

Apple

REPORT TO THE CORPS

Volume 12, Number 3

November/December 2002

VILTIS CAMP—A FIRST FOR ME

Ten years ago, for the first time, I met with a group of Lithuanian mothers of children with developmental disabilities. They asked me what education was like for children with special needs in America. Faced with such a question (which will never have a concise answer that could sum up the various educational opportunities here), I groped for the right words to explain a part of what was happening in my little corner of the world. I'll never forget the look on one mother's face, or the tears in her eyes, as she softly placed her hand on the arm of her 15-year-old daughter with Down Syndrome, and tentatively ventured, "But you don't mean that children like my daughter are allowed to go to school in America?"

Today, thanks to groups like Viltis, and a changing educational system, this question is no longer asked. The Viltis organization, located in Vilnius, is an advocacy group for people with developmental disabilities that

spreads information and encourages fighting for the rights of people with developmental disabilities. For the past few years, A.P.P.L.E. has been fortunate to be a part of the Viltis camp, held at the Baltic Sea for families and their children with developmental disabilities and their siblings. Because of the Viltis camp, A.P.P.L.E. is now able to explore new ideas for children with special needs with Lithuanian teachers in a "hands-on" setting.

This summer I was back in Lithuania for the first time in four years, and I was going to be spending my first summer at the camp. Myra, Gita, Emilija, and Phil (long time A.P.P.L.E. people who know me pretty well) had all told me how I was going to love it. My excitement about being back in Lithuania, coupled with the anticipation of being a part of camp, had me walking a few feet above solid ground, which meant that my gaze was leveled somewhere in the sky.

It wasn't until about the third day that I realized the courtyard, where we met for meals, held meetings, and chatted with campers and teachers, held a defunct fountain in the center. The surrounding yard had driftwood-lined flower gardens in some areas, but just straggly weeds in others. The splintery wooden benches, around the fountain area, were weatherworn, and the cracked and chipped cement left a far-from-level surface. OK, I was coming back to earth where there was work to do.

The A.P.P.L.E. lecture team consisted of both Lithuanian and American teachers. We began each day with a group music time, moved to lectures, and then there was time for teachers to work with individual children. In the afternoons choice lectures were presented for both teachers and parents by the A.P.P.L.E. staff, Viltis staff, or visiting



Egle stood proudly by her father while he played the music for the singing and dancing as we said "goodbye to the sea," at the closing of the Viltis Camp at the Baltic Sea.

American or Lithuanian specialists. Every evening at 6:00 p.m. there was a sing-along/dance time, and at 7:30 p.m. were evening programs, including everyone at camp. On Sunday morning Antanas Saulaitis, S.J., led the Mass.

My standard opening speech for A.P.P.L.E. courses has always been: We don't have any magic formulas. First, listen to what we have to say, and practice the method to gain a working understanding of what we're talking about. Then, implement what you will that fits into the future you see for the education of Lithuania's children. Make educated decisions for yourself. Don't let someone else tell you what to do.

This year I never gave my standard speech, yet this year, more than ever before, I saw the Lithuanian teachers doing exactly what I hoped for. What they had to say at our closing was not singular praise for Americans, but praise for one another, and for what they had learned by working on their own, in groups, with parents, and with us. Best of all was the praise they had for learning from the children.

One teacher spoke of the orchestra in which we all played, the importance of all the members, how the music isn't right if someone doesn't play, and how all the parts together make a beautiful sound. It was an orchestra of which I believe we were all proud and thankful to have been a part.

Late one evening, toward the end of camp, we returned from the evening program to find several family members and children gathered around the fountain. Ilona, the A.P.P.L.E. coordinator, asked what was going on. One mother smiled broadly as she explained that it was more fun to be out there with the other family members, instead of alone in their rooms. The solid ground was not exactly under my feet anymore. My gaze was drifting skyward.

The folksinger David Roth has written a song titled, *Holland*. The song poignantly draws an analogy between having a child with developmental disabilities and planning a trip to Italy that ends up in Holland. It tells of buying new guidebooks, learning a whole new language, and meeting people they never knew. It ends by saying:

*And when we're honest, we're exhausted
As we walk the streets of now familiar towns
A different dream is what we've landed here and found
But we have tulips and we have Rembrandts
And we remember not everyone will know such
different kinds of beauty.*

This summer, gathered 'round a defunct fountain, was a whole group of people who know such different kinds of beauty. This summer, the tulips and Rembrandts were many, and they were colorful; they were loved and admired. This summer new friends were found on the streets of the now-familiar towns, and new motivation was found as we sang and danced, laughed

and cried together, renewing and sharing our dreams.

