemia publications*** (NEWS and newsletters, good knowledge of orthography)
- **Translations** (translation of Website- und NEWS-articles into English)
- **Funding proposals** (good articulation and attention to detail)
- ***nehemia ambassadors*** (introducing the projects of the *nehemia team* to your community)
- **Pioneers with creative ideas** for new projects nationally and internationally (pioneer spirit, teamwork)

Interested? Contact us - we're looking forward to get to know you!





A New Start for Exploring Life's Living Community

Nuremberg/Germany: With a wonderful new team, consisting of four young adults, ages 20-24, a new season has begun for Exploring Life's living community. Since October 2017, the students with various courses of studies (civil engineering, applied chemistry, interior design and social work) have been living together.

Besides sharing an apartment, the residents desire to have fellowship, support one another and advance their perspective on their own lives. For this cause, the students can rely on experienced *nehemia* team staff members who func-



tions as coaches. Also the new group is excited to get to know our *nehemia* team staff and initiatives, volunteer with our

different departments, and perhaps even gain cross-cultural experience by visiting a project abroad. ■

Electricity for Burkina Faso

Fürth/Germany: Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries on earth. Only a small percentage of the population has access to electricity. Therefore, many people lack an essential requirement for independently improving their situation in life.

The German city of Herzogenaurach is organizing a sister city project that includes an international student exchange between France, Germany and Burkina Faso.

As part of this project, a team led by Thomas Tschaftary developed and built

a small, environmentally friendly and cost-efficient hybrid power plant, which will be set up in Burkina Faso in January 2018.

Combining a solar power system, a battery storage device and a diesel generator for phases of low sunlight, the device is able to supply a communal building with electricity for lighting, computers, etc. while being ecofriendly, reliable and weather independent.

Not only do mobile home batteries and LED-lamps make it possible to support small business projects, they also supply



up to twenty additional households with light and electricity needed for operating mobile phones. By setting up this simple and extremely low-cost system, we hope to improve the life situation of more than one hundred people and equip them with new development opportunities.

Our further goal is to set up such solar power systems in numerous locations around the globe. There is an immense need for such initiatives!

In order to make this possible, we need your help! –

For further information please write to thomas.tschaftary@nehemia-team.de ■

Event Day with 'GoKick' in Gostenhof

Nuremberg/Germany: Every week the cross-cultural kids club 'GoKick' takes place in a Gostenhof, an inner-city suburb of Nuremberg. Exciting games, songs and a meaningful message make up an entertaining program for the ten to thirty kids, ages 5-12, that attend 'GoKick'.

The suburb is characterized by poverty, a high percentage of foreigners, low educational achievement, a high unemployment rate, as well as people struggling to accustom to the German culture and learn the German language. Our staff members invest a lot of time and energy in order to offer kids and their families a new perspective on their – otherwise often somber – everyday life.

As part of their studies four prospective social workers were able to set up an event day with 'GoKick'. For the kids as well as the staff this was a welcome change to the

routine weekly meetings. The highly motivated children and workers created nature pictures made of materials they had previously collected themselves. This wonderful

day ended with stick bread over an open fire – a highlight for the kids. A rewarding and enriching day – for the children as well as the staff!



Seminar: Becoming Qualified as a Bridgebuilder between Cultures

Nürnberg/ Germany: On the 15th and 16th September 2017 twenty-nine participants from Germany, Ukraine, Turkey, Syria and Burkina Faso met in the YMCA facilities in Nuremberg for a seminar.

These people are actively involved as full-time workers or volunteers working with migrants and refugees. The seminar material was designed to assist them in their cafés for asylum seekers, support groups for mothers and children, in schools and in government agencies. The program content was conceived, illustrated and compiled by workers from the *nehemia* team.

This project was supported by the City of Nuremberg and „Aktion Mensch“.

The theme of the seminar was "Developing mutual understanding between people from different cultures." Inter-cultural misunderstandings are commonplace whenever differing cultures interact, especially in communication. Here is a typical, everyday situation: A foreigner on the street asks you the way to the railway station, but you don't know. What do you say?

"Sorry, I don't know. I don't come from here."

"Wait a minute, I'll check on my phone with google-maps."

