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The A.P.P.L.E. Seed

(American Professional Partnership
for
Lithuanian Education)

E-Zine

from Kaunas School for the Deaf

In This Issue

A.P.P.L.E. Member Profile - Kristen Ross

Where Has A.P.P.L.E. Been?

A.P.P.L.E. Board Spring Meeting

Fundraising Corner

Dear John,



Karl Janowitz

Message from the President

It is wonderful to be in Lithuania at this time when the Winter has gradually transitioned into the early stages of Spring. I am working on A.P.P.L.E. Summer 2012. Within a few days I should have completed important meetings regarding details for our Summer seminars. Specifics will be provided as soon as details have been finalized. Our Lithuanian friends and I wish you

SVEIKINAME SU PAVASARIU!

LINKIME GRAZIU IR PALAIMINTU SV.VELYKU!

I look forward to presenting my findings at A.P.P.L.E.'s Spring meeting in New Jersey.

Dr. Karl P. Janowitz
President

Mission Statement:

"The American Professional Partnership for Lithuanian Education (A.P.P.L.E.) is a volunteer international non-profit educational organization. With the support of the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science, A.P.P.L.E. partners with Lithuanian educators to foster the implementation of innovative educational approaches that contribute to the development of a democratic society."

A.P.P.L.E. Member Profile - Kristen Ross



Kristen Ross, Ed.D.

As an administrator of 32 years, my experience includes being a classroom teacher (reading and English), department chair, assistant principal of high school, principal of elementary and middle school, assistant superintendent for curriculum, college instructor, supervisor of student teachers, and educational consultant for inner city schools. All of this took place in the state of Illinois which provides a variety of locations (urban, rural, suburban) simply because of its size and expanse. When one has this kind of experience, "been there, done that," is a common statement. Not so this past summer. I had my first experience facilitating the administrative strand in Lithuania with Ed Topar under the auspices of A.P.P.L.E. In addition to the challenge of language and location (12-13 hours of travel plus layover), there was the concern of the differences in the education system and practices. What I learned was that with the help of skilled interpreters (and being adept at reading non-verbal communication) language can be managed positively. I also learned that the destination was well worth the travel challenges. Beyond the issues of language and location, not surprisingly, I

learned the more education systems are different, the more the challenges are the same.

The A.P.P.L.E. staff (both those in Lithuania and those that traveled over) were so supportive and helpful. They took newcomers like me under their wing and helped with everything from class work to tips on how to survive in the new environment. The participants, Lithuanian educators, were very dedicated. The school directors we worked with were so proud of their schools and committed to helping their students succeed. They experience the same kinds of issues that administrators in the U.S. do, and like us, work to maintain a focus on student learning and school improvement.

There are several impressive aspects of the A.P.P.L.E. program. One is that they have worked to train leaders who can take over the professional development work so that in 2011 there were as many Lithuanian instructors as there were American. They have also implemented a grant process that provided teachers with small amounts of money to implement new ideas in their classrooms. I was able to see presentations about science projects working with water analysis and environmental studies, as well as programs to increase students' love of reading. There were several grant project presentations given and each had been very successful with the students.

Last summer I was doubly blessed. I heard frequently from my fellow instructors that this was an especially good summer due to beautiful weather and greatly improved accommodations. In addition, I was able to share ideas about educational change with the school directors and to provide them with time to share knowledge and experience with each other. It was a professional growth experience for all of us.

On a personal level, I was also able to explore my Lithuanian roots. Having grown up on the south side of Chicago, I visited "the old neighborhood" that my father grew up in, sampled Lithuanian food and experienced some of the traditions, but didn't know my grandparents. Part of my interest and motivation in going to Lithuania was that my grandparents had come from there at the age of 18 and started a life in America. I was never able to hear stories of their homeland or have food memories from them, though my father had learned to cook some of the favorites. For me, this was a personal growth experience: to visit the country that my family came from and see the qualities and characteristics that were so much a part of them - love of nature, great kindness to others, tenaciousness - even the love of chocolate! I was able to visit the town my grandparents grew up in, see relatives' headstones in the cemetery, and pray in the church that was begun around the time of their early childhood. The priest there is searching old archives for information on the names of my great grandparents. During my time in Lithuania, I saw my father in so many of the people I met, and had a sense of knowing my grandparents even though they weren't alive when I was born. It was a truly amazing summer that was like nothing I have ever experienced before both professionally and personally. My thanks to A.P.P.L.E. for giving me this opportunity.