I met Egle, a 15-year-old girl with Down Syndrome, who writes poetry that she shyly shared with us on talent night. I understood that she loved making friends at camp. I loved that Egle's shyness disappeared as she stood proudly by her father as he played for our dances while we said "goodbye to the sea."

All my friends kept telling me how amazed I'd be at the changes in Lithuania as I hadn't been there in four years. I knew that Old Town in Vilnius had been widely restored, boasting great street life with sidewalk cafes, great restaurants, music and, of course, the ever-lovely crafts. I'd heard about the Wal-Mart type stores that now abound throughout the country, where anything and everything is available. When I got there, I found out about Akropolis, the first major shopping mall.

Well, these things were interesting and fun, but once again my amazement came from the people. It was the teachers, the parents, the children, and my friends (both old and new) who sent me back to America walking a few feet above solid ground, my gaze leveled somewhere in the sky.

Katie Hoyle



Saying "goodbye to the sea" was a fitting farewell to a great summer camp. Shown here are Dana Migaliova, president of the Viltis organization (left), and Ilona Laucius, A.P.P.L.E. Coordinator, at our farewell celebration.

AN OPEN LETTER TO A.P.P.L.E.

Dear Friends,

History shows that unless volunteer organizations such as ours have unlimited funds, most encounter a critical period of transition sometime between the seventh and 12th years. At this point founders are usually exhausted or need to move on to other responsibilities. Original sources of monies are often drained. There may be questions about the role of the

organization or the continued need for services. Many groups disband because they are unable to resolve these three issues of funding, staffing, and vision.

A.P.P.L.E. certainly faced a similar challenge in the years after its tenth anniversary. The time when one person could—or would—shoulder the entire cart of APPLES was over; and our future was in doubt. After a year or more of individual and group soul-searching, the supporters of A.P.P.L.E. determined three things at the 2002 Spring Meeting. First, we have sufficient financial resources to continue for one more year. Second, we have dedicated volunteers who are willing to carry the load for another year. Third, the mission of this organization is still viable, and A.P.P.L.E. services are still needed in Lithuania. Other organizations and governments are also working in the education field now, but no one offers the type of program that A.P.P.L.E. provides.

I believe that, if A.P.P.L.E. is to continue to prosper, we must identify and tap the talents of every qualified person who is interested in and willing to promote a professional partnership for Lithuanian education. I take as my text St. Paul's letter to the Romans, in which he said that we are one body with many members, and not all members have the same function. "We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us." I believe that—if we are to be successful in the long run—we must first discern our gifts, individually and as a group. Second, and equally important, we must support one another in acting on these gifts for the benefit of A.P.P.L.E. and the Lithuanian teachers and students we serve.

Our 2002 Vilnius program was an excellent example of this principle. Each member of the leadership team had a clearly assigned role. Like Goldilocks' chair, porridge, and bed, these roles were *just right*—not too big, and not too little. In addition, the assignments were perfect for the individuals who accepted them. Given her shopping panache, there is no one more suited to special events than Giedre! Shirley, with her persistence, was perfect at organizing choice lectures—a task as difficult as herding goldfish. Gita's quiet, competent organizational skills enabled the whole program to run without a single hitch. I could go on, listing all the great people who made our Seminars so successful *and* enjoyable, but I am sure that you get the idea.

This appropriate assignment of duties enabled each member of the team to perform so admirably that it looked effortless. Of course it was not, as we would have seen if just one member of the team had not been present. Imagine Vilnius without Joe, Phil, Aldona, or Amanda. If just one of these key players had been absent, our program would have suffered immeasurably.

As we move forward into our 13th year (the first

year of our new phase), one of our primary challenges will be encouraging and developing new leaders. We will have to attract new people to the organization, determine their individual gifts, persuade them to share those gifts with A.P.P.L.E., and provide the support they need in order to be successful. On this combination of discernment and action, our future depends. As in Vilnius, the assignments need to be *just right* for the individual, our organization, and our mission.

"Of course!" many of you are thinking. But I want to remind you that our focus on one year at a time will also bring changes, and some of these changes may be uncomfortable or even unwanted. Some of our new leaders, like Phil and myself, will have few or no historical ties to Lithuania. Some new leaders will demonstrate no competence with the language and no familiarity with A.P.P.L.E. traditions or Lithuanian customs. Clearly, new leaders will do things differently from the way that they have always been done by the beloved founders who worked so hard to maintain A.P.P.L.E. for so long.

As your new president, I ask for your patience, your wisdom, and your support through this period of transition.

