

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



(American Professional Partnership

for

Lithuanian Education)

## E-Zine

### In This Issue

Organizational Development Message

Heard in Lithuania

A.P.P.L.E. Membership Profile

Summer Program Activities

Quotables and Quizzes

### Greetings!



### Message from the President

It was great to spend some time with our Board Members and Officers at our Annual Spring Meeting held in Milan, Michigan last month, and a heartfelt thanks to our hosts Sue Kohfeldt and Jim Brousseau for organizing the event. We enjoyed lively debate and discussion on a variety of issues dealing with re-organization and A.P.P.P.L.E.'s plans for the future.

Now, we are busily planning for our A.P.P.L.E. programming in Lithuania this summer.

The theme for the 2010 A.P.P.L.E. Programs focuses on topics and strategies that have been

identified as "Innovation and Best Practices in Education." Strands will include: Administration, Developing an Effective Team Organization; The Response to Intervention Model; Supporting Learners in Reading; Inquiry and Student Involvement in the Biology Classroom; Computer Science, Google Apps in the Classroom; The School Librarian as a Resource for Students; Teachers and Researchers in Lithuanian Schools. The general lectures will be delivered by Audra Skukauskaite, PhD, on the topic of "Action Research as a Tool for Change."

Our program will take place at the Klaipeda Tourism School, located at 69 Taikos Gatve, in Klaipeda. The sessions will be held from July 12th to 16th and from July 19th to 23rd.

In addition, the Viltis/A.P.P.L.E. Special Education Program will focus on the theme "Adaptations and Modifications" as an integral part of an effective inclusion program. The Camp will operate from Saturday, July 10th through Wednesday, July 21st.

The Dr. Grigonis Special Education Program will operate a number of sessions in a variety of venues throughout the Kaunas Region.

The 20th Anniversary A.P.P.L.E. Cruise planned for this August has been cancelled due to lack of participation. Another celebration is in the works and more information on that will follow.

Happy Spring to all of you!

Vida (Strazdaite) Gavin, Ed. D.  
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."

**Organizational Development Message**



### **Former President Addresses Lithuanian Education**

The opportunity to speak with former President Valdas Adamkus, Ambassador Audrius Bruzga, philanthropist Jurate Kazickas and Curator Tatjana Lorkovic, exceeded even the best expectations of A.P.P.L.E. attendees, Barbara Henriques, Ed Topar, and Gail Cassidy.

The former president was the guest speaker at Yale University's MacMillan Center for Baltic Studies on April 14. He spoke about the opportunities made available to Lithuania over the last 20 years and the progress made as a result. He encouraged the audience to rethink definitions and old concepts in order to..."leave the Soviet labels behind them."

Adamkus spoke proudly about the Baltic States being the economic stars of the EU during this period, measured by their gross national product advances. In the area of education, he was quite clear when he stated his belief that Lithuanian teachers were on par with the best teachers in any of the EU nations. He expressed considerable pride in his country's educational advancements, which have produced employees who work in NASA, Silicon Valley and a number of prestigious United States corporations.

During the question/answer session, board member, Ed Topar, introduced himself as a representative of A.P.P.L.E., an organization that has been working in support of Lithuania's teachers for the past 20 years. He related that the organization was considering an increased focus on special education in the future and asked what the president thought about that change of emphasis.

The former president brightened visibly and stated that he was very familiar with the good work A.P.P.L.E. has contributed to the current quality of Lithuania's teachers and expressed his thanks for our consideration to now address the issue of improving the special education needs of Lithuania. He stated that he felt this was an important goal and Lithuania would welcome assistance in this area.

Later, at the reception, Ed was immediately approached by Audrius Bruzga, the Lithuanian Ambassador to the U.S. and Jurate Kazickas of the Kazickas Foundation, both of whom inquired at length regarding A.P.P.L.E.'s plans. Jurate indicated that she was also familiar with A.P.P.L.E. and suggested that Ed contact her relative to our plans in support of special needs programming. After an exchange of business cards, they agreed to follow-up their initial conversations with more detail in their next contact.

In a separate conversation with Barbara, Jurate mentioned support the Kazickas Foundation had provided for a pediatric hospital in Kaunas. The goals of Jurate and her family's foundation clearly embrace those of our mission statement to meet the needs of all of Lithuania's learners.

