

# Working together for siblings



Foto: Fotolia/Sonja Fröhlich

Special issue for the 4th FamilyTies specialist conference

„Standardised variety“ and „a variety of standards“

**Over 100 participants found their way to the 4th FamilyTies specialist conference in Holzkirchen, Bavaria, in mid-July. Lectures and discussions centred on the question of how sustainable offers for accompanying siblings should be set up against the background of the first refinancing step by the statutory health insurers.**



From left to right: George Lankes, Dr Birgit Möller, Claudia Kleinert, Christina Leber, Andreas Podeswik and Florian Schepper

Standards or variety in accompanying siblings? Experts from the fields of medical science and practice discussed this question of a workable nationwide programme to support siblings on 10 and 11 July 2015. The 4th specialist conference of the FamilyTies Foundation was held at the Hexal site in Holzkirchen for the first time ever.

The patroness of this year’s conference was Ilse Aigner, Bavarian State Minister of Economic Affairs and Media, Energy and Technology.

Experts explained their respective approaches to working with siblings in lectures, workshops and an open forum.



Hexal boss Sandrine Piret-Gerard welcomed the delegates to the conference

They shone light on such topics as expanding offers for siblings, in particular how to arrange support for siblings now that the statutory health insurers are beginning to pay reimbursements.

Sibling and weather presenter Claudia Kleinert chaired the conference. Hexal boss Sandrine Piret-Gerard returned from her holiday a day early especially to welcome the guests to the specialist conference.



Don Meyer

**Internationalität**

Speaker Don Meyer, founder of the Sibling Support Projects (SSP), travelled especially from Seattle to talk about the structure and financing of the US American siblings offers. There are currently 475 Sibshops in eight countries gathered under the roof of SSP. They are largely financed by donations. Anybody wanting to place an offer under the Sibshop label must agree to the Sibshop Standards of Practice and attend a training session. ▶

**Editorial**

Dear friends of FamilyTies,

When we chose the title „Standards or Variety“ for our 2015 specialist conference, our primary aim was to show the many different possible approaches to working with siblings and to illustrate their respective special aspects. The number of offers has grown steeply since FamilyTies was established. Our online search engine started with 34 offers for siblings. Today, there are 262 - and still going strong. But a number of outstanding examples for accompanying siblings have been abandoned or severely cut back. Involvement, ideas and even resounding acclaim cannot guarantee that an offer will be continued. This has spurred us on to add sustainability to our agenda as well as setting up offers.

Another incentive is the request: „... more reports on siblings please“. This reached us via the feedback sheets that we handed out at our specialist conference. We see this exactly the same, and we’re very pleased that the reports on siblings and their special situation are really a highlight this year. From medical specialists’ titles to reports on the radio and TV to a lovely report in the BARMER GEK magazine for their clients.



**Adib Jacob**  
Chairman (acting) of the Novartis Foundation FamilyTies



**Irene von Drigalski**  
Managing Director Novartis Foundation FamilyTies

continuance Special issue for the 4th FamilyTies specialist conference



Walk to the evening programme



Evening programme ...



... at the Tegernsee

„Life discovered on Mars. Where are there more of us?“

Sascha Velten

► (For more information see: [www.siblingsupport.org](http://www.siblingsupport.org).) During his workshop he also presented the Facebook group „SibNet“, a platform on which adult siblings can exchange news and views.

Ursula Neuhaus from the Lower Saxony Siblings Network displayed more thinking outside the box by making material from the British organisation „sibs/uk – for brothers and sisters of disabled children and adults“ available in German. The network was awarded the FamilyTies promotional award for this (see page 3 of this issue).

### Adult siblings

Sascha Velten, himself a sibling „child“, took the microphone. He told us how his blog [www.erwachsene-geschwister.de](http://www.erwachsene-geschwister.de) started up, and how it has blossomed into a real network with regional and nationwide meetings since October 2014. „His stories show how today’s children view tomorrow’s world, and ... what early support they need“, summarised one of the delegates on a feedback sheet.

