

John Baltrus

From: A.P.P.L.E. (American Professional Partnership for Lithuanian Education) [gail@appleamericanprofessionalpartnershipforlithuanianeducation.ccsend.com] on behalf of A.P.P.L.E. (American Professional Partnership for Lithuanian Education) [jonaspb@verizon.net]
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 5:00 AM
To: jonaspb@verizon.net
Subject: News from A.P.P.L.E. (American Professional Partnership for Lithuanian Education)

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

(American Professional Partnership
for
Lithuanian Education)

E-Zine

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Dear John,



Karl Janowitz

Message from the President

February is here! We hope we are nearing the end of Winter as we finalize A.P.P.L.E.'s plans for our Summer 2013 Seminars. Interesting applications have been received and

I have been in contact with our Lithuanian colleagues in planning for the Summer.

We are looking forward to A.P.P.L.E.'s Spring meeting, which will be held the weekend of April 13 - 14 in Baltimore. Summer plans as well as future A.P.P.L.E. initiatives will be addressed.

I wish you a wonderful, productive month and, as always, look forward to your input.

Sincerely,

Karl

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 - Myra Goodwin



Myra Goodwin

In 1992, I began a love affair...with Lithuania. No, I am not Lithuanian, except perhaps in my heart. Initially, I was drawn to the country due to my lifelong passion of serving as a teacher and advocate for people with special needs.

It began with meeting members of Dainava, a singing group from Alytus who were performing in a small, but somewhat progressive, town in western North Carolina. Katie Hoyle, a dear friend, became friends with members of the group who suggested that she sponsor a performing group to travel to Lithuania. Katie and I had worked on projects together. Because of our shared love for many of our students with severe disabilities, Katie suggested that an inclusive performing group be formed. Our purpose would be to demonstrate that people with severe disabilities can contribute to performances along with their non-disabled peers.

While in contact with the Lithuanian Embassy, we were told about a newly organized

group of Lithuanian American educators whose goal was to assist with Lithuanian educational reform. The group was A.P.P.L.E. The Soviet era was ending marking the beginning a new era of education. At that time Katie and I had no idea of the impact A.P.P.L.E. would have on our lives.

Our first trip was to assess the challenges we would face in bringing students in wheelchairs to Lithuania. We spent two weeks assessing access to public buildings such as hotels, schools, airports etc. We not only didn't observe accommodations, we didn't observe individuals with disabilities. We discovered that most people with special needs were living in orphanages or institutions.

My love affair began during our first visit, as we lived in the homes of families in Alytus. We learned about the Lithuanian countryside, summer gardens, the culture, the history, but most of all, the people. We were treated like queens and enjoyed every minute. I can even remember that I had my first taste of Lithuanian champagne, which I love to this day!

In 1993, after 2 years of planning and fund raising, we were scheduled to take our group to perform in Lithuania. Due to an economic crisis that summer, the festival was canceled. The airlines refunded the money for the tickets, but our hearts were broken that the inclusive performance did not happen. That summer Katie and I taught for the first time with A.P.P.L.E. It was through this experience that the second part of my love affair began. For the next 10 years I taught special education teachers in various cities throughout Lithuania. I met teachers who were creative, intelligent, and motivated to change the education for people with special needs. I was always amazed how often I would present ideas and strategies, to discover the next year that entire classrooms and schools were implementing them. It seemed that when the seed was planted it often resulted in a tree of blossoms the next year. I saw the A.P.P.L.E dream begin to be fulfilled.

Many of my most memorable experiences occurred after I received a call from Emilija Sakadolskis. She knew that I had been asking to teach in a hands-on environment with children, instead of the customary style of lectures. Emilija began the conversation by saying, "Well Myra, you are going to get your wish. This summer you will direct the A.P.P.L.E. portion of a summer camp organized by Viltis, a parent support group for children with disabilities". I immediately began remembering that I did not consider myself a camper and I certainly didn't know how I would be in a primitive camp setting. But the exciting opportunity was too much to allow to slip by, and I soon learned that the simple living conditions were just fine!

The first summer camp was amazing despite organizational challenges. Fulfilling the needs of the teachers attending the camp as well as providing information for parents seemed never ending. As we worked to convert cabins into classrooms, made adjustments to the topics we previously thought were needed, and discussed ideas for forming relationships with the teachers, parents, and kids, we spent many sleepless nights. I became close friends with many Viltis parents who described the struggle of having a child with special needs during the Soviet era. They were advised to place their children in institutions since there were no services to help them if they kept them at home. Viltis was comprised of a gutsy, determined group of parents who supported each other as they faced the challenges of daily living.