Barbara also spoke with the Curator of the Slavic and East European Collection of the Yale University Library, Tatjana Lorkovic. She described the work of board member Blanche Woolls with Lithuanian school librarians and her hopes to hold the International School Librarians Conference in Vilnius in the near future. Ms. Lorkovic indicated that she would be supportive of such a worthy effort.

President Adamkus was given a recent copy of our ezine, The A.P.P.L.E. Seed, that contained a picture of him with Amanda and Algirdas Muliolis. He was obviously pleased, recognized them immediately, and asked about them.

In summary, the immediate and strong response from the former president, the ambassador, and the philanthropist to Ed's question, reinforced our belief that support for the special education needs of Lithuania's children can and should be a primary focus for A.P.P.L.E. Further, that both financial and political support can be available to us if we accept the challenge and pursue the opportunity.

Submitted by Gail Cassidy

**After much discussion, the reorganization of A.P.P.L.E. is now a work in progress...** During the recent Annual Board of Directors Meetings held on April 10

& 11, the leadership team voted to reorganize in a variety of areas to strengthen the organization as it prepares for the challenges ahead in support of Lithuania's educational and social needs. With a timeline of four months to completion, such items as infrastructure adjustments, by-laws revisions, election policy edits, will all be immediate areas of focus for our officers and board members.

**Have you been considering becoming personally active in a worthwhile volunteer organization? *We have been looking for you!*** A.P.P.L.E. is actively recruiting volunteer members who feel their need to contribute to a cause larger than themselves. We have been an integral part of the positive development of the educational system of Lithuania for the past twenty (20) years as it emerged from fifty (50) years of Soviet rule.

There is much more work to be done !

We would welcome greater participation on the part of our members and friends in the continued development of our organization and the needed support we provide to the educational and social needs of Lithuania. **If you have thought about it....contact us.**

#### **ARTICLES**

Additionally, we want to remind you that **you are encouraged to send articles** to us that you feel would be of interest to our readers. They can be items that you have authored or articles from others, including photos, from whom you have received permission to duplicate and to publish.

### Heard in Lithuania

**Fulbright Science & Technology Fellowship applications available now....**The U.S. Embassy in Lithuania has announced the availability of forty-five (45) awards for Ph.D study at top U.S. institutions for the academic year 2011-2012.

The areas of study are science, technology and engineering. The deadline for application is June 1, 2010.

Applications should be made online at :

<https://apply.embark.com/student/fulbright/international/20/>

## A.P.P.L.E. Membership Profile



"WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO TO LITHUANIA?" On an otherwise unmemorable day, these words dropped into the subject line of my email queue, accompanied only by the typical sound of incoming mail. The question was clear, but I kept rereading the words. I couldn't believe what I was reading. I was gobsmacked, to say the least! Before I read the message I had to ponder, who would ask me that. I recognized the sender, so I eliminated the possibility of spam, but why would an administrative assistant in my workplace

ask me this? Did he know I was American Lithuanian? I couldn't remember ever discussing my ethnic background with anyone at work. Was there something about me that shouted 'Lithuanian'? I had never been asked this question. In fact, though I had traveled, I had never even posed this question to myself.

As it turned out, this message was sent to a group of researchers in child development at the University of North Carolina and was my introduction to A.P.P.L.E. The contents explained that due to the last minute unavailability of a participant, A.P.P.L.E. was looking for an individual with special education and psychology background to fill that place. A person was needed to participate at a camp in Lithuania on the Baltic Sea, for children with disabilities and their families. The camp was scheduled to occur within a few weeks. I couldn't believe what I was reading. I had the requirements they were looking for, including a valid passport. However, as soon as I started to contemplate the possibility of participating in this foreign endeavor, my thoughts quickly morphed to; I can't do this. I can't leave my work, my home, and family for two weeks. I discussed with a colleague my excitement about this opportunity, which was simultaneously coupled with serious reservations about my capacity to parcel out that much time. This colleague's wise advice removed my equivocation. He said simply that if I wanted to do this, I could. Infused with confidence that I could make the time, I replied to the contact person, Katie Dunlap, and told her I was interested in working with children with disabilities and their families at Camp Viltis. In a few weeks time I was in a small Lithuanian Airlines plane flying low over the green forests and fields of Lithuania, reveling in

being in a never imagined place, thinking of my grandparents. They would never have believed it either.