"Over there, the street on the left, (even though you have no idea, you think it would be unfriendly not to answer and embarrassing not to know.)"

"Come on, let's ask someone else."

The answers differ, depending on the culture you are from.

We dealt with basic topics covering culture, doing or saying inappropriate things and understanding one another, through clear and straightforward presentations and interaction in the whole group, role-plays and in smaller groups.

Here are some of the main points:

- What is culture?
- Recognising and understanding one's own culture, ideas and values
- How can we explain cultural differences to migrants in a simple, practical way?
- How do Germans or migrants think?
- Direct and indirect communication and resolving conflict
- Hospitality and good manners
- Equality and status of men and women

For people living in the Nuremberg area, we offer regular training meetings and the opportunity to be involved in the work of the *nehemia* "Bridge-building Team."

Interkulturelles Seminar für Mitarbeiter in der Integrationsarbeit und für Geflüchtete		
Qualifizierung zum „Kulturverbinder und Brückenbauer“		
Freitag, 16:30 – 21:30 Uhr + Samstag, 9 – 17 Uhr		45 €
<p>1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persönliche interkulturelle Kompetenz • für private, berufliche, ehrenamtliche Kontakte • Verstehen, wie Migranten denken • Verstehen, die die Deutschen denken 	<p>2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutzungsvereinbarung für Nehemia-Kultur-Material • weitere Schulungen • Mitarbeit im Nehemia: "Kulturverbinder und Brückenbauer"-Team • Mit Nehemia-Brücken-Team Kultur-Schulungen halten: • Honorar-Vertrag • Termine nach Vereinbarung • 40 – 60 Minuten • in Asyl-Cafés, Wohngruppen, Gemeinschaftsunterkünften,.... 	<p>3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutzungsvereinbarung für Nehemia-Kultur-Material • 25 € Material-Beitrag • Selbstständig Kultur-Schulungen halten • in eigenen Einrichtungen

Five Things I Have Learned from Refugees:

A glimpse into living with friends from other cultures (by Elke Feld)

I have been involved for two and a half years with my husband and a wonderful group of workers in the Kontaktcafé of the *nehemia* team.

We meet every Thursday at 4.30 pm, offering a place where Germans and asylum-seekers can get to know each other through conversation, tea, German conversational practice and a 'discovering faith' course. This has brought me into closer contact with refugees and has enriched my life tremendously. My husband and I have gained many new friends through this and we've learned much. Here are some brief insights.

Hospitality and Mutual Esteem

We've been invited to visit Abu and Um D. Their table is laden with many dishes, intended to spoil us with Arabic delicacies. We eat until we almost burst. As we leave, we receive yet more wonderful things wrapped up to take home. Even though they have very little, they give generously to us. I realise, as they do so, that their hospitality is an expression of their esteem for us. Esteem is good for body and soul. They want to honour us in this way; that's the reason for the excess. I think about how I sometimes serve guests at home and leave, satisfied in one way, yet thoughtful and a little ashamed.

Faith is a matter of the heart, not outward form

One evening, with Iranian friends, who are interested in the Christian faith, we were sitting, eating quiche together. A. said that she didn't put ham in it, because Muslims don't eat pork. M., who very recently has become a Christian, says in broken German,

"But why not? I've come to understand that what we eat is no sin, only that which is within our hearts can be sin. Since then I eat everything."

Relationships are more important than work or pleasures

"To help a friend is more important than my personal plans."

Many of our refugee friends live by this principle. We Germans are excellent planners and organisers, but it is difficult for us to put ourselves out if someone needs help at short notice:

It's August, in the middle of the summer holidays and we are looking for help to shift house. Most of our German friends are either on holiday or at a wedding or exhausted from their strenuous daily life – we understand. What should we do? Hire a removal company? I phone A. our

Syrian friend to ask if he can help.

I'll never forget his answer, "We're ready!" Not only does he offer his own help, he organises other people he knows, who turn up on the day to lug around boxes and furniture on a brutally hot day. I can rely on my Syrian friends!

It is important to live your faith

There was a knock on our front door. A Kurdish friend, who is very close to us, had a couple of questions. He wanted to know what to say to his friend, a Muslim who wants to become a Christian. Is it okay for him to do so? What should he do? What religious rules should he keep? How should he pray? We tried to explain some of this. Then he burst out, saying that he himself was the one who wanted to do this, to become a follower of Jesus.