- I believe that you will contribute your wisdom gained from years of tradition in A.P.P.L.E.

- I hope that you will welcome new people and embrace new ideas.

- I expect that you will support new courses of action when we, as a group, agree that change is appropriate.

- Above all, I trust that you will keep your eyes on the prize and continue to work for the vision that has brought us all together.

As I wrote these last words, an image came to my mind that I would like to share. As our spring decisions demonstrated, we, the supporters of A.P.P.L.E., have strength like bars of steel. We can use this strength—these bars—to build a jail to ensure that things are done as we have always done them. Or, we can use the bars to create a scaffolding to reach to the stars. The steel is available, and the choice—containment or support—is ours.

Katie Dunlap

WHAT MAKES A.P.P.L.E. SPECIAL?

The idea for A.P.P.L.E. emerged in 1991 from a minister's challenge, "Help us reform the educational system." The little seed grew through the next decade, becoming a strong tree, bearing fine fruit. At the 2002 Spring Meeting, the membership wondered whether A.P.P.L.E. services were still needed in Lithuania. Several people noted that other countries are now

sending teams of professional educators who work with teachers during the year. Since that meeting we learned that the World Bank has voted to spend 29 million euros to finance an education improvement project in Lithuania. Is it time for A.P.P.L.E. to withdraw?

For me this question was answered at the International Dinner held during the 2002 seminar in Vilnius. At the international dinner American lecturers prepare food that reflects their own heritage. Our Lithuanian colleagues sample this food, copying recipes for the items they like.

Working in close quarters with finicky equipment, the Americans spent the afternoon making dishes like banana pudding, pasta salad, wild rice salad, chicken pie, and blueberry cobbler. We offered chips with dips, hummus, home fries, and pizza. The day was hot, and the menu required a lot of work. That evening it rained, and we had to move the feast indoors at the last minute. Most of the 300 teachers stayed to sample the fare, and the lobby of the PPRC was filled to capacity with hungry people squeezing from table to table.

As I moved around the room, I overheard two comments that warmed my heart. "The Americans," one woman said, practicing her English, "They always bring us something different." "Yes," her colleague replied, "Other groups bring us curricula, but no one else does this. No one else gives of themselves like this."

Today, A.P.P.L.E. is not the only group communicating sound teaching methods. A.P.P.L.E. is not the only group presenting curricular innovations. But there is still a need for A.P.P.L.E. services, and A.P.P.L.E. has found its niche. In addition to our established program, we offer ourselves as colleagues and friends. We share our strengths and our successes, but we are not afraid to admit that we fall short of our goals. We forge interpersonal bonds that endure long



This summer as A.P.P.L.E. lecturers prepared food for International Night, they shared more than academics and food – they shared themselves. (From left) Katie Dunlap, Ruta Kazlauskaite (interpreter), Paul Batezel, and Irena Ross.

after the summer session ends.

It is not time to cut down this mighty tree.

Katie Dunlap

ANSWERING THE NEED TO RAISE FUNDS

Interested in how you might raise some money for A.P.P.L.E.? Read on to find out what some other A.P.P.L.E. members have done, and maybe you'll come up with a way to make some money for A.P.P.L.E., too. Keep in mind that we're always looking for articles about the work of A.P.P.L.E. and its members. This year we'd love to focus on ways that you've raised money. We'll be on the lookout for your success stories.

Katie Dunlap, A.P.P.L.E.'s new president, took a new approach and has asked the members of the A.P.P.L.E. leadership to each raise \$1,000 this year. Several people in leadership roles have answered Katie's challenge in quick fashion.

Mort Strom, a member of MBNA New England Educational Grants Foundation, named A.P.P.L.E. as the recipient of a \$1,000 charitable donation. Mort is a retired high school instructor and former chair of the Board of Selectmen in Camden, Maine. His wife Jean is a former science teacher. They are the proud parents of first-time A.P.P.L.E. lecturer **Dr. Kim Strom-Gottfried**.

Dr. Phil Taylor decided to hold a car wash. Initially, he planned to soap 1,000 cars at \$1.00 a car. Fortunately for Phil, his wife, Bee, came to his rescue and donated \$1,000 to A.P.P.L.E. That must have been some clean car!

Ritone Rudaitis took Katie's challenge to heart and raised \$1,000 in a way that she doesn't consider anything special or creative. (We're thinking that if she raised \$1,000 – it's special!) Ritone says that she appealed to the Lithuanian Scouts Collegiate Division's Vydunas Foundation, where she presently serves on the Board of Directors.

