

Working together for siblings



Siblings Library

“This library is different – but different in a wonderful sort of way”

The Janusz-Korczak Siblings’ Library in Lilienthal is celebrating its fifth anniversary. And even after 30 years of working with and for sibling children, the founder Marlies Winkelheide, has never once thought about packing up her books and retiring...

“A library is usually a silent room where nobody talks, where everybody’s reading or just thumbing through books and browsing; it’s really only a place for books, somewhere to find peace and quiet, to ponder or mainly to read. This library is different – but different in a wonderful sort of way. Actually, it’s a little like my own situation. I personally have a special relationship with the handicapped and siblings of handicapped people, because I’m a sibling myself. Now my life is different – but different in a wonderful sort of way, just like this library”.

This entry written by a 15-year-old boy from Osnabrück in the siblings’ library guest book in 2012 clearly illustrates the special atmosphere of this library, the only one of its kind in Germany. The Janusz-Korczak Siblings’ Library in Lilienthal is home to over 4,500 books on the subject of siblings. 3,000 of these belong to Marlies Winkelheide alone, the founder of the siblings’ library, who has been working with siblings since as early as 1982. “We focus on books for children and teenagers as well as reference books dealing with social issues. We have books on the subject of relationships between siblings’, e.g. in families in which one or more children with handicaps live, relationships between siblings in other cultures, care,



Marlies Winkelheide

adoptive families and much more besides”.

At the same time, the library is also a safe haven for siblings of all ages, for families and for the handicapped themselves. The Siblings Council, a group of siblings aged 15 and over, was founded here in 2012 and still meets in the library to this day. Seminars and further training events are also held here. “The response is growing ever stronger. Word has got around that the siblings’ library is an interesting place to discover. We also have non-book material here and plenty of games. About 800 visitors from all over Germany come here every year, we’ve even had a few international visitors too – and the numbers are rising”, says Marlies Winkelheide.

Marlies Winkelheide would love to see even more visitors from other sibling children’s’ projects in future. “What’s more, I’d just like to spend even more of my time in the siblings’ library”.



The siblings’ library in Lilienthal

On the next page you can read what the visitors to the siblings’ library think.

Editorial

Dear friends of FamilyTies,

A great deal has been achieved in the area of working with siblings in 2014: the first statutory health fund will be paying for its members’ SuSi courses. The Bunter Kreis wants to roll these out successively with its Siblings Club nationwide starting in 2015.

70 people have already taken part in courses for training specialists in providing support and advice to siblings, which are led by ISPA and sponsored by FamilyTies. Tried and tested offers such as the siblings’ library in Lilienthal are celebrating their fifth anniversary, while others appear to be becoming firmly established. However, at the same time, we have also seen recognised programs disappearing. We have to observe and accept such developments too.

In 2015, FamilyTies wants to push ahead with plans to create a “Colourful Map of Germany” with a wide range of programs, events and activities on offer, so that each and every sibling is able to find something suitable in his or her neighbourhood if he or she needs it.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those people who have dedicated themselves to helping siblings and their families. We wish you all a very merry Christmas and all the best in the New Year!



Mark Never,
Chairman of the
Novartis FamilyTies
Foundation Board



Irene von Drigalski
CEO, Novartis
FamilyTies
Foundation

FORUM

Successful pilot project in Nuremberg

“Build a regional network, expand the range of programs, events and activities on offer for siblings” – these were the objectives of four pilot projects in the regions Berlin, Nuremberg, Marburg and Wehr (southern Black Forest) that were initiated by the FamilyTies Foundation at the end of 2013. Klabaubermann e. V. in Nuremberg has, together with other partners, been very very successful in achieving these goals: besides setting up a siblings’ library, they have established a round table, prepared a folder with regional programs, events and activities on offer for siblings and they hosted their first siblings’ day in September.



Save-the-date

The **FamilyTies specialist conference** will be held on 10/11.07.2015, this time in Holzkirchen near Munich. You can expect fascinating lectures, eminent speakers from home and abroad as well as educational workshops. The highlight of the conference will once again be the announcement of the **Promotional Award** from the FamilyTies Foundation worth 10,000 EUR.

“Focus on the family”



The parents of the around two million children in Germany with chronic diseases or handicaps don’t know enough about the numerous offers of support that are available to them. This was revealed by the study “Focus on the family” that was presented on 12 December 2014 at the self-help conference hosted by the AOK Federal Association in Berlin. “This huge gap in awareness of the advisory and information services must be closed” said Uwe Deh, Executive Chairman of the AOK Federal Association. Almost 1,600 affected families were surveyed for the study commissioned by the children’s network.

