

Working together for siblings



Putting overseas experience to use

„Best practice“ – this is how the British organise sibling work

The siblings network in Lower Saxony is translating the materials and experiences from England to find out what's on offer in regions with few siblings.

Siblings in the sense of “siblings with special needs” are also an international theme – albeit with varying degrees of intensity and systematic approach, as has been shown by an internal study by FamilyTies. In most Western European countries, siblings are cared for by patient organisations. Higher level systematic approaches, independent of the indications, are found mainly in the US, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

Ursula Neuhaus and Volker Rinne from the siblings network came across the activities of the English help for self-help initiative www.sibs.org.uk during their research. The initial contacts made it patently clear: this could also work in Germany. „You just have to try it out and see what works and what doesn't. There are a number of cultural and structural differences”, explains Ursula Neuhaus, who is accompanying start-ups of siblings groups modelled on www.sibs.org.uk and translating material as part of the pilot project „**Help for self-help: setting up and supporting siblings liaison offices and independent siblings groups**“. Sponsors of this project include „Klosterkammer Hannover“, „Aktion Kindertraum“, „Kroschke Kinderstiftung“, the „Carls“ Foundation and the ETL Kindertraum Foundation.

The working materials make it possible to start at a particularly low level. The

focus is on the practical implementation. For instance, the material gives tips on how to set up a siblings group and offers help with funding or looking for suitable venues. Besides the practical input, the project also suggests how to structure content with various theme packages such as fun and games or getting information across. Starting in May, it will be possible to download this material free of charge from the website www.Geschwisterkinder-Netzwerk.de.

„We encourage those who aren't ready to set up their own siblings group just yet, but who can relate to the subject and are dedicated, to participate actively as contacts in a siblings liaison office, i.e. as a sort of local project agency“, explains Volker Rinne. „We provide these people with materials and information and give them help and advice. We introduce potential group leaders to the sibs.org.uk idea and other concepts“. One of the first liaison offices is the Therapeutic Riding Centre in Braunschweig and one of the first pilot siblings group has been set up in Hanover.

Anyone who is interested in setting up a group or would like to take an active part as a purely informative contact as a local siblings liaison office can get in touch with the siblings network. Ursula Neuhaus will also be presenting the project at the **FamilyTies specialist conference on 10/11 July in Holzkirchen near Munich.**



Editorial

Dear friends of FamilyTies,

This much is certain: 2015 is going to be an eventful year working together for siblings. We'll all be meeting up in Holzkirchen on 10 and 11 July for the specialist conference, where we'll be discussing the question of „Standards or Variety“ in terms of accompanying siblings as nationwide as possible in Germany. The promotional award will be presented for the fifth time at the meeting's gala evening – so if you've embarked on your first project or if you have great programmes/events for working together with the parents of siblings, make sure you register! A total of 10,000 euros are waiting for the winners.

We'd like to draw your attention now to the 2015 campaign „Discover your treasure!“ Siblings can send us their particularly treasured moments – be they stories, photographs, pictures – to FamilyTies and will receive a present as a reward. The objective: to draw attention to the interests and concerns of siblings. The treasure hunt is going to be tested for the first time at the Down's Athletes Festival on 25.4 (see page 2). All institutions can order their free tickets for the FamilyTies event for their work with siblings starting in July. For those of you who would like to know more now: www.stiftung-familienbande.de

We hope you will find this an interesting read.



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(acting) Chairman
of the Novartis
Foundation
FamilyTies



Irene von Drigalski
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Call for registrations

Register for the FamilyTies Promotional award 2015!

The FamilyTies promotional award has already become a tradition and is offered as a prize for charitable institutions. We are looking for offers/activities for siblings in the categories innovation/first project and parent work. The deadline for registrations is 15 May.

The FamilyTies Foundation has been awarding a promotional award since 2011 for institutions and organisations that organise at least one event/activity a year for siblings. Thus, in 2015, the promotional award is already being presented for the fifth time and supported for the first time by the Siemens company health insurance fund, SBK. The aim of the 10,000 euros prize money is to encourage innovative events/activities with an eye not only on the family, but also on the specific situation of the siblings.