The mission of Vydunas Foundation (VF) is to loan money to students of Lithuanian heritage with a promise to pay it back, so that other needy students could benefit as well. Since its establishment 50 years ago, VF has provided stipends to some 215 students and has published at least 17 books. After Ritone's request, A.P.P.L.E. received \$1,000 from VF.

Knowing that VF had been contributing \$300.00 each year to A.P.P.L.E., Ritone felt that she needed to raise an additional \$300 to truly meet her commitment to Katie's challenge. Help for the additional money came from fellow board member Algirdas Stepaitis and his wife, Laimute. Making their donation, they commented that they had always admired and supported

the work that A.P.P.L.E. does in Lithuania. Ritone added, “Needless to say, I was very grateful and touched by their generosity and kindness.”

Ritone offered the suggestion of sending cards, perhaps around Thanksgiving, to personal friends, asking for their support. Then she wished good luck to one and all in their fund-raising efforts.

Vitas Underys raised funds in response to a letter that he received last year from the director of the special education school in Kaisiadorys, requesting adaptive computer equipment.

“With urging and support from family members, I decided to try to ask for donations from the Lithuanian community,” Vitas said. “I passed out letters at a concert in Chicago, while my wife passed out letters in Detroit. We picked one Sunday in May. This turned out to be a great success.”

The letters explained the project and had envelopes attached with their address. “I wanted to get the word out and let people decide if they wanted to donate,” he said. Turns out, that people did indeed want to donate. The donations began to arrive, interestingly from all over the country—Boston to Omaha.

In Chicago an article was printed in the local Lithuanian paper, *Draugas Lithuanian Catholic News*. The community in Detroit showed a great amount of interest in this project as well. “I was moved by how many friends supported the effort, but also at how many strangers donated to the cause,” Vitas added.

They raised \$2,500, which was used to purchase augmentative communication devices, books, and adaptive computer equipment.

Vivian Williams. My partner, Sr. Kathy Brazda, CSJ, and I were regional seminar leaders in the Religion and Ethics strand for the last two years. We had a wonderful time meeting people and seeing wonderful towns and cities! A large part of what we do involves catechesis (teaching about) and modeling ways to pray that help people, especially children, experience Roman Catholic rituals and symbols “up close and personal.” We believe that children are often a little lost in the big Sunday assembly and worship space.

This kind of prayer takes some “stuff.” We needed bowls for water and oil; good pottery bowls for incense; olive oil; large candles; small, thin congregational candles; incense; charcoal; and cloths in the colors of the liturgical seasons of the church. We also are very conscious of how precious paper is in Lithuania, so we were determined to find some nice journals or notebooks for our teachers.

To this end, we decided to ask “almsgiving” of the church communities with which we work. Kathy is the pastoral associate of Notre Dame de Chicago, and I am the liturgy director for the St. Giles Family Mass Community in Oak Park, IL. “Almsgiving” is the term

for money specifically collected for people in need. In advance of the collection, we let the churches know about A.P.P.L.E., and the good work it does in all areas of education. We explained that we would be in seminar with at least 70 teachers. This generated interest and gave the parishioners a chance to ask questions about the work. We then had what is called a “special” collection, or “almsgiving” collection, for our trip.

We were amazed at the money we raised! Kathy’s church took one collection, and mine took two. Her church contributed about \$600 and mine about \$900. We disbursed the money in various ways. Some went directly to A.P.P.L.E. for scholarships, and general support. Quite a bit went to buying the journals, and sending them overseas. We spent a great deal for our prayer supplies in the cities in which we taught. The teachers “drew” for the supplies at the end of the seminar. We also gave donations to the catechetical centers in Kaunas and Panevezys.

In my experience, when asked, people are very generous. It helps to let them know how their money will be spent, and what the circumstances of the recipients are. Kathy and I were very grateful to our church communities and immediately let them know what we did with the money. What our church members gave was basically “pocket change.” But, God bless them, they really emptied their pockets.

Vivian Williams

A.P.P.L.E. 2003: THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF EDUCATION

The poet John Donne said it best when he wrote, “No man is an island.” Association and cooperation among individuals may not be as essential for survival as food and shelter, but as soon as humans satisfy their hunger and gain protection from the elements, they begin to seek fellowship with other people. This fellowship gives rise to community, which is both a place, such as a neighborhood or a town, and a set of relationships.