"I've been watching you for two years and I've seen many things in your lives that have spoken to me. The way you live is real. You care for me and my relatives. I see so much hypocrisy in Islam." (These were his approximate words.)

We were amazed, hugged him and prayed together at our kitchen table.

You can always fit another person in a small apartment

A Syrian married couple, who came regularly to the Kontaktcafé, live in Nuremberg with three children in an apartment with three and a half rooms. A little bit cramped, but they were able to put up with it.

The husband, A. is the eldest in his extended family and has other relatives in Germany. Soon after being accepted as asylum-seekers, his sister and brother moved into the house with their families. There are now 14 people there. In spite of the cramped conditions and because they can't find other accommodation, they do this so that the family can remain together.

Responding to questions about the lack of privacy, he answered, *"It is not a question whether our family will help. I am the oldest in the family and I have responsibility for my brother and sister."* ■





A New Challenge for the Home of Blessing

ChiangKham/Thailand: The *Girls Care Project* – aka „Home of Blessing“ (HOB) – supports girls from seven hill tribes by providing them with accommodation and practical life skills, whilst they pursue their schooling. The aim is to stop vulnerable girls being led into forced prostitution and break the cycle of poverty and hopelessness in their lives.

During the last 25 years, more than 500 girls have successfully graduated from high school following their time in the *Home of Blessing*. Many of these girls have gone on to university and further study, becoming nurses, teachers, homemakers and so much else. Many have been able to get good jobs and occupations as result of the solid foundation in life that was laid in *HOB*. Because they can earn a better living than might otherwise have been possible, they are able to support often very poor families back in their home towns and villages.

Currently 81 girls live at the *HOB*, ranging in age from 7 to 18. Most of these girls are from ‘broken’ families, where their parents are no longer together, one or both parents are in prison because of drug-related activity or because they have been orphaned. These kinds of challenges are increasing and we are finding a growing number of girls needing help every year.

In addition to being enabled to complete high school, the girls benefit from planting rice, raising chickens, pigs and fish as well as growing a vegetable garden to help provide for themselves. Though the quantity of what they produce doesn’t meet the needs of feeding and providing for 81 girls year-round(!), it is a real help and teaches them farming and animal husbandry, traditional skills that are important for them to know.

Since the *HOB* started, the bottom floor of the main dorm is in use for cooking, eating and studying, all in the same space. All the while this has been a challenge with the girls often disturbed in their studies by the other things happening. To finally allow the girls to study in peace, a plan was worked out to build a designated new kitchen and dining room. This will also be a major help for the times when the *HOB* hosts youth camps and other large gatherings.

The total amount needed to build the new complex is approximately 66.000 EUR. Sayan and Siriporn Kusavadee and the girls of the HOB would very thankful for any support for that challenging project.





A Hot Summer in Uzhgorod

Uzhgorod/Ukraine: No, it wasn't just the high temperatures that brought the staff of the *Nehemiah Team Ukraine* out in a cold sweat. More than that, it was the events going on in and around the *Nehemia Center* in Uzhgorod. One of them involved the German *nehemia team* ...

Explorer Camps

Again, we welcomed more than 1.000 children to the weekly Explorer Camps of the *nehemia team* in Uzhgorod. This year the young Ukrainian staff took on even more responsibility with language classes, creativity, sports and spiritual input for the kids since the German volunteers could only help out, at the last camp this year. Most of the Ukrainian staff were former participants of the camps. It was encouraging to see their trust and drive to help others grow over the years. 50 of the participating children and teenagers were refugees of war from Eastern Ukraine who have settled down in Uzhgorod by now; also thanks to the help of the Ukrainian *nehemia team*. Since the war in the east is still going on, they are likely to stay long-term or even forever.

In addition to the Explorer Camps, there was also a team from a bible school under the leadership of Silas Kettner, that came to host a weeklong camp for teenagers from family communities for orphans. Besides lots of fun, activities and community, they also shared about the founda-

tions of Christian faith. The foster parents were very grateful for the opportunity and the teenagers are already waiting for round two.