For example, one innovative approach was to intensify relationships between premature babies and their siblings and thus relieve pressure on the whole family. This was proved by the winner of the 2014 promotional award, the

DRK-Kinderklinik [Paediatric Hospital] in Siegen. In 2013, the Society for Mucopolysaccharidosis (MPS) e.V. came up with the idea of a video week on the topic „ME“, which focuses on children and teenagers discovering their own identity. This was rewarded with the promotional award in the category innovation/first project.

However, besides new ideas, we are also looking for ways to include the parents. For instance, the German Association for Children with Heart Disease e.V. developed „time-outs“ for the whole family in the form of parent coaching sessions and recreational activities for children. It was awarded the 2013 promotional award in the category parent work. The long-term aim of the prize is a „Colour-

ful Map of Germany“ showing events/activities with a variety of approaches. The Society for helping Parents of Children with Cancer in Leipzig, winner of the promotional award in 2011, proves that this can be done: the society used the prize money to set up the „Network for Siblings“, which was promptly awarded the prize in 2013.

You will find all the award winners from the years gone by as well as the latest registration form on our website www.stiftung-familienbande.de/foerderpreis-2015. Applications can only be made electronically.

The festive award presentation will be made at the FamilyTies specialist conference on 10 July 2015 in Holzkirchen.

Down's Athletes Festival on 25.04.2015 in Frankfurt

Siblings Olympics and Treasure Hunt at the 13th Down's Athletes Festival

The annual Down's Athletes Festival in Frankfurt has become a calendar fixture for families with children with Down's syndrome. The families of the athletes with Down's syndrome are avid fans of the event. The brothers and sisters of the athletes with Down's syndrome also get their money's worth at the FamilyTies Siblings Olympics – together with their siblings. Like the year before, the siblings programme, which included knocking down cans, a dexterity course, basketball throwing and goal wall shooting, was quickly booked out. New this year: the siblings event „Discover your treasure“.

The festival is supported by celebrities such as Joachim Hermann Luger, Peyman Amin, Bobby Brederlow,



As every year, the festival will be backed by celebrities, e.g. Peyman Amin, who is also a sponsor of the FamilyTies Foundation.

Susanne Fröhlich or Regina Halmich, who are very happy to give their autographs to the athletes and friends of the festival. For more information visit: www.down-sportlerfestival.de.

Interview with Bea Engelmann

Heighten awareness for happiness

Bea Engelmann is coach, author and founder of the Institute for Happiness Psychology in Bremen



What do you mean by positive psychology?

The essence of positive psychology follows Aristotle's approach. He once said: the aim of life is a good life. Accordingly, positive psychology has three core elements:

- to boost peoples' happiness and help them feel good
- to empower people to tap on their human strengths
- to create better living conditions.

How does that manage to strengthen resources?

It all starts with positive thinking. We can heighten our awareness for happiness. But feeling, thinking and acting have to be on the same wavelength before we can strengthen our resources. And: we can positively influence our thoughts and actions far more often than we think and we can take control.

What can this mean for work with siblings?

It's vital that we see the siblings as individuals and ask ourselves which coping

strategy is right for which child. As I see it, it is important to make it clear to the siblings that it's OK to be happy – we can help them understand this by encouraging them to ask „What do I have to do to be happy“? We consider the different levels of need and give the children space and time to think about this concept and to ask themselves: which of my needs has its „turn“ today.

What happens if this approach doesn't work for a child?

We don't raise any expectations – so there can't be any disappointments. Also when accompanying siblings, the idea is to talk about all the feelings they harbour in their situation and to tell them that these feelings are OK. You mustn't be afraid. Of course you can be sad. The child must learn about his or her strengths and abilities – only then can they be confident and learn to recognise happiness.

„There are flowers everywhere for those who want to see them“.