### FamilyTies promotional award 2015

True to tradition, the 5th 2015 FamilyTies promotional award was presented to a total of 5 outstanding offers in the categories parent work and innovation/first project during the evening programme – one of

them Swiss for the first time ever. (Read more about the award winners on the following pages and in future issues). The promotional award was sponsored this year for the first time by Siemens company health insurance fund (SBK).

### Summary

To summarise the content of the two-day event, one of whose goals was to network siblings experts: in view of sustainability and plannable financing (e.g. by statutory health insurers), validated standards in supporting siblings point the way to the future. However, we must make it possible to use the widest possible variety of methods here too – or, as Florian Schepper from the Network for Siblings/Parent Support in Leipzig so trenchantly put it: (see right)

“We need standardised variety and a variety of standards“.

Florian Schepper



Great feedback!

We are delighted by the great feedback we’re getting from you! Half of all the delegates responded to the survey. A phenomenal 99% were satisfied. More information on two subjects was explicitly requested: financing the offers and coping with conflicts at work. We’ve made a note of that!



More great news: the nationwide attention of the German media



2015 promotional award winner in the category Innovation/First project

## Helping people to help themselves with a mouse click

**The Sibling Children Network has been working on improving and further developing outpatient care for families with severely ill/ handicapped children in Lower Saxony and neighbouring German states since 2008. Also with their 2015 promotional award project**



The winners from Sibling Children Network together with Claudia Kleinert (left) and Herlinde Schneider (right)



**Geschwisterkinder  
Netzwerk**

### Sibling Children Network

The goal of the Sibling Children Network that was set up by the "Netzwerk für die Versorgung für schwerkranke Kinder und Jugendliche e. V.", is to make work easier for facilities or parents' associations that have not yet broached the subject of siblings. In their search for new solutions, the members of Sibling Children Network compared and analysed the approaches and solutions found to similar problems in other European countries. The analysis showed that the concept established by the British organisation „sibs/uk – for brothers and sisters of disabled children and adults“ was particularly convincing. The concept enables specialist staff, self-help groups and associations to find a low-threshold foothold into setting up their own siblings group. The project „Helping people to help themselves with a mouse click“ translated the English working materials for working with groups of siblings and has made them

available free of charge to be downloaded from [www.geschwisterkinder-netzwerk.de/fuer-gruppenleiter-von-geschwisterkindergruppen.html](http://www.geschwisterkinder-netzwerk.de/fuer-gruppenleiter-von-geschwisterkindergruppen.html). For example, the site gives advice on finding funding and premises as well as tips for suitable personnel and organising work. The promotional award jury explained their decision as follows: „We don't all have to reinvent the wheel. References to pre-existing good offers simplifies the work of many players and groups. This fills the domestic and international networks with productive life“.

### Key information

**Established:** 2011  
**Target group:** siblings  
**Address:** Geschwisterkinder-Netzwerk [Sibling Children Network] MHH/Auf der Bult – Zentrum für Kinder und Jugendliche Carl-Neuberg-Str. 1, 30625 Hannover, Germany  
**Telephone** (0511) 8115-5411  
**Telefax** (0271) 2-19 55  
**Email:** [info@geschwisterkinder-netzwerk.de](mailto:info@geschwisterkinder-netzwerk.de)  
[www.geschwisterkinder-netzwerk.de](http://www.geschwisterkinder-netzwerk.de)

### Treasure Hunt!

The FamilyTies Foundation has launched the campaign „Treasure hunt!“ to broadcast the interests of siblings even further and to make as many people as possible aware of these concerns. We are not searching for treasure chests filled with gold or sweets. We are searching for day-to-day stories from siblings: memories of special, crazy, difficult or fantastic moments in their lives with sick and/or handicapped siblings.



The siblings can send us their „treasures“ such as texts (prose, verse, song lyrics), videos, photographs, photo compositions, pictures, drawings, cartoons, etc. These will then be published in a suitable form. As a reward, we send each participant a solar torch so they can search for even more treasures!

