



The Tiltas Trust

Patrons: Their Excellencies The Lithuanian Ambassador to the United Kingdom and The British Ambassador to Lithuania

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Earlier Newsletters containing background to some of these reports can be seen at our website

From the Trust Desk

- We should explain to our readers the rather long intermission between our last Newsletter and this one. We have not been inactive; far from it we have been making substantial progress in a number of areas. This activity is the subject of this Newsletter; however, in response to several readers' comments we will not go into so much detail as heretofore.
- On our flagship cancer support project we left the story with Jeff Faulkner's Report being translated into Lithuania. This was completed around the turn of the year and was then printed in an attractive booklet containing the text in both languages. Copies were sent to all those consulted by Jeff, others in the cancer support sector, the Minister of Health and the President of Lithuania. We allowed these readers a few months to absorb the messages contained about how we do things in the UK, those projects that seemed, on the surface, to have direct relevance to Lithuania and the recommendations made by Jeff.
- While this was ongoing, our friends the Franciscan Brothers at Kretinga were developing relations in Parliament (Seimas) and the various Ministries. They interested the Speaker of Parliament in their work and the potential of the TTT link and she kindly agreed to host a Conference in Parliament to look at the way forward. This was held on 9 June with the participations of dozens of volunteers from the cancer support sector and a number of those involved in palliative care. The Director of Vilnius Oncology Centre and a number of MPs were also present. We were extremely fortunate to have as the Chair of the Conference, Chris Butler, Managing Partner for Lithuania of Pricewaterhouse Coopers. Jeff Faulkner and Michael Peart, the Chair of TTT, participated, as did Sue Smith, Director of The Mustard Tree (MT) Macmillan Cancer Support Centre in Plymouth – see the article below about links between the MT and the Franciscans at Kretinga.
- The outcome of the Conference was to support Jeff's main recommendation for the establishment of an umbrella organisation uniting the various cancer support organisations in Lithuania. This is the key to the delivery of quality controlled training and information, particularly the Macmillan material so generously offered by Macmillan. We are hoping that a working group will soon be established to decide on the structure of the umbrella. Once the umbrella is up and working, we hope that it will be able to seek funds to undertake training and the translation of printed material.

- Just prior to the Conference, the Franciscans held their annual Fun Run in Klaipeda to raise awareness and fundraise for their new cancer centre adjacent to the hospital in Klaipeda. Ciaran Devane, the CEO of Macmillan and a Patron of the new centre attended as did TTT Trustee Wendy Howe and her husband Peter. The event was bigger than ever, received national exposure on TV and in the Press and raised substantial funds. The President of Lithuania has become a supporter.
- While in Lithuania, Wendy Howe built upon contacts she has been establishing with volunteers in palliative care. Readers may recall that we put on hold further developments in palliative care because it seemed to be a sector in the hands of professionals. We now discover that there is a growing involvement by volunteers who are keen to establish contacts with UK counterparts and Wendy is helping to establish links. Members of BLS who attended the AGM in June will have heard from some of these inspiring people who were on a study visit to the UK supported by TTT. We are hoping that the Cancer support umbrella will find room for palliative care colleagues who need similar training and education materials.

Arts in Health Project

Readers may remember an article ART TERRITORY by Ieva Kruopytė in Newsletter No. 4. The following report was presented to the BLS AGM in June.

Bringing the arts – in a variety of forms – into hospitals can bring remarkable benefits. Patients, above all children, families and staff feel better and stress is reduced. Patients recover faster and can be released sooner. Everybody wins. And it's an area where the UK leads the world.

TTT has been associated since 2008 with this work in Lithuania and were glad to support “Meno Teritorija”, an arts-in-health project in “Vilnius – European City of Culture 2009”. This project, masterminded by Roma Surviliene, Director of the Artists Union Gallery in Vilnius, had two main elements:

- A conference of Lithuanian and foreign experts;
- A summer school for young artists which led to the creation of works of art to be installed in the Vilnius Children's Hospital.

TTT's inputs were:

- Organising a visit by Roma to organisations with an interest in arts-in-health in NW England.
- Facilitating UK expert inputs into the conference;
- Funding a Lithuanian trainee photographer to record the event.

A bonus from the conference was a Seimas Committee session, to which UK experts gave evidence, which led to the establishment of a Government taskforce to chart a way forward for arts-in-health in Lithuania. Ms Surviliene is now working on a further project to develop and apply these ideas further: TTT contributed to a second visit by her to the UK earlier this year to discuss ideas with leading practitioners in the North West and to see work being done in hospitals in Milton Keynes.

TTT hopes to be able to support this activity further in Lithuania as ideas develop.

St. Francis Cancer Support Centre, Kretinga, link with the Macmillan Cancer Centre “The Mustard Tree” in Plymouth

One of the foremost cancer support groups in Lithuania, the St. Francis Cancer Support Centre in Kretinga, visited the UK to develop an understanding of the services offered by Macmillan Cancer Support. They decided to base their own service development on the Macmillan model.

One of the links suggested, was for the Kretinga team to visit the well-established cancer support centre at The Mustard Tree (MT), a Macmillan Centre based in the Derriford Hospital in Plymouth, in the South West of England.

In late November, Aldona Kerpyte, Director of the St Francis Centre, together with Franciscan Brothers Benediktas and Alvydas and a group of 9 supporters and volunteers made a 9-day study visit to examine the running of The Mustard Tree and to undertake a range of Macmillan training courses. The team at The Mustard Tree were impressed at the enthusiasm of the Kretinga volunteers as well as the high personal qualifications of the team.

As they returned to Lithuania, the Kretinga team said that the experience at The Mustard Tree had been life-changing. They felt inspired to offer a similar range and quality of services to the patients and families in Lithuania.

As a result of the relationship built by the above visit, the St Francis Centre invited Sue Smith, the Director of the MT, together with two of her trainers to visit Klaipeda over the Fun Run weekend in May to offer training to health professionals and volunteers. This further strengthened the link between the two organisations.