

## LATEST NEWS FROM THE LIVSLUST-DZIVESPRIEKŠ VOCATIONAL SCHOOL FOR ORPHANED AND OTHER VULNERABLE TEENAGERS IN LATVIA

### No improvement of the Latvian economy

The financial situation is still critical. Latvia has been granted a loan of 7,500 million EUR from IMF, EU and the Scandinavian countries under the condition that a considerable stabilization plan be implemented. This involves among other things a considerable lowering of salaries, up to 50%, for public employees. Schools and hospitals are being closed down with many unemployed as a result. Spending power has been reduced and companies are forced to lay off employees. Unemployment rate is 18.6 %, in some places in the countryside as high as 50%. Many people have a very hard time and manage only thanks to the more and more common soup-kitchens and by begging in the streets.

Of course, former Livslust pupils are affected as well. Many have lost their jobs and have a hard time to support themselves. If they should lose their place to live as well, it would be nearly impossible for them to get back on their feet again. Therefore, for the time being, we try to help them as far as possible with food and rent by a change of priorities and with the aid of extra contributions.

### Long adaptation time gives good results

Due to the natural variation in birth rates and also migration, the size of age groups in the population is constantly changing. For the time being, the number of school children in Latvia is decreasing. In spite of this, the amount of teenagers of Livslust's target group is growing, most likely as a result of the financial crisis. This is clear, since we have more applicants than usual this year. 22 new pupils were accepted and started in September. The newcomers use the entire autumn term to familiarize themselves with the school routines, and to get to know each other as well as the grown-ups.



*A secure togetherness is the basis for personal development.*

On arrival they often lack motivation and have hardly given a thought of what might happen in the future. Here they are encouraged to reflect on their future and to draw up their own plan on how to achieve the goals. During the autumn term they try out the vocational program that they have chosen. And also get an opportunity to try out the others. Should they rather like to follow another program than the one they chose initially, they can do so. If they would rather take another program they can change their initial choice. The vocational programs are accredited at level 1 of the Latvian educational system, which opens up for further studies.



*Graduation in June for seamstresses, painters and carpenters.*

There are now 43 pupils at the school, equal numbers boys as girls. Two of the ones graduating last June chose to stay an extra year instead of facing an uncertain job market. They will revise what they have already studied, and get more vocational training. They also get a chance to improve their English and computer skills. Due to the lack of jobs, most of the others choose further studies at other schools supported by our different scholarship funds.



*Sports and outdoor activities are part of the social rehabilitation and the drug prevention program.*



## Interest in the Livslust methods

Our methods have been developed over the years and are continuously being improved. Our good results draw attention. More than 80% of our former pupils are doing well, which can be compared to similar institutions, where the success rates are considerably lower according to the information we could find. We would, of course, like to see that more vulnerable boys and girls could have a good life in Latvia as well as in other countries. Therefore, we would be happy to share our experience with others working with orphaned teenagers or youngsters from dysfunctional families. We have noticed an increasing interest from several municipalities. In Carnikava and Burnieku a process has started to implement the Livslust methods in the work with vulnerable youngsters. Burnieku is planning to start a pilot project similar to Livslust's. If this is successful, we have reason to believe that other municipalities will do the same. We are happy to share our experience but we have no ambitions to enter into some new activities. If there would be an interest for it, we could offer some students to come and study our methods.

## Report from a Swedish exchange student



*Minna, wearing a cap, together with the girls in the sewing workshop.*

*"My name is Minna Talmaa. I study the TextileForm&Design program at the Vackstanäs Gymnasium in Södertälje in Sweden. Right now I am an exchange student at Livslust. Today it is cold and snowing which I really enjoy. Everybody is very nice and both teachers and pupils do their best to make me feel at home. In the morning I take part on "The large circle" where everybody expresses how they feel, sometimes in words and sometimes by comparing their feelings to a color I find this to be a good way to start the day. I spend a lot of time in the sewing workshop to learn different techniques, which is really good. I also take part in pottery and drawing classes as well as lectures of different kinds. I learn quite a lot. The day before yesterday a policeman was here to tell us about drug addiction and its consequences, which I find extra important for these youngsters as they are at great risk to become addicted. I have also been asked to help out a great deal at the English lessons to get the pupils to talk more. The teachers say that I am a great help and I am happy to be able to contribute*

*with something. In the evenings the pupils invite me to take part in different activities. I try to give back as much as I can and the other day I taught one of the pupils to play a little on the piano so that we could play a duet. It was great fun. The atmosphere between the pupils is really wonderful and they say themselves that it is good to be together with others who also have a background filled with problems. I think this is what makes the fellowship so strong. They all have something in common. The way I see it the school is a wonderful organization as it offers vulnerable young people a much better future."*