At Camp Viltis I had the rewarding experience of using my clinical experience in developmental disabilities and special education to work with parents of children with disabilities. The next summer I conducted a seminar in Vilnius on preschool education and gave a general lecture on infant brain development. Years of participation in A.P.P.L.E. summer programs ensued. In subsequent summers, spurred by the vision of Dr. Algirdas Grigonis, I conducted seminars in regional locations on a range of topics related to special education, particularly the importance of early intervention and family-centered services, as well as intervention techniques for particular disabilities. In recent years I presented seminars to graduate students and regional medical clinic service providers at Siauliai University, as well as at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, on aspects of early intervention services for young children with disabilities and their families.

A.P.P.L.E. allowed me the opportunity to disseminate information regarding special education to Lithuanian educators and clinical personnel. The information is valuable, but equally important is the professional presentation of a progressive and equitable attitude regarding the rights of children with disabilities. A.P.P.L.E. not only afforded me this opportunity, but was the catalyst that spurred me to explore previously unknown family. I had the pleasure of connecting with extended family in Kaunas. A particularly moving moment occurred when I was in Kaunas with A.P.P.L.E and had the chance to visit Pazaislis. A nun greeted me with a brochure documenting the history of the Sisters of St. Casimir. Thumbing through the brochure I found myself gazing at a photo of my grandmother's younger sister Katerina Mileviciute, recognized as the founding director of the Saules Gymnazia. ([http://www.saule.kaunas.lm.lt/saule/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=46&Itemid=53](http://www.saule.kaunas.lm.lt/saule/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=46&Itemid=53)).

My association with A.P.P.L.E has touched my life in significant ways, not the least being the special relationships I have developed with other A.P.P.L.E. participants. What began with a seemingly random email, resulted in my traveling to Lithuania to share my expertise, which prompted me to explore my family origins and amazingly led me to discover the place where my great aunt was recognized as an educator 75 years prior. Long ago my grandparents resigned themselves to the fact that leaving Lithuania meant never seeing their homeland again. But even with the passage of time my experience with A.P.P.L.E. made me realize my permanent link to them and the culture that shaped who they were, and that ultimately contributes to who I am.

Anita Adamitis Scarborough, Ph.D.

Chapel Hill, NC

*Anita Adamitis Scarborough is a special educator. She has an MA from the University of Northern Colorado in the area of learning disabilities and a Ph.D. in early childhood special education from the University of North Carolina. She has worked as an educational diagnostician in both the public school and clinical setting and as an early intervention researcher at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina. She has published on topics related to early intervention services for young children with disabilities and the developmental trajectories of maltreated infants and toddlers.*

## Summer 2010 Program Activities

**Increased networking activities in Lithuania** will be on the agenda this summer for President Vida Gavin and Board members, Barbara Henriques and Ed Topar. It has become increasingly obvious that for our programs to be relevant to the people of Lithuania whom we serve, we will require even closer contact and a more in-depth understanding of their needs. Visits are planned to ministry, university and local school offices to meet face-to-face with our constituents and to do a great deal of listening.

**How much is a Lita worth?....**Here are the monetary values of the Lita, the Euro and the Dollar relative to each other to assist those going to Lithuania with us this summer with their finances. Believe it or not, it is only two months away. **Start saving!**

As of 4/23/10 the relative values for each currency were:

1 EURO = 1.33 DOLLARS; 1 DOLLAR = .746 EUROS; 1 LITA = .387 DOLLARS;

1 EURO = 3.45 LITAS; 1 DOLLAR = 2.58 LITAS; 1 LITA = .289 EUROS.

## Quotables and Quizzes

"Today, Lithuania's teachers stand on a par with the best teachers in any of the European Union member states."

Valdas Adamkus

Former President of the Republic of Lithuania

April 14, 2010



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.

Editing for grammar, punctuation, and spelling of submitted materials is the responsibility of the authors.

Organizational Development Committee

A.P.P.L.E. (American Professional Partnership for Lithuanian Education)

### Quick Links

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