Urie Bronfenbrenner, a refugee from communism and a famous Cornell professor, explains:

“The understanding of human development demands going beyond direct observation of behavior on the part of one or two persons in the same place; it requires an examination of multi-person systems of interaction not limited to a single setting and must take into account aspects of the environment beyond the immediate situation containing the subject.” (1977, p. 514)

Social Context. Bronfenbrenner visualized relationships as a series of nested circles or social systems. At the center of his diagram is the individual, surrounded

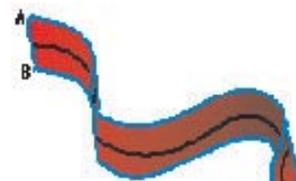
by family. The definition of family is broad and includes biological parents and others who have accepted responsibility for raising a child. The next circle includes the people with whom the child and family interact on a regular basis: people in the neighborhood, a church, a school, peers, and other friends. The outside circle depicts larger systems such as the courts, mass media, the medical community, a school district, and the church universal. Two other important systems affect these circles: the attitudes and ideologies of the culture and the impact of time on the pattern of life.

Social Products. Social scientists used to think in linear terms: A causes B; B causes C. Now we know that the world is much more complex. A may cause B, but B produces changes in A, too. For example, suppose a new illegal drug is introduced to a community and brought into a school by a gang. Many outcomes are possible. Parents and teachers may label the school as a bad environment, creating the impression that the school provides a fertile opportunity for the sale of illegal drugs by other gangs. This would result in an increase in the number of pushers and the number of users at that school. The culture of the school would continue to deteriorate. Deaths from suicide and drug use would increase. School attendance would decrease. More students would fail, and fewer graduates would have marketable job skills, further demoralizing the town.

Alternatively, parents and teachers might band together to keep pushers off school grounds, to educate children about the dangers of drugs, and to provide more enticing activities for them. They might ask police to take a more active role in arresting pushers; they might insist that the court system punish those who attempt to sell illegal drugs. They might persuade the medical system to provide effective, accessible treatment for students who have become addicted. They might also mount a television campaign to tell others of their success and promote replication. Through these actions, the school is strengthened. People—working together—change the community and the community, in turn, changes the school, making it a better place for students, teachers, and members of the community.

A Visual Image. The symbol for 2003 will be the Möbius strip, a curious phenomenon first identified by August Ferdinand Möbius, a 19th-century mathematician, astronomer, and pioneer in the field of topography.

The Möbius strip has provided inspiration for writers and artists such as M. C. Escher, with his famous drawing of ants crawling on an endless grid. In industry, giant Möbius strips are often used as conveyor belts. They last longer because each “side” gets the same amount of wear.



A.P.P.L.E. family in Vilnius – 2002

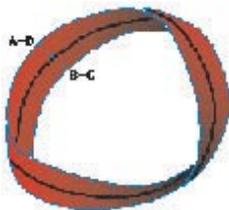


The A.P.P.L.E. staff enjoyed a closing party in the courtyard of PPRC. Part of the evening was spent in song. Participating in the singing are (from left) Maryte Speiciene, Phil Taylor, Anele Biliunaite, Katie Hoyle, and Gita Kupcinskas.



The A.P.P.L.E. donation of benches for the area near the apple orchard in front of PPRC gave rest and relaxation this summer. Shown here are (from left) Shirley Sabo, Giedre Stankunas, and Phil Taylor.

Free-style skiers have named one of their acrobatic stunts the Möbius strip. Because it goes on forever, the Möbius is also the symbol for infinity. If you turn it sideways and pinch the middle together, you will see the familiar symbol.



At their Spring Meeting, A.P.P.L.E. Board members crafted the following poem to capture the theme of 2003. Like the Möbius strip, the poem summarizes the interconnections of social context and the relevance of this theme for A.P.P.L.E. and education in Lithuania.

The Apple Tree

With life comes love.

From love, springs hope.

Hope spawns joy and joy brings strength.

In strength, there is freedom—

With freedom comes responsibility for life.

Request for Proposals. For 2003, proposals should tie strand plans to the theme *The Social Context of Education*. Three examples illustrate possible connections:

- In agriculture, a farmer's success at the end of the year depends not only on weather but also on demand for a product and the ability to get the product to market.

- In math, problems should deal with concrete examples that children can use in daily life.

- In library science, language arts, and history, teachers must consider what parents want their children to read, which books are available in the Lithuanian language, and which books will help children gain the skills they need to function in society today.

All proposals must be submitted to the President, Dr. Katie Dunlap, by Friday, January 10, 2003. For more information, please visit the A.P.P.L.E. Web site at www.applequest.org.