*Fun excursions strengthen solidarity.*

## The annual harvest festival

In the large beautiful assembly-room on the third floor, two pupils came buzzing in dressed up as bees in order to introduce the different items on the program, which included a lot of song and music as well as a big surprise. This was the former pupil Baiba Belova who had brought her friends from the design program at the Purvciems Craft School and Studio "Defile" in Riga. With beautiful make-up and stylish hairdos they gave a much appreciated fashion show, where they dancing modeled dresses of their own design. As is appropriate at a harvest festival, there were plenty of farm products, and big heaps of different kinds of bread and delicious cookies. The winners of a quiz game were awarded with jars of honey. The entire school had been decorated with all sorts of things from nature, and there was an exhibition with the pupils' pottery and products from the workshops.

## An adult as a role model makes a difference

This is the basic idea of Mentor Sweden, whose main purpose is to encourage young people to withstand violence and drugs. It is a question of helping them to find their place in society. Mentor Sweden, SEB and Livslust now launch a co-operation in Latvia, where SEB employees in Riga become mentors to former Livslust pupils. They will have recently graduated from the school, be lacking family and be in need of help and support. We look forward to this co-operation, which we believe will mean a lot to our former pupils. (Read more about Mentor at [www.mentorsverige.se](http://www.mentorsverige.se))



*Līga started at the kitchen program in 2008. Zane is training in the sewing workshop since March this year. Kaiva, began in September and has chosen the kitchen program.*

## Livslust pupils as trainees at Oriflame

Last year two Livslust pupils were invited to work in the conference-team at the Oriflame Gold Conference in Athens. This turned out to be a success and this year two new pupils were offered this unique opportunity. Ruta Ivancikova and Arvids Rozitis were chosen for this year's event in August in Rome. Here are some excerpts from their reports:

*Ruta: "It was my first time abroad. The two weeks in Italy were the best this summer. I have a lot of memories and I am really happy to have been a part of this event."*

*Arvids: "I met many people from different countries and worked together with them. It was a really good practice of English. I made new friends and we continue to keep the contact. It was good that they needed someone who could speak Russian. If I had this chance again I would not hesitate to say yes!"*

Modris Eglitis, who is a trainee at the Oriflame office in Stockholm, has a wonderful time. He has been taken care of in a fantastic way and is given meaningful tasks. Modris has settled down well and learns a lot and at the same time he keeps up his studies at senior high level. He wants to become a lawyer.

## Management group from Electrolux visit Latvia

*"We were ten people from Electrolux who paid a visit to Livslust's school in Latvia. The chairman of Dzīvsprieks, Edijs Petersons, told us about how it all began and how they work. It was easy to see how much he cares about the pupils. Two of the youngsters guided us around the school and we were very impressed by how well they spoke English. They showed us the sewing workshop and the carpentry and you could see how proud they were when they showed us the well made products. They talked a lot about the importance of being a good friend and what that meant. It was a very nice visit and we appreciated the positive atmosphere and how well the youngsters seemed to be doing at the school."*

*Maria Eriksson, Electrolux*



*Oskars and Igors at the top left bake "bread on a stick" together with Swedish friends.*

## We are looking for summer hosts 2010

Soon it is Christmas, but still we have to think about next summer when we will need more summer hosts in Sweden, Latvia or elsewhere. If you would like to know what it entails to host a couple of Livslust pupils in the summer please contact Eva Ribbing on [eva.ribbing@comhem.se](mailto:eva.ribbing@comhem.se) or +46 8-612 27 33.

## New chairman of Stiftelsen Livslust

Martin Moström succeeds Eva Christensson as chairman. Martin is MBA and part-owner of Retail House, a strategic retail company specializing in brand-building in the retail branch. He is married to Carmen and they have two boys of 2 and 7 years. Martin joined the Livslust board last winter. Maria Cakste, board member, takes over the responsibility for the economy. Eva will remain as a board member.

After many years on the board, Torbjörn Torell has decided to resign due to lack of time. Thank you, Torbjörn, for all your contributions and valuable advice.

## The Livslust Golf 2009

This year was the fourth time for the Livslust Golf with a record number of participants. A sunny Tuesday morning in the beginning of September, 120 golfers came together at the Täby Golf Club with SEB as co-organizer. After the game a lot of nice prizes awaited the golfers, donated by Berntson Brands, Brandskyddsforeningen, Design House Stockholm, Läkerol, MC Collection, Oriflame, SEB, Swedish Match, Såstaholm, Täby GC, Vattenfall, Vitalt Vetande and White Guide. A big thank you to all the golfers and sponsors who helped to pay for 2 pupils for a whole year at the school!