Aid Shipments from Franconia

Several aid shipments from Franconia made their way to Ukraine again this summer. We are so grateful that Avid & Hanni Feldhoff of „Oase Hersbruck“ and Friedrich Dorsch of „Lasst uns gehen“ in Heiligenstatt and their staff make these shipments possible again and again. Thanks to them we were able to send things like school furniture, hospital equipment, wheel chairs, mattresses, toys and household supplies to Uzhgorod once more.

Many poor families, refugees of war, family community homes for orphans and disabled people and also a hospital in Velikiy Berezniy that hasn't received new equipment since 1970 benefitted from the shipments. We were also able to send a donated tent for the camps for children in the *Nehemia Center* to the Ukrainian team.

This is the impression one of our German drivers had when he visited the hospital: „It was devastating to see the conditions under which the patients are being treated and accommodated. The budget they have for medical care per patient is 1 EUR a day. A nurse makes about 100 Euro a month, a doctor 200. The building looks disgraceful, tiles fall off, the walls and ceilings crumble, and the windows are leaking. Beds and mattresses are ancient, dirty and worn-out, there are no wardrobes to store private items in the rooms, all the furniture is in bad condition as are the rooms for treatment and the equipment. They are lacking everything. These were the impressions we got before we headed back“.

The local offices helped a lot with the distribution. More deliveries of aid materials have been planned after all the Ukraine remains a war zone in Europe and still needs our support. According to locals, the situation won't improve much as long as the war is still going on since the majority of finances is still going towards the war zone in the east of the country.

Being torn between the world powers' appetite for power and the interests of the EU the country will only calm down slowly. As always, those suffering the most are the poorest members of the population.





Support like this will be necessary for a long time.

Much is happening – a big chance for the *nehemia* team in Uzhgorod to shape and change their country in a positive way.

Montessori Kindergarten

The Montessori Kindergarten in the *Nehemia Center* is bursting as its seams. Since this year, children of the age of two can participate. There are two groups by now: one for 2-3 year-olds and one for 4-6 year-olds. The staff are being trained regularly.

It is our goal to put up a new building on the premises of the *Nehemia Center* to start an elementary school for inclusive education. ■

Developing An Inclusive Primary School

Uzhgorod/Ukraine: The *nehemia* team is supporting the project of the Ukrainian *Nehemiah Team* to start an elementary school in Uzhgorod in 2018, which is based on Montessori pedagogy.

Target groups are especially children from marginal groups: Roma families, orphans, children with disabilities and behavioral problems and refugees from Eastern Ukraine.

In addition to this, the school will serve as a model enabling other private and public schools to teach inclusive and child oriented education. This way children who usually experience disadvantages or total

exclusion from the education system gain access to a proper elementary education, which will allow them to visit secondary schools.

Furthermore, their chances on the job market rise together with the possibility to make their own living.

Children, parents, teachers and the society as a whole, will be positively sensitized for diversion and prejudices will be reduced. To make the construction project happen, the German *nehemia* team has applied for financial support from the *German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation* for 2018. ■





INDONESIA

Visiting Churches

Ketungau Hulu/Indonesia: In the middle of June, Peter and Arna Mountain travelled with Daniel Tan from Kuching for a week to villages in the area of Ketungau Hulu in West Kalimantan.

In Bekuan Daniel and Peter met pastors from the area over two days to encourage and advise them. Afterwards they moved on to Muakan to hold a Family Seminar. Peter and Arna have led these in many places over the last few years, and the feedback has been very positive. ■



Training Centre in Melingkat

Melingkat/Indonesia: In March and October, Aran Tan, our very experienced instructor from Kuching, continued our training for kindergarten teachers in Melingkat. The experienced teachers in Melingkat have already taken responsibility for parts of the training. Because they have over 40 children, their 'model' kindergarten offers the trainees plenty of opportunity to experience "Montessori-Live" and to practice what they've learned.

Ibu Rahel, from Melingkat has become our official „Field Extension Officer“, as of the start of this year. She regularly visits the kindergartens we've established, to supervise and mentor them. A further,

big step towards integrating and giving responsibility to our Indonesian team. Ibu Rahel (usually with Ibu Luisa accompanying her) is a very good person for this role.