Quotes

Excerpts from the guest book at the Janusz-Korczak siblings’ library

Where children, parents and organisers have created a space!

(Father, Bremen, 2009)

I am the door to the Janusz-Korczak Siblings’ Library. Everyone who visits the library pauses in front of me for a moment before walking in. I always watch the visitors very carefully because I love observing how the people look when they walk into the library and then how they look when they go out again, because, no matter whether they’re laughing or crying, curious, inquisitive, business-like, pensive, desperate, happy, uncertain, self-assured, anxious, relieved or tense, they all leave enriched. And many of those who have passed through me come again, because they’ve found a sanctuary where they can open up, each in their own individual way, just like I always like opening for them.

(16-year-old girl)

It feels good when you walk into the building housing the library because it’s all about ME when I cross the threshold. Thank you for making this beautiful feeling possible.

(adult sister, Frankfurt, 2012)

For more information, go to www.geschwisterbuecherei.de

Announcement of the FamilyTies Promotional Award 2015 soon at:

www.stiftung-familienbande.de

Combining family, care and career under one roof more easily

Having more time for children in need of care and their siblings – the new Act tabled by the German government on the compatibility of family, care and career now makes that possible. The German Federal Parliament passed this act on Thursday, 4 December 2014. The act interleaves and further develops the possibilities presented by the Home Care Leave Act and the Family Medical Leave Act. With this Act, an earnings replacement benefit in the amount of 90% of the net wage is introduced. This is paid to employees if they take 10 days off work to organise care for a close relative. Starting next year, there will also be a legal right to 24 months’ family care leave. During this period, employees can reduce their working week to as little as 15 hours to give them time to care for a close relative needing their help. “We can now offer family members greater certainty that they can look after their relatives when they need care, without having to sacrifice their jobs”, says Manuela Schwesig, Federal Minister of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, a sponsor of the FamilyTies Foundation. For more information, see www.bmfsfj.de or www.bundestag.de.

Advancement award 2014

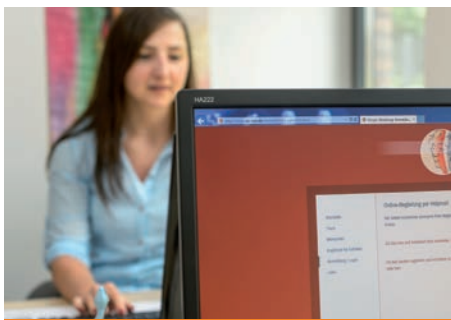
Grief counselling 2.0

Young people often feel that adults do not take them seriously or even misunderstand them – they do not know who to turn to with their worries and concerns. This is particularly true of situations in which young people are confronted with grief or death on the loss of a loved one or a life-threatening diagnosis. The outpatient hospice service and children's hospice service in Oldenburg has looked into these problems and created a grief counselling program that is unique in Germany.



The www.da-sein.de team

Since March 2013, teenagers and young adults up to the age of 25, who are suffering a crisis due to a grief or death situation can contact voluntary team members anonymously and free of charge by email via the Internet platform www.da-sein.de. What's special about this is the fact that the volunteers are so-called peer counsellors aged between 16 and 26 and thus about the same age as those grieving. "Besides the anonymity, this also hel-



Employee Ina at work

ps them overcome their inhibitions. What's more, young counsellors are much closer to the teenagers and their world", says Cordelia Wach, who has developed the concept of online counselling.

The grief counsellor at the outpatient hospice service is contacted time and time again by young people, who often don't know who to turn to with their grief. But this is because there are no offers suitable for this age-group. "You can't reach out to teenagers via the classic avenues, but, at the same time, there is a tremendous need. We saw the digital media as the solution to this problem. That's how www.da-sein.de came about", she says.

The young volunteer peer counsellors are given special training, where they learn how to support the young mourners and give them courage. Once a month, the volunteer team members meet to talk about their experiences

Recommended reading

Sechs Jahre: der Abschied von meiner Schwester [Six years: farewell to my sister]

by Charlotte Link

In this book, best-seller author and sibling Charlotte Link writes about the illness and death of her sister Franziska, who died of cancer at the early age of 47. A very personal book – full of insights into her own life such as the constant fear of having to lose a person she loved more than anybody else.