Where Has A.P.P.L.E. Been?

As A.P.P.L.E. prepares for another summer in Lithuania, we are reminded in this "vintage" article, forwarded by Jane Serbent, of all the places A.P.P.L.E. has been over the past 21 years. During that time, there have been two types of educational programs: two-week summer seminars and one-week regionals. Until recently, Vilnius has been the annual focal site for the two-week summer sessions.

A.P.P.L.E.'s other offering, called "regionals," evolved over the years. After the summer of 1992, a couple of American lecturers were invited to do day presentations at various locations. Dr. K. Phillip Taylor was active with this phase of reaching out. The next step developed after the 1993 session as some of the returning lecturers were recognized

from the past year. The best example was Dr. Karl Janowitz in his association with Dr. Grigonis through the Special Education Strand. As a result of their common interest, Dr. Janowitz has made annual spring trips to Kaunas and the surrounding region.

The 1992/1993 strand titles dealing with different aspects of elementary education, produced invitations to Dr. Joseph Kalla and Walter Serbent to do one-week sessions in different towns during the fall and spring while schools were in session. At that time this extended involvement was referred to as satellite programs rather than regionals and consisted of one to three weeks' duration depending on the request received from towns throughout the country. This phase of teaching topics pertinent to the elementary level lasted for about five years when it was replaced by one-week regionals following the Vilnius session. This permitted educational directors to request specific topics they wished to have covered for their staff.

A later phase beyond the summer program had to do with computer literacy and was conducted by Amanda and Algirdis Muliolis during the winter session. This took place for several years.

So where has A.P.P.L.E. been? All over the country! A.P.P.L.E. reached out to thousands of Lithuanian teachers. Besides Vilnius, the summer locations were at Alanta, Birstonas, Druskininkai, Kaunas, Kedainiai, Klaipeda, Marijampole, Mazeikiai, Panevezys, Salcininkai, Siauliai, Silute, Taurage, Trakia and Utena.

And there was Alytus, Anyksciai, Birzai, Buozenai, Daugai, Elektrenai, Gargzdai, Gelgaudiskis, Giruliai, Kavarskas, Kazlu Ruda, Jonava, Joniskis, Jurbakas, Kavarskas, Kazlu ruda, Kaisiadorys, Lazdijai, Moletai, N. Akmeme, Pabaiskas, Pakruojis, Pasvalys, Plunge, Prienai, Rietavas, Seda, Seduva, Silale, Simnas, Skaudville, Svencionys, Sventoji, Skuodas, smalininkai, Taruagnai, Telsiai, Ukmerge, Varena, Venta, Veisiejai, Visaginas and Zapyskis! Many of these have had multiple visits.

Yes, A.P.P.L.E. has indeed been all over the country!

A.P.P.L.E. Board Spring Meeting

The Spring Meeting of the Board of Directors and the Annual Meeting for the purpose of electing officers will be held the next weekend, April 14-15 in Belmar, New Jersey. A report on the meeting will be in the next EZine.

Fundraising Corner

Have you noticed that putting your money in the bank isn't much of an investment these days with CDs paying about 1% interest and savings accounts even less? Why not invest in the A.P.P.L.E. Scholars' Fund instead? Your return in dollars will be about the same as from a bank (next to nothing), but in terms of promoting education and giving opportunities to students they otherwise would not have, the return on investment will be great. In the last few issues of this EZine we have given you examples of some of the innovative projects teachers and their students are carrying out with just a small grant from the Scholars' Fund.

Find out more about donating to A.P.P.L.E. on the [A.P.P.L.E. Website](#). If you wish, you may designate your donation for the Scholars' Fund.

This electronic newsletter is designed for quick delivery of A.P.P.L.E.-related news to an audience that includes current A.P.P.L.E. members, friends of A.P.P.L.E. and interested potential members both within the United States and Lithuania.

Increasing communication and the exchange of ideas among our members increases the strength of our organization and our ability to be relevant to our Lithuanian constituents. Exciting and pertinent events occur all year round, and we want to keep all of you abreast of what is happening, when it's happening.

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