On the one hand, as local people, they are not intimidating, nor are they special foreign visitors, for whom the village people are ready to change all their normal activities, and on the other hand, Rahel and Luisa have become quite experienced in the last years, and have confidence to question and correct those they are mentoring. Last, but not least, both these ladies have a great sense of humour – a very useful quality if they need to travel through rain and mud for three hours! ■



Transport for Ibu Rahel's Work

Melingkat/Indonesia: Ibu Rahel and Ibu Luisa are not really afraid of rain or muddy roads when they visit the kindergartens, however, Ibu Luisa's own motorcycle is getting rather old and is held together somewhat by faith, hope and love.

Several times they've broken down on the road and have had to find somewhere to spend the night.

The *Nehemiah Team* wants to provide a new and reliable motorbike especially for Ibu Rahel's ministry.

The price for a suitable motor cycle is about 1500 euros. We would rejoice to receive any donations! ■



YMCA Leutershausen Journey Where the Pepper Grows

Kalimantan/Indonesia: In August a team of young people from the YMCA in Leutershausen (Heidi's home town) visited Borneo. Every one of them was involved last year helping with the charity bike race and wanted to get to know the place where Wolfgang and Heidi Oelschlegel and the *Nehemiah Team Borneo* are working.

Right on the day when the Indonesian Independence Celebrations began, Heidi and Wolfgang picked the team up from the airport in Kuching.

They spent the first week in Sanggau at the children's hostel which the Oelschlegels lead. They took part in vari-

ous games and competitions, as well as organising a "Fun and Games Olympics" for all the kids. They also participated in the worship services, with song presentations and testimonies.

At the end, they went to Melingkat for four days – a part of the donations from the Bike Races was contributed to the Model Kindergarten there. For the Germans, the four hour journey over the rock-strewn clay roads was a completely new experience; for Heidi and Wolfgang it was rather an improvement compared with previous years.

There was a wonderful welcome for the team when they got to Melingkat.

A loud murmur went through the church during the Sunday Service, when five young fellows, all over 180cm (5 foot eleven inches) tall, stood up in the first row for the opening prayer. They towered a head or two above all the Indonesians.

On the next day, there was a visit to the kindergarten with plenty of opportunity for practical involvement – the team gave the building a long-deserved coat of paint, inside and out.

When the folk from Leutershausen heartily devoured and obviously enjoyed the local speciality – turtle stew – their visit became unforgettable, both for the guests and for the hosts! ■





In Spite of Setbacks, We're Moving Forward!

Rajahmundry/India: The Children's Center, part of *Nehemiah Ministry Welfare*, is a place of hope. Carri MacFarlane and Tobias Daniel visited them in September and brought back many impressions.

Ebba Suffers a Stroke

Several months ago, the ministry suffered a heavy blow; Ebba, the project leader, had a severe stroke. She was partially paralysed on one side and could not speak. Her condition has improved in the meantime, she is now able to walk, although somewhat restricted.

Even though she understands everything



and despite intensive, daily therapy, she finds difficulty recalling words and is often able to communicate only with signs and gestures. She is able to sing, so Carri practiced simple words with melodies with her. The visit by "Mum Carri" (as Ebba and Raja call her) and Tobias was a great encouragement to these two Indian pioneers as they face this very challenging situation.

Starting A School

Despite this setback, there is no question for Ebba about giving up her vision for the school. She even went along on several journeys they had to make. There are a number of official authorisations that they still need for the school. The cost of getting these is not small. Since Raja avoids paying the usual bribes that smooth the

way, there are even further delays. They had planned the official opening of the school for 2017. Now the goal is the summer of 2018. Until the formalities are taken care of, the children continue to go to private or state schools.

The Children's Center

About 30 children are living in the Children's Center at the moment. Carri took some lessons on hygiene. Washing their hands and wearing shoes is an important topic because sicknesses caused by worms are very common. Thanks to donors from Nuremberg who gave "Money for New Shoes," Carri and Tobias, with about 30 broken off sticks of various lengths indicating the length of each child's feet, set off to buy new shoes – an unforgettable experience. Tobias spent a lot of time playing volleyball, football or UNO with the children. He won their hearts and some of them cried as they went home for the holidays. High on their 'wish-list' is a small playground. A suitable piece of land is needed for that.