Facilities that work together with siblings are also warmly invited to participate in this treasure hunt. You can order treasure maps from the FamilyTies Foundation ([info@stiftung-familienbande.de](mailto:info@stiftung-familienbande.de)) that can be useful for supporting siblings. The maps come complete with all you need to know about the Treasure hunt! campaign, and instructions on what to do.

For more information visit: [stiftung-familienbande.de/unsere-projekte/entdecke-deinen-schatz.html](http://stiftung-familienbande.de/unsere-projekte/entdecke-deinen-schatz.html).



## Recommended reading

### Never Ending

by Martyn Bedford



*„They say I have to find some way to live with what I have done. But how can I? How can I live with it?“*

This novel tells two stories. One thread tells of a family holiday: parents and two children, a sister (15) and her brother (12). The protagonists' characters are clearly described by individual holiday scenes. We learn of landscapes in Greece, of the sister's secret love, and of conflicts between siblings in puberty. And then of the brother's fatal accident for which the sister feels responsible because it was her idea to go on the trip.

The other thread tells us about an unusual form of therapy with six teenagers who have all lost close relatives. Ultimately each one is faced with the question of how they can carry on living with their experiences.



Stiftung  
**FamilienBande**  
FamilyTies – Together for siblings

## Publishing details

**Content:** FamilyTies network

**Editing and realisation:** COMMPartners,  
info@commpartners.de, Holzkirchen

**Publisher:** Novartis FamilyTies Foundation  
Öflinger Straße 44, 79664 Wehr/Baden, Germany

### We value your opinion!

Please let us know what aspects of FamilyTies NEWSLETTER you have enjoyed or what could have been done better. If you would prefer not to receive the newsletter, please send a brief e-mail to:  
[info@stiftung-familienbande.de](mailto:info@stiftung-familienbande.de)

Supported by:



## 2015 promotional award winner in the category parent work



„learning from each other together“

„Learning from each other together“ – the step into the next moment evolves from the dialogue between different skills“! – this is the leitmotiv of the Centre for Systemic Exercise Therapy and Communication that has been awarded the 2015 FamilyTies promotional award.

The centre won the award for the family courses it holds twice a year. The eight-day courses address all the members of the family; furthermore, all the families are cared for by an interdisciplinary team of professionals. They discuss various subjects including the parents' concerns about the sibling and the relationship between the siblings themselves. Each family has the support of a dedicated specialist. „The primary objectives are setting up and stabilising individually helpful resources and conditions to help each individual, and the whole family, fulfil his or her development tasks“, explained the family therapist Renate Heule.

During their stay, parents and children alike get to know themselves as players in offers of organised games and interaction. Their joint actions are analysed in various discussion settings and examined for their relevance for each family's day-to-day life.

The promotional award jury was particularly pleased that the family courses concept is a further development of the research project „Lived-in-worlds of handicapped people“ at Tübingen University. Furthermore, the expert staff do not provide any solutions, they accompany the family as it develops its own behavioural and communication strategies. The parents are seen as the „family architects“ and are helped to recognise, expand and utilise their competences and resources. Parents and siblings are given the opportunity to talk among themselves and to explain their situation. This multimodal approach with interdisciplinary support keeps the family „on the move“ and in practice for day-to-day living at an action level and cognitively. This interlinking of the units together



with fun and games are integrative elements of the joint „family and parent work“. Another advantage in the jury's opinion: the concrete help given with applying for reimbursement by possible payers.

## Key information

**Established:** 1995

**Target group:** whole family

**Address:** Bewegung im Dialog – Zentrum für Systemische Bewegungstherapie und Kommunikation e. V.  
Postfach 210211

72025 Tübingen, Germany

**Telephone:** 07071 21 192

**Email:** [info@bewegung-im-dialog.de](mailto:info@bewegung-im-dialog.de)

[www.bewegung-im-dialog.de](http://www.bewegung-im-dialog.de)