CURRENT CONDITIONS AFFECTING EDUCATION IN LITHUANIA

Vaiva Vebra, one of the founders of A.P.P.L.E., a former Vice Minister of Education, and a current consultant to the Ministry of Education, was invited to address the A.P.P.L.E. Board in August. The purpose of her remarks was to give the Board a deeper, clearer understanding of current conditions in order that the Summer 2003 program might be of greatest benefit. A.P.P.L.E. president, Katie Dunlap, recorded her comments, summarized below.

Before they begin their work, A.P.P.L.E. volunteers need to know the actual, everyday concerns that teachers in Lithuania have. Our work needs a social

context of its own. Lithuanian teachers face intractable problems and personal, professional insecurity. The education system in Lithuania continues to employ antiquated systems that are overburdened by the need for reform. Key concerns include:

- In the next few years, negative demographic changes will drive changes in the educational system. Unfortunately, the country has 25% fewer first-graders than it did 10 years ago, and this means that the educational system will need to shed 25% of its work force in the coming years.

- Under Communism every collective farm—regardless of size—had a school with a full complement of teachers. Some schools had more teachers than students! Current economic conditions cannot support such waste.

- School structure has changed. In the past, many schools encompassed 12 grades, and an individual teacher would teach a particular group of children for four years in grades 1-4. A second teacher became responsible for the group from grades 5 through 12 and felt that she had “raised” these youth. The change to separate elementary and middle schools creates an emotional loss for many teachers, who are already worried about losing their jobs due to the changes in demographics.

- Principals are paid according to the number of children in their schools. When schools are split into smaller units, principals' incomes drop.

- Lithuania mandates compulsory education through 10th grade or age 16. There are four types of schools: Those that contain grades 1-4; those that contain grades 1-10; those that serve grades 1-12; and the gymnasias (grades 9-12). The overlap, especially in grades 9 and 10, is both expensive and prejudicial. There is talk of eliminating the 1-12 year schools by converting them either to basic schools or to gymnasias, but no solution has been adopted.

- Teachers are paid by the hour, as determined by the school director. Teachers have no tenure or annual wage, and they receive no remuneration for extracurricular activities, faculty meetings, supervisory meetings, peer supervision, cooperative learning, or consultation with parents. Often, teachers cobble together classes at several schools to earn a working wage.

- There are now two specialties in grades 11 and 12: humanities and science. The Ministry expects students to know which track they want to follow by the 10th grade. Teachers are blamed if students do not know what they want to do.

- There are empty class periods in which students do not have a class. In the U.S. these would be used for study hall or extracurricular activities. In Lithuania there are no comparable programs. Consequently, parents and teachers complain that students leave the school, smoke, drink, take illicit drugs, and engage in

aggressive or antisocial behaviors. Students complain that there is nowhere to go but the streets. Clearly, there is a strong need for programming during these class periods; however, this would require money to pay teachers, and funds are not available.

- Economic conditions have improved over the past 12 months, and they are expected to continue to improve. The middle class is increasing statistically, but it exists at a lower level of consumer consumption. Nevertheless, gaps still exist, especially between the young and old, rural and urban, computer literate and computer illiterate.

- The number of children in rural areas is increasing, while the number of children in urban areas is not. Alcoholism and joblessness are higher in rural areas, where educational programs are generally not as strong. Teachers may not live where jobs exist.

- Many families are raising foster children in order to obtain the financial benefits. There is a great risk that some may not care adequately for the children and may mistreat them.

- Suicide rates are still climbing, and there is now little shame associated with suicide. Bullying and other forms of aggressive behavior are also rising in schools.

A.P.P.L.E. will address this last point directly next summer, but much of the rest lies beyond our charge. Still, we will need to be able to discuss these kinds of issues with Lithuanian teachers as we network with them.

The reform of the educational system will be guided by three documents that are currently being prepared. If each is accepted, together they will set the direction for future reform of the Lithuanian educational system. The documents are ambitious and consistent; however, not everyone supports the changes. Therefore, teachers are hearing mixed messages. The documents are:

1. *Law on Education*. This document was prepared by the Ministry. It has been submitted to Parliament for consideration at the fall session.

2. *Strategic Plan for 2002-2012*. This was prepared by a working group from the President's office. For more information (in English), consult <http://www.smm.lt>.

3. *UNESCO: Education for All*. The target is improved basic education. Lithuania falls into the Europe/North America region. This means goals for the country are high.

UNESCO is unique in that it encourages the establishment of community groups to consider local goals and an oversight group to establish a national plan. The Director of the Lithuanian Institute of Pedagogy, Pranas Gudynas, is a member of the team preparing the national plan. Additional information is available at http://www.smm.lt/nsf/nsf_prn_spaudai_engl.htm.

