

Vacation from war

Excerpts from children's letters to the donors

2004 NEUM (Bosnia Herzegovina)

Camp with 86 young people from Sombor (Serbs, Orthodox), Tuzla (Muslims), Banja Luka (Serbs and Croats, Roman Catholics)

August 2004

Dear Friends,

Greetings from beautiful and warm holidays in Neum/ Bosnia at the seaside of the Adriatic sea. We are 83 young girls and boys in the camp.

My name is Jasmina and I am 15 years old. I come from Banja Luka. I will start in grade 9 in September. I have a younger sister of 10 who is in grade 6. My parents are unemployed, there are no jobs in my city.

I am very happy to write this letter to you and thank you for sending me to the sea. I have a great time here and I met many new friends from different countries. My town is Banja Luka in the Serbian Republic of Bosnia Herzegovina, my friends come from Tuzla, Gornji Vakuf and Sombor. There are Roman Catholics, Orthodox Christians and Muslims in our camp. We don't look at religion or nationality , we are just friends!

Thank you very much for this summer vacation.

Jasmina, 15 years old girl from Banja Luka (Serbian Republic)

Dear Donors,

21.08.2004

My name is Renato and thanks to you, after so many years, I am once again on holidays at the sea. I live in Serbia, in Vojvodina in a beautiful town Sombor. As Vojvodina is pretty flat, my town is nicknamed *flattown*. This is also the name of the organization in Sombor from which - by your help- I come on this vacation to Neum. I am an excellent student in third grade of agriculture and farming school in Sombor.

Neum is a small modern place on the seaside of Bosnia and Herzegovina, located in a bay and surrounded by rocky mountain sites. There are many deep beaches and marines around. The hotel in which we are staying is big and reminds me of a small village.

The organizers really work hard to make this more than just a vacation where you spend all the time lying on the beach. Two times a day we may choose workshops where we learn how to get by in different situations, help others, how to be humanitarian. We do also various creative and artistic workshops as well as sport workshops.

In our activities it is quite easy to create communication with young girls and boys from other ethnies and countries. I think the most important is, that between them there is friendship and harmony. There is no fighting despite of all the different beliefs. There are Muslims, Roman Catholics and even Orthodox Catholics from Serbia in our camp. Of course I made many new friends and along with that I fell in love.

On the large terrace of the hotel, every night we organize our own disco party. After that there is a meeting of all the group with the staff, where we plan and talk about what we are going to do next day. Besides all this we also go on touristic trips such as to Dubrovnik, the famous medieval world heritage city and the isle of .Korcula.

I should especially like to thank the Shiatsu therapists whose concern is our relaxation.

During these last two weeks not only did I relax and let go but I also learned a lot of necessary things.

Truthfully thank you

Renato, 17 years old boy from Sombor (Serbia)

Dear Friends!!!

21.08.2004

My name is Samir and I come from Tuzla in the Bosnian Croatian Federation. I am 16 years old and I go to the second grade of highschool. This is a very hard school, and I would like to be electrician.

First of all I would like to thank you for everything you are doing for us. We really enjoy our holidays here in Neum. Besides having fun, relaxing on the beach and meeting new friends, we also do many different activities. In the daily workshops we learn about new ideas. In one of these workshops, with the help of pictures, we invented stories about peaceful and non violent solving of problems.

Greetings from all my heart

Samir, 16 years old boy from Tuzla/Simin Han (Bosnian Croatian Federation)

My Dear Friends!

My name is Edin. I am living in Tuzla. I am 17 years old and go to the 3rd grade of high school. I am an excellent student. My favorite sport is boxing and I even had intense training for a while. First I want to thank you for making it possible to spend two weeks in this beautiful place. Here everything is really great. In the few days we are together in the camp I made friends with many children from other towns, religions and ethnies. We have a great lot of fun. We go to the beach 2 hours in the morning and 2 hours in the afternoon. Just so we have 4 hours a day with a lot of interesting activities and workshops. I prefer games and the disco on the enormous terrace of the hotel where we have fun all together.

Once more I want to thank you, and I would like to come again to the camp if possible.

Greetings from the heart,

Edin, 17 years old boy from Tuzla/Simin Han

My name is Jovica. I am 17 years old. I am going to the 3rd grade of Technical High School at Banja Luka, and I am born to be a star.

In my free time I go to dance, guitar lessons and soccer. Since when I was eight, I live in a children's home. Thanks to you, I come to these holidays with some friends of mine who are also living in the orphanage.

I am deeply grateful to you for donating in favor of this project. Thank you once again.

Greetings from the heart,

Jovica, 17 years old boy from Banja Luka (Serbian Republic)

Hello!

My name is Emina. I am 16 years old and come from Gornji Vakuf - Uskoplje. I am going to the third grade of Gornji Vakuf – Uskoplje High School.

In my free time I play handball and I am an active member of the Youth Center Gornji Vakuf – Uskoplje, which also brought me to Neum. Here in the camp children from Gornji Vakuf and from Uskoplje, that is Croats and Bosniaks, have the chance to meet and to have a great time together. Although our parents fought one another some years ago, we young people wiped that terrible war out of our heads and have become inseparable.

Thank you for all that you have done for us! Greetings from the heart!

Emina, 16 years old girl from Gornji Vakuf – Uskoplje (Bosnian Croatian Fed.)

My Dear Friends,

First of all I would like to thank you for allowing us to have this beautiful summer vacation in Neum. My name is Edis and I come from Tuzla. I am 17 years old. I go to the third grade of the highschool and I am a very good student. When I finish school I hope to become a mechanic. We have a great time here and we make friends with young people from other towns, like Sombor, Banja Luka, and Gornji Vakuf. Besides going to the beach to swim we also do other workshops such as juggling which is my favourite activity, as well as ping pong. My favourite sport is fast bicycling.

I want to thank you once more, and I would like to come again to the camp.

Warm greetings,

Edis, 17 years old boy from Tuzla/ Simin Han

Dear Donors,

My name is Emina and I am very glad that you made the effort and wanted to help us to pass a good time here at the seaside.

I come from Tuzla and I am 14 years old. I go to the middle school Brcanska Malto. I am a good student. My mom, brother and sister are very happy that I am here by the seaside. In the war I lost my dad and other loved ones.

Here in Neum we spend a great time together.

Lots of love

Emina, 14 years old girl from Tuzla

Dear Donors,

My name