

Miriam Turrin and Letizia Solimeno: "ESC in Lednacek"

Hi everyone we are Miriam and Letizia we are two girls of 20 and 22 years old from Italy, we are two ESC project volunteers, who during the year 2023 served within the Lednacek Montessori-forest kindergarten, located in Předklášteří, a village close to Tisnov. This article aims to share our experience with the community that welcomed and hosted us during this year, giving us good memories.

Lednacek was created by a group of parents and educators based on two fundamental approaches: Montessori and forestry. The former is based on the teachings of Maria Montessori, so the basic principles are independence and freedom of choice for the child, support the development of a sense of responsibility and awareness. Forestry, because most of the activities are conducted outdoors, so in different environments and weather conditions that stimulate children's creativity, imagination and emotions. Nowadays we can say with certainty that a really good relationship has been established between us, we are their mates in games and adventures, but also big sisters or sometimes simply a shoulder to cry on when they have bad days.

The school also has an educational program for pre-school children to prepare them for entry into elementary school. One day every two weeks the kindergarten is divided into two groups, with the younger ones carrying out the normal routine at the kindergarten accompanied by a guide and a volunteer, while the pre-school group will have a separate program with activities preparatory to their development, which is carefully prepared by one of the guides, also assisted by a volunteer.

In addition, the school offers summer camps that are developed over the course of the summer, which are open to different age groups, in fact, thanks to this we have had the opportunity not only to see our children again during the summer period, but also to get to know their brothers and sisters. Each week has a different theme and lots of recreational activities, we were part of the animation and had a really good time both with the team and the children themselves

At the beginning of our experience, the children were a bit shy and wary of us, the main "problem" was the lack of communication because of the language, but soon we started to interact and find our common ground: they taught us Czech and we taught them something of Italian and English.

The children are definitely an important part of our journey, but the parents and guides have also played a key role, making this experience more unique than ever. They often made us part of the meetings to discuss possible changes within the school, but also to involve us from a pedagogical point of view.

Both of us can say that we learned a lot, from a professional point of view and from the children themselves who taught us to rediscover the world through their eyes, with innocence and simplicity.

We will always be grateful to the school, the parents, the guides, the children and the community of Tisnov for this adventure and all the emotions they gave us during this beautiful year, they will surely have a place in our hearts forever and it will not be a goodbye, but a see you soon or an "ARRIVEDERCI".