Kindergarten

Because of Ebba's illness, the establishment of a Montessori kindergarten has slipped into the background in the last six months.

Carri is considering spending an extended time in India, over Christmas 2018, to help establish this. Raja was hesitant about the pro-



ject at first, but has become convinced about the advantages of the Montessori methods.

Their Small Agricultural Project

Over the last while their many fruit trees have grown well. Alongside the pumpkins, which are also doing excellently, they should be getting other vegetables as well. Moringa trees have been planted too; they are among the most nutritious plants on the earth.

Thanks

Finally, many heartfelt thanks to all those who have supported this project. Especially those who gave money for shoes, those who sponsor Dalit children and those who pray - and to Tobias and Carri (it was her 16th time visiting the Children's Center, and she is a great supporter of Raja and Ebba's work.) ■





Cinnamon Delights in Rural Miwani

Kisumu/Kenya: Who would have thought that the people of rural Miwani would one day struggle to choose between buying a loaf of bread and indulging in a cinnamon roll? „Don't get me wrong, there's no joy in watching the rural folks debate between the basic loaf and the tantalizing sweet indulgent cinnamon roll when holding 30 Kenyan Shillings in their hand, knowing very well that you can only buy one. But one thing's for sure though, watching them decide between the two affirms to me that fact that we did something right by bringing cinnamon rolls to the people of Miwani.“

Nehemiah International Miwani, with the help of the German chapter recently reopened their bakery with the idea of introducing freshly baked pastries to the local market. Being a first and only bakery in the area and the first bakery of its kind to operate using only a charcoal oven, and a first and only bakery to have started by producing pastries and as a start the Cinnamon Rolls, the future and success for this bakery is limitless.

You need to understand, that in rural Miwani, Bread is king when it comes to a daily staple with tea, almost at par with the tradition root vegetables that the locals farm and/ buy for cheap like sweet potatoes, groundnuts and arrow roots. Let's not forget the ever popular local alternative that is called "Mandazi" (which is basically a sweet deep fried donut) which is even cheaper than then options above. So coming in with what is considered a classic "modern" unknown pastry has paved the way for a need for the locals and Miwani environs to open their eyes to a possibility of new pastry delights.

The bakery is run and production is managed by Maureen Ndeda, who first started producing the cinnamon rolls at her house and hawking them in schools and the shops around Miwani. The idea for he was to be able to introduce freshly baked goods to a community that felt of out of reach with the "modern" life of the City. She wanted to bring a little of the city to the rural folks at a rate that they could afford. What better way to do this that to introduce them to food, and we all know that food is life, AND Cinnamon Rolls is definitely THE HEART! They are warm and yummy and make you feel good.



Among life simplest joys: is smelling freshly baked cinnamon rolls wafting through the simple and basic bakery at Nehemiah International and its corridors. "I always like to see people eating and indulging in it and I hope that one day the Cinnamon Roll becomes a staple here".

We have also had our downsides too and our biggest one was that it had been a challenge to get customers out to the farm on a regular. But we have resolved it by introducing TV entertainment shows at the hall right next to the bakery. This allows locals to come watch TV for their sports entertainment (the biggest being football), African movie watching and Local News. This has given our locals an even GREATER reason to come to the farm, buy our yummy cinnamon rolls and enjoy their favorite football matches.

"The nearest entertainment source was almost twenty kilometers away for most revelers, but once locals heard that we would be opening our doors to them beginning 20th September 2017, they began asking for our football schedule"

If it wasn't for the current political climate that has disrupted the almost normal business in the entire county, periodically grounded all business to a halt and delayed set up for the last 2 months, the bakery and the TV entertainment would be working seamlessly already. Being an election year, this is hopefully just a temporary set-back for the people of Miwani and the County as a whole.

"Once the dust settles, we expect the locals to get back in full swing indulging in our sweet cinnamon goodness while watching the latest in the Football Premier League matches". ■





PAKISTAN

A New School in Mehran Town

Karachi/Pakistan: At last we've come so far! Lots of children have been waiting for this moment. In part of Mehran Town, a suburb of Karachi, they are able to go to school.