## Christmas gifts produced by Livslust

If you would like to buy Livslust's Christmas cards or gifts produced in the school's workshops please contact us on [livslust@telia.com](mailto:livslust@telia.com) or +46 8 6607784. You can find most of the products on our website [www.livslust.com](http://www.livslust.com).



*Livslust is great!*



*A handprint is left on the wall by those who finish school.*

## Some activities during the last 6 months:

- The school staff attended a seminar with Dr. Anita Plume at Latvia's Family Centre on family planning.
- A seminar for the pupils on trafficking.
- Summer excursion with the psychologist Ilona Luksa.
- Graduation Party.
- Ceremony when the pupils about to finish put their handprint on the wall to remember them by.
- A 2-day excursion to Roja and Kolka.
- A new number of the pupils' own newsletter "Durvis" (The Door).
- A program recorded at the school was broadcast by the Swedish Radio.
- Visit to a concert at the culture house of Slampe.
- The pupils were invited to If and Nordea in Riga as well as to a football match together with these companies.
- Cross-country race for the pupils.
- Excursion to the zoo in Riga.
- Gisela Ivarsson from World Childhood Foundation paid a visit to the school.
- "Youth against Aids" visited the school several times and met with the pupils.
- The Boys' and the Girls' Clubs met regularly
- Four teachers from the ESS Gymnasium in Stockholm made a 2-day study visit to the school.

**We are very grateful for all the support we receive from our faithful volunteers, collaboration partners and sponsors, and big thank you to all the companies and private persons for their financial support, products and collected clothes and other items.**

### SWEDEN

**Stiftelsen Livslust (The Livslust Foundation)**  
**Address** P. O. Box 29092, SE-100 52 Stockholm, Sweden  
**Tel** +46 8-660 77 84 **E-mail** livslust@telia.com  
**Website** www.livslust.com  
**Bank** IBAN SE07 5000 0000 0522 2104 1488  
**Reg No.** 802018-1064  
**Secretary** General Elisabeth Melin Cejje  
**Board** Martin Moström (chairman), Maria Cakste, Elisabeth Melin Cejje, Eva Christensson, Rikard Josefson, Carl Johan Smith.  
**Auditor** KPMG  
**Patron** H.M. Queen Silvia of Sweden

### LATVIA

**Asociacija Dzivesprieks**  
**Address** Aizupe, Kandavas novads, LV-3131, Latvia  
**Tel** +371 631 55 103 **E-mail** dzivesprieks@dzivesprieks.lv  
**Bank** IBAN LV65 UNLA 0032 0007 000 51  
**Reg No.** 50008006681 **Tax deduction No.** 584  
**Board** Edijs Petersons (chairman), Juris Bariss, Elisabeth Melin Cejje, Ausma Ece, Kristians Gabalins, Inete Ieliete, Andris Morozovs, Dmitrijs Petrovs

### USA

**Livslust, Inc. (supporting charitable org.)**  
**Address** 22 Minturn Street, Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706, USA  
**Contact persons** Juris Padegs, LLD.  
**Tel** +1 914 478 0134. **E-mail** jgpadegs@aol.com and Adolf af Jochnick **E-mail** adjoch@aol.com  
**Bank details** Fleet Bank, 777 Main Street, Hartford, CT 06115. Account No. 940 912 8772

### GERMANY

**Livslust-Lebensfreude e.V.,**  
**Address** c/o Monica von Schierstädt, Elpertingerstrasse 2, D-83209 Prien, Germany  
**Tel** +49-8051-61496  
**E-mail** m.schierstaedt@gmx.de  
**Bank details** Münchener Bank eG, Konto 3013600, BLZ: 701 900 00  
**Board** Monica von Schierstädt (chairwoman), Thomas Schimitschek, Elisabeth von der Schulenburg, Hans-Friedrich von Schierstädt.

**Help us to support vulnerable teenagers**  
 Companies could commit themselves on a long-term basis as a **CO-OPERATION PARTNER**. You can become a **LIVSLUST-SPONSOR** with a monthly contribution of your own choice or you can make a **SINGLE DONATION** e.g. in connection with Christmas or other occasions. You could also **HOST** a couple of our students in the summer. You could **BUY PRODUCTS** made in our workshops. For additional information please use the contact details below.