The three documents address social context and, therefore, directly relate to the A.P.P.L.E. theme for 2003. The documents aim to make the parts of the educational system more coherent. They call for improving benefits for everyone. Finally, they look toward improving the quality of education in Lithuania, making it more nearly commensurate with opportunities in Western Europe.

But the documents also have sparked some controversies. In addition, teachers do not always have access to the latest drafts of these proposals, and they may be confused by rumors and obfuscation.

- Preschool is to be mandatory for all children of families at risk of school failure.

- Kindergarten is to be universally available free of charge as part of the public school system for all children.

- Children will enter first grade at age 6 (now most wait until age 7).

- Education for prisoners is mandated through age 18.

- The connection between school attendance and family responsibility is addressed in that parents whose children do not attend school may forfeit welfare benefits.

Daunting challenges lie ahead for Lithuania's educators. Yet incremental progress is being made all the time, and we can be proud of A.P.P.L.E.'s contribution to that process.

WILLIAM P. WILLIAMS 1932 – 2002

Even though Bill Williams was not a longtime member of A.P.P.L.E., his enthusiasm was profound. Incredibly well-liked by his faculty and students at home, it was the same when Bill was with A.P.P.L.E.

In 2001 Bill worked with Barbara Henriques in the Administration Strand in Vilnius. This year illness forced Bill to leave Vilnius before the teaching began. Hoping that the memory of his previous year in Vilnius, would bring a smile to Bill, Barbara wrote to his wife, Marianne. Barbara has shared that e-mail with us here, which give us a lovely insight.

Marianne,

Last night I found myself thinking about Bill and I thought he might enjoy hearing these memories of our trip to Lithuania last summer.

Let him know that I was remembering our trip into the National Forest with Robert and the revelry that we enjoyed by the campfire near the river. I remember him trying to teach us the song "Come Home Patty 'Reilly". As a matter of fact I remember him still trying



Bill Williams (right) with A.P.P.L.E. lecturers in Vilnius 2001—(from left) Phil Taylor, Aldona Vosyliute (interpreter), and Barbara Henriques.

to teach us on our way home and as he went up to his room. It was a wonderful evening.

When we returned to Vilnius, the dining hall was closed so we went into town for dinner. We went to one of Phil's favorite restaurants and sat outside to have dinner. As we sat there having a drink before dinner we looked up and saw a fleet of hot air balloons moving through the air in Old Town. We found out that this was an annual race that takes place in early August, but never having been there that late in the summer I had never known about it. It was an amazing site. Bill's comment to me was, "Does it get any better than this?"

I hope he enjoys these remembrances, he certainly knew how to enjoy a good time.

Barbara

Bill received his bachelor's degree in history and government from Boston College and master of education degree from Boston State College. He was an Army veteran of the Korean War, where he served as a military policeman in Germany, and throughout the United Kingdom, Ireland, Belgium, and France.

He was trained at the University of Washington in Seattle to teach English in Loey, Thailand, for the Peace Corps. He was an administrative assistant to the principal in Iselin, NJ, and vice principal in Colonia, NJ. He was also principal at Heminway Park School in Watertown, CT, and retired as principal of Watertown High School.

Besides his wife, Marianne, he leaves two sons, two daughters, a brother, three sisters, two grandchildren, and one step-grandson. Contributions may be made to American Cancer Society, 538 Preston Avenue, P.O. Box 1004, Meriden, CT 06450.

A.P.P.L.E. DISTINCTIONS

The purpose of this column is to showcase the creative output of our lecturers. If you would like to be included in this column for a publication or milestone in your profession, please send the information to Katie Hoyle, 1264 Locust Creek Road, Sylva, NC 28779, or e-mail to KatieHoyle@aol.com.

Shirley Sabo. On September 18, 2002, Shirley was awarded the State of Connecticut, Secretary of the State's Public Service Award. A Prospect Town Council member for 20 years, Shirley has been a member of various community and church organizations for 45 years. Her work includes such areas as serving on committees for choosing educational personnel, community beautification, and teaching church catechism.

In a congratulatory letter from the Secretary of State, the essence of this award was outlined: "As a dedicated volunteer who has served your community, you are an example of what makes our towns and cities work. Your commitment to your community, and your willingness to serve your fellow citizens is what makes Connecticut such a wonderful place to live."

Shirley attended the Awards Ceremony with her husband, George, and daughter, Katie. It would seem that community service runs in the family. George was the recipient of this award last year.

Vitas Underys. This year, the Oakland County (Michigan) Arc presented its 2002 Inclusion Leadership Award to Vitas Underys. As a teacher of students with severe and multiple impairments, Vitas was nominated for the award by a group of parents from his school. "This award came as a total surprise to me," he said.