Their part of the city is known for poverty. Many parents work as casual day-labourers or cleaning the streets. There is hardly any clean water and no sewerage or proper drainage. Especially for girls, it is almost impossible to go to school, in fact there is no state school here at all.

Muazzam John, the leader of the *Nehemiah Trust* Pakistan, knows about this first-hand. Because his father died prematurely, he would normally have had to leave school and work to help provide for the family. But because of a gift from someone, he was able to complete a computer course and that laid a foundation for a solid education later on.

Ever since that time Muazzam has a passionate desire to make it possible for young Pakistanis from poor backgrounds to get a good education. The Mehran Public School, as the new school is called, is the third school that he has built, with the help of his *Nehemiah Team*.

The *nehemia team* in Germany applied

for and received approval from the „Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit“ (the government agency for economic co-operation) for 75% of the funding to build and equip this school. The remaining 25% came from donations from *nehemia team* supporters..

There are almost 500 children in the two schools that the *Nehemiah Trust* previously established. They receive a free education.

Now they need equipment, educational materials, books, shoes and school uniforms for 100 children.

Since the school opened at the beginning of October they are already teaching 41 children. Others have applied and will begin in the next weeks. The goal is to provide elementary schooling for up to 300 boys and girls.

We have received a BIG THANK-YOU from Pakistan; from the children and parents, who didn't think it was possible that their children would ever go to school – and from Muazzam and the Pakistan team.

We gladly pass on their thanks to those who have made donations and to the BMZ (Government Agency) who have made this project possible.

A big Thank YOu also goes to those who contributed to the repairs and renovations of *Hope Grammar School* after the devastation caused by the recent Monsoon rains in September, providing new furniture and electrical equipment. Lessons have begun once more!





Siberian Help Center thriving

Prokopjewsk/Russia: When Klaus Buchner and Dr. Sabine Auerochs visited in the summer, they were impressed by the development and progress made in the *Help Center* project.

It was impossible not to see the steps that had been made in two years. A heating system and new windows have been installed in the dilapidated building. It was 'winter-proof,' so that the first residents could move in. In the meantime, more than 15 rooms have been renovated.

Seminars on Child Safety

Siberia/Russia: Peter and Arna Mountain, *Nehemiah* volunteers from New Zealand, visited several cities in Siberia this year.

Part of their activities were presenting practically-oriented seminars for parents and church workers on different kinds of abuse of children, how to recognise signs of abuse and things we can do to prevent it, or what to do if abuse has already occurred.

In addition, they held some presentations for children. The aim was to help them recognise inappropriate behaviour by adults or other children, how to avoid or respond to dangerous situations and setting boundaries for their own safety. ■

Such good progress has been made that 53 people now live there. Many of them have come out of major life-crises: homeless children, solo mothers, elderly and frail men and women, young people who are seeking to escape from a downward spiral of drug abuse ...

Perhaps most important of all, a small team of workers has been formed to receive these people with love and a commitment to them and who can offer them time, security, and practical help.

This multi-generational project is taking form and becoming an example of living together, through which everyone can be blessed through mutual giving and receiving. All the residents experience not only practical help, but spiritual support and love from other people.

Highlights this year were two weddings between residents. Only a short time ago they came seeking help, now, after successful therapy, they are establishing their own families. In the future, they plan to support the work as co-workers. One mother was able to get her child back from a children's home; now she is training to become a nurse.

Others were helped to obtain personal identification papers, residency permits, financial support for handicapped people or orthopaedic aids, such as special shoes or prostheses.

Thanks to financial support from the *nehemiah team* the renovation of the buildings can progress. Fire protection and a ventilation system were installed, a fence was built, the dining room renovated and some old beds replaced.

This project is still developing: There are plans to build more bedrooms, apartments for guests and workers, and to establish a large vegetable garden. These things offer work opportunities for the residents, as well as helping them to provide for themselves.

In addition, a medical examination room, a wheel-chair ramp and a large oven are needed. To generate income a wood-work shop or facility to produce animal fodder will be built. In other words, there is still a lot to do.

As soon as the guest accommodation is finished, volunteers from anywhere in the world, who want to contribute their skills for a limited time, will have a place to stay right at the Center. ■