In her book, Charlotte Link also describes everyday hospital life in Germany that patients with cancer and their relatives are exposed to. In all its facets.



and to give each other support, if they don't know how to move forward in certain situations. In such cases, they can ask Cordelia Wach for advice.

The outpatient hospice service and children's hospice service in Oldenburg received particular praise for the "www.da-sein.de" program on offer during the

Key data

- Established:** 2013
- Target group:** teenagers and young adults who are in a crisis due to a grief or death situation.
- Age limit:** up to 25 years of age
- Address:** Haareneschstraße 62, 26121 Oldenburg, Germany
- Telephone:** +49 (0)441 / 770 346 0
- Email:** info@hospizdienst-oldenburg.de
- www.hospizdienst-oldenburg.de

Adult siblings

“See and be seen”

Many things change as we grow older, including our relationships with our brothers and sisters. But the responsibility that many siblings bear usually remains. Because you are a sibling all your life.

Adulthood brings with it aspects that shed a different light on being a sibling. Uncertainty, anxiety, worries and perhaps even depression are phenomena that overtake many adult siblings. This is why it is so important to meet people in the same or similar situation and to exchange experiences. To see that you are not alone in your situation and that others also see you and appreciate the position you are in. Sascha Velten, Amir Tawfik and Thomas Ermann have made this possible by organising meetings for adult siblings.

Thomas Ermann from the Offene Behindertenarbeit [Open Work with the Handicapped] in Nuremberg (www.lhnbg.de) is planning regular meetings. This was kicked off with an information evening in early November,

at which adult siblings of people with handicaps were given the opportunity to talk to each other and exchange experiences. The speaker Eberhard Grünzinger, who has been dealing with siblings for the last 15 years, provided information on special aspects of the handicapped and the risks and chances for siblings – followed by a lively round of discussions. “The reactions shown by the guests were very positive. They expressed interest in further meetings with accompanying rounds of discussions and lectures on the subject”, said Thomas Ermann. “It would appear that more and more people are prepared to examine their family situation in closer detail. And of course we want to provide these people with professional support and advice.

The invitation from Sascha Velten and Amir Tawfik to the siblings meeting held in Cologne at the end of October was taken up by 17 siblings from all over Germany, some of whom had already been networking via their blog www.erwachsene-geschwister.de.



Participants in the siblings meeting in Cologne

“The focus was on mutual exchanges concerning a very wide range of topics and experiences, which were just as mixed and diverse as the participants and their stories themselves”, says Sascha Velten. Besides chatting in small groups or all together, the participants were supported by psychologist Marc Hittmeyer and the family therapist Sonja Richter with lectures on the subject of “Depression” and the “The role in the family”.

“See and be seen – a phrase that has taken on a totally new meaning since that weekend. A weekend full of surprises and small adventures”, as summed up by the participant Daniela on Sascha Velten’s and Amir Tawfik’s blog.

A Siblings Meeting 2015 is now a done deal, details still have to be announced and will be published at: www.erwachsene-geschwister.de/geschwistermeeting-20/



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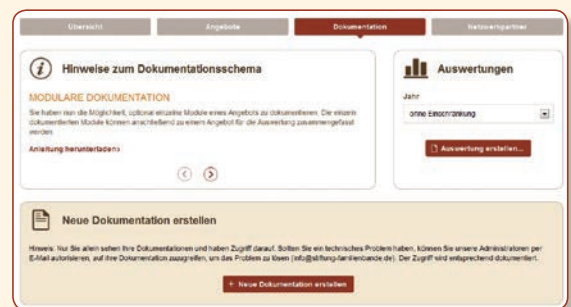
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We value your opinion:

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

Standardised documentation for siblings projects

The FamilyTies Foundation has been promoting a standardised approach to working with siblings for three years now. Since the relaunch of the foundation’s website in the early summer of 2014, specialist circles can now prepare their documentation on the programs, events and activities on offer with the help of a documentation template. The documentation template has been developed by the FamilyTies Quality Circle to help describe the different and various siblings’ offers in a standardised form. “This gives all providers a simple and practical instrument for documenting their work. The documentation promotes the lively exchange of news and views on accompanying siblings and thus the network”, explains Thore Spilger from the Institute of Social Medicine in Paediatrics Augsburg (ISPA), which is responsible for organising the content of the Quality Circle.



Specialist circles can register here:
www.stiftung-familienbande.de/fachkreise



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