The award was for facilitating inclusion, and helping open doors for kids with special needs. "The most important aspect of the award for me was that the building staff and the district were well represented at the banquet, and that I was able to thank them publicly. I thought that an inclusion award needed to be inclusive, and I dragged all 20 people up to the stage with me."

Vitas feels that recognition by others for facilitating inclusion is essential in making inclusion successful. The work of inclusion is not done by an "I" or a "me," but it always has been and always will be done by a "we".

Anna Scheyett. Anna, a first-time lecturer in Vilnius this summer, received the Excellence in Teaching Award in May 2002. This award, the most prestigious the School offers, is presented by students in the University of North Carolina School Social Work in Chapel Hill.

Anna was also elected by her peers to the Board of Directors of the North Carolina Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). As a member of the Board, Anna will be responsible for setting policy and overseeing the activities of the state-wide organization.

Jurate Sucylaite. Jurate, a poet and prose writer, has published a new novel *SUSITIKIMAI SU RAGANA* (The Meetings with the Witch). The novel was published in the Lithuanian language in September 2002. The heroine of the novel is one of the few of the living who are aware of the world of dead. Her interactions with the dead lead her to comprehend many of the ills that plague Lithuanian society. The novel is about the quest for psychological freedom that must be achieved before political freedom can be realized in full. There were several presentations of this novel, which led Lithuanian scholars and writers

to note the professional growth in Jurate's writing, as well as the importance of this book in Lithuanian culture.

Lois Danes. Lois has created two Web sites that are devoted to helping others read better and enjoy it more. They can be found at www.improveread.com and www.improveread2.com. These contain books for small children as well as vocabulary and pronunciation help for older persons. The *Phonics Handbook* is the same as was given by Lois to the teachers that she worked with in A.P.P.L.E. two years ago.

Laura Byrne. Laura has recently received her fifth certificate in the field of curriculum and instruction. This certificate, which was inspired by her two trips to Lithuania, is for **TEACHER OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE**. Laura is currently employed as a Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant in Millburn, New Jersey.

WHAT CAN YOU BUY FOR \$30 IN 2003?

YOU CAN CHANGE THE LIFE OF A LITHUANIAN EDUCATOR

If you have been attuned to international news recently, you know that Lithuania is attempting to join NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. This historic move will require many changes. Former A.P.P.L.E. president Vaiva Vebra has outlined some of the challenges for the educational system in this newsletter.

A.P.P.L.E. is poised to help. The goal of our summer program is to assist with the reformation of Lithuania's educational infrastructure so that all Lithuanian citizens and youth-the citizens of tomorrow-will have the skills they need to sustain democracy and freedom. The unfortunate reality is that the costs of transportation and lodging are still a real-but unnecessary-barrier to participation in the summer program.

This summer, we hope to provide a scholarship to every participant. We believe that we can accomplish this for only \$30 a person. In return for your tax-deductible donation, you will receive a personal letter providing a first-hand account of the influence of the summer program on the life and professional development of a Lithuanian educator.

Scholarships are not the only way to help sustain democracy in Lithuania. For \$100, you can provide an ink cartridge and two boxes of paper so that A.P.P.L.E. can distribute lesson notes to teachers. For \$150, you can provide a stipend for a translator. For \$450, you can underwrite the distribution of this newsletter. For \$1,000, you can send a US lecturer to Lithuania.

During the holiday season, when so many of us in the United States have so much, consider honoring a family member or friend with a gift that can really change the world. You will be making a difference!

Send your contribution (along with your 2003 membership dues of \$25.00) to
A.P.P.L.E., P. O. Box 617, Durham CT 06422.

Reminder

A.P.P.L.E. is a 501(3)c organization, which means that your gifts are tax-deductible. Our tax exemption number is 23-2682202. Because of strict Internal Revenue Service regulations, we cannot accept scholarships intended for specific people. If you would like to support relatives or friends, please do so directly. The A.P.P.L.E. scholarship program is intended for Lithuanian educators who do not have friends in the United States.

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Send correspondence concerning A.P.P.L.E. to:

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1687 Rackett Branch Road
Collettsville, NC 28611
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YES! I would like to join in your efforts toward educational reform in Lithuania.

I would like to make a contribution to:

The Scholarship Fund. (\$30 supports one teacher. You will receive a personal letter from the teacher who receives your donation.) _____

The Stipend Fund. (\$250 supports an interpreter or Lithuanian lecturer.) _____

I am enclosing the following amount for annual membership:

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