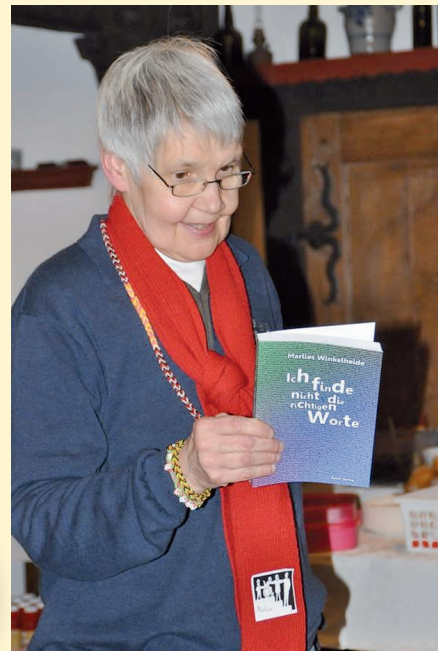
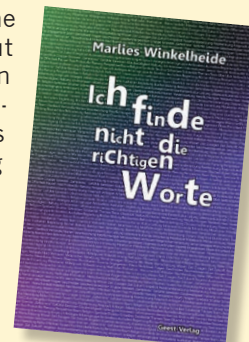
Henri Matisse

We must remember that parents also need to strengthen their resources because the challenges they face are immense.

I can't find the right words

by Marlies Winkelheide

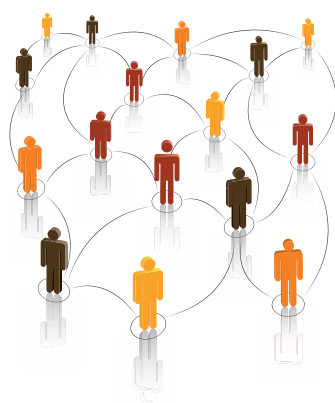
In this edition, the author writes about her experiences in working with siblings; she urges us to keep on asking new questions and to observe the situation, to keep on talking to the siblings. She also talks about Janusz-Korczak, on whose statements and observations she and her colleagues base their work. „I am surrounded by words, I listen to people, I absorb words and sentences. Sometimes it all goes so quickly that I need days, or even longer, to understand what was said and to understand the connections between the person I was talking to and myself, in order to be able to ask the right questions“.



Marlies Winkelheide, born in 1948, has a diploma in the social sciences. She has over 30 years' experience in working with siblings, and has developed various forms of programmes/activities together with Charlotte Knees. She has been a freelancer since retiring and repeatedly sets important new highlights in work with siblings at the Janusz-Korczak siblings' library in Lilienthal.

FamilyTies specialist conference 2015

Register now!



„Standards or Variety? – towards helping siblings to cope nationwide“ – this is the title of the 2015 FamilyTies specialist conference being held on 10/11 July in Holzkirchen near Munich. We'll be holding lectures and practice-oriented workshops presenting successful building blocks for accompanying siblings on our way to painting a Colourful Map of Germany with events/activities for siblings. For more information, visit www.stiftung-familienbande.de/fachtagung.

We're already looking forward to your registration!



Successful networking

The FamilyTies Foundation at the expert meeting „Healthy all over“ held by the „MünchnerStiftungsFrühling“ and a medical CPD event in Altötting



Irene von Drigalski in Bielefeld



Irene von Drigalski and Dr Stefan Vlaho in Altötting

One central objective of the FamilyTies Foundation is to inform and educate on the subject of siblings. The foundation attended several events to present the foundation's work and enable people to experience it live, to forge new contacts and to answer questions about the subject of siblings. For example, at the expert meeting „Healthy all over – shaping healthy lived-in-worlds together“ on 19 February in Bielefeld. Invited by the North Rhine-Westphalian Ministry of Health and the Bertelsmann foundation, around 200 health care experts met for discussions. For example, there was a keen interest in the information about further education as a trained assistant for siblings.

Or the event hosted by the „MünchnerStiftungsFrühling“ from 20 to 26 March 2015, which centred on exchanging news and views on the charity landscape and finding avenues for co-operation. Here, the foundation was able to acquire new offers for siblings for the 'Search for offers' page' on the homepage.

At the CPD meeting „Problematic paediatric cases in practice“ in Altötting on 21 March 2015, Irene von Drigalski held a lecture to draw the attending doctors' attention to siblings' needs.



Stiftung
FamilienBande
Gemeinsam für Geschwister

Publishing details

Content: FamilyTies network

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

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

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