Whether it was taking a young adult male with cerebral palsy to a restaurant without his mother, or seeing the eyes of a mother or teacher who realized that others were seeing a child with a disability as truly beautiful, or realizing that teachers were thinking in terms of what a child CAN do instead of what he can't, all of us who taught were changed forever. That year camp was a miracle and we knew that it would continue.

Experience has shown me that change is slow. When asked about the status of Lithuanians with special needs, the word "inconsistent" describes it well. Depending on which part of the country, whether in a village or a city, in an institution, an orphanage or a public school, the education provided is different. Inclusion is becoming more accepted, however in a country with few community supports and little funding for schools it still remains more of a concept than a practice. Providing appropriate academic and positive behavioral instruction remains essential in meeting the needs of all students, including those on the autistic spectrum or with behavioral disabilities. Putting theory into teaching practice is a challenge, but it is important that teachers become proficient in the application of research based teaching strategies in order to maximize learning. There continues to be training needs in the area of special education coupled with working toward seeing all people as valuable members of society. Hopefully A.P.P.L.E. can assist in meeting these needs and I look forward to being part of this effort. And, my love affair continues.

Myra Goodwin is a Behavior Consultant and Autism Specialist in North Carolina.

Editor's Note: We are actively looking for members of A.P.P.L.E. to profile in upcoming EZines. If you wish to submit a profile or suggest someone's profile you would like to see, please contact us by simply replying to this EZine email.

Lithuanian Scholars' Fund Awards Announced

A.P.P.L.E. recently announced the [Lithuanian Scholars' Fund Awards for 2012-2013](#). This year we were able to make 19 awards for a total of \$7,650. In the next couple of EZines, we will bring you brief descriptions of a few of the top-ranked proposals. The [A.P.P.L.E. website](#) also contains final reports for all of the projects that were funded last year. We encourage you to read how your donations were able to permit school children in Lithuania to participate in worthwhile educational activities that they might not have otherwise had an opportunity to enjoy.

This month, we feature the highest-rated proposal submitted by Renata Bogusko of Vilnius Salininku gimnazija. Renata was a participant in the 2012 A.P.P.L.E. summer seminars, where she attended the session on the use of Google Earth in geography lessons.

The title of the project is "Musical - An Educational Activity Supported by Interdisciplinary Connections." The school has a strong focus on integrated (music, dance, literature, art, technology) creative activities. Participation in community celebrations is encouraged as part of the teacher's efforts to involve students in creative, educational activities. Presentation of the musical "Spider's Wedding" will show the possibility of creative activities to bring together not only students and their parents, but community members as well.

The objectives of the project are 1) to perpetuate a common creative joy among the school's community members; 2) to provide students the opportunity to experience the integration of a variety of creative activities; 3) to occupy the students with meaningful curricular activities.

The expected impacts of the project are 1) students will familiarize themselves with new creative activities; 2) community building; 3) a professionally produced musical owing to the acquisition of decorations, costumes and equipment; 4) development of students' aesthetic tastes, courage to speak/sing in public, sense of responsibility, stage attitude and team work skills; 5) attraction of students to creative activities; 6) it will serve as an example to the school and community as a creative educational activity.

The project will be implemented between February and May of this year. The musical will be performed for the school and community, as well as the Eglute kindergarten. The project was funded for the requested amount of 1200 LT, which will be used for clothing, materials, and microphones.

Fundraising Corner

Would you like to support future projects awarded through the Lithuanian Scholars' Fund? Now is the perfect time to make a gift to A.P.P.L.E.

You may click on the button below to make a donation using PayPal. Make sure to add a note if you wish that your donation be specifically used for a Lithuanian Scholars' Fund grant.

What will different levels of donations accomplish?

- For \$100, you can provide an ink cartridge and paper so that A.P.P.L.E. can distribute lesson notes to teachers.
- For \$200, you can provide a stipend for a translator.
- For \$450, you can underwrite the distribution of our newsletter.
- For \$500, you can sponsor a Scholar's Fund Grant. Lesser amounts will be combined to fund a grant.

A minimum donation of \$25-individual or \$40-family will enroll you as a member of A.P.P.L.E. for one year.



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

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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