

IMPACT

August 2023

Dear Friend,

Summer camp! For children these words carry excitement and anticipation – just as much for the parents too!

Summertime for children is typically a time of more unstructured days, perhaps family vacations and lots of active outdoor time. Sadly, for some children these same conditions leave them vulnerable if they are reliant on the structure of a school year.

Through the generosity of our friends and partners, we are pleased to be able to offer children wholesome alternatives. Disadvantaged children in our Amaro Tan school and young clients in our special needs (Social/Medical Improvement) program had opportunities to learn and enjoy activities within secure and well-organized settings.

As you read through the highlights of these summer camps, it's not difficult to imagine echoes of the children's laughter as they enjoy the cooling breezes of Lake Ohrid during sun-filled days.

With deep gratitude,

Your Impact team



Here's Where Special Needs Are Met

Every year, the Social and Medical Improvement (SMI) program at NG Albania has multiple events for their clients. One of the biggest, and most in depth, events is the summer camp. The camp typically lasts for two weeks – weekdays only from 8 a.m. until about 2 p.m. It is an opportunity for the clients with special needs to learn how to interact with one another in a social situation, as well as for the parents of these clients to have some time during which they do not need to be watching their children.

This year, through the generosity of our donors, the camp was able to last for three weeks. One of the changes that was made this year was that the first week was a smaller group of children that are first time clients of our SMI program. The second and third weeks were with the group of clients that have been part of the program for a longer time.

The cherry on top, however, was that the very last day of the camp the participants went on a fieldtrip to a nearby village – the first time our SMI program has taken a group outside of the city of Pogradec. They took a short bus ride to a small village about 20 minutes away from the campus. The program there was the same as every day, but at the end the children were able to provide feedback on the aspects of the camps they liked and didn't like. Resulting in a good discussion and feedback for our SMI program.

The SMI program has been working hard with many clients in order to achieve these kinds of successes. Being able to have a group of 18 children with special needs in an unfamiliar environment all behaving well and enjoying their time is no small feat, and it's a testament to the hard work that our social workers have been putting in.



Fun in the park at Amaro Tan summer camp



Amaro Tan's kitchen turned into a classroom

A Different Kind of Summer School

As the school year comes to a close, numerous children find themselves either roaming the streets or trapped in unfavorable home environments. Amaro Tan presents a solution with its summer activities, offering a wholesome alternative for these youngsters. Through an engaging blend of sports, games, educational pursuits, and more, children are provided with a constructive avenue to make the most of their summer months.

Amaro Tan offers two main summer activities for children to enjoy. The first of these options is the Summer School program. For many people, a Summer School is a requirement for those that were unable to complete their regular curriculum during the allotted school year. At Amaro Tan, however, Summer School is very different. Held at the Amaro Tan center, the Summer School spanned a two-week period in June, during which, dedicated teachers offered a range of courses tailored to children's interests, aimed at enhancing their education. The purpose is not to make up for uncompleted coursework, but rather to cultivate the interests of the children. While some students delved into the world of culinary arts, mastering simple dishes that could be recreated in their own homes, others honed their vocal talents through singing lessons. By rotating schedules for various options, kids had the chance to engage in a diverse array of activities, including cooking, music, dancing, hand crafts, and more.

The second program is a summer camp. Taking place in August, this summer camp is held outdoors in a park next to the picturesque lake in Pogradec. While the Summer School concentrated on enriching various facets of education, the primary aim of the Summer Camp is to provide children with an



Worship time with German volunteers

enjoyable and exhilarating space to foster social connections. Each day is brimming with an assortment of games, sports, and meaningful devotional activities. The focus of the Amaro Tan summer camp is to have fun and be in fellowship with one another.

During the initial week of the Summer Camp, a dedicated team of volunteers from "Overflow," a youth program encompassing churches in the Frankenwald region of Germany, journeyed to Pogradec to contribute to the camp's operation. Differing to the typical programming, this week's activities took place at the Amaro Tan school. The children were sorted into small groups based on their age and cycled through an array of stations including games, crafts, singing, and more. Each day, the volunteers and children congregated for a worship session, as well as lunch.

While this week-long camp deviated from the typical structure of Amaro Tan's summer camps, it resulted in a significant extension of the August program by a full week. This might appear inconsequential to some, yet when considering the potential alternatives some of these children could have faced during that period, it truly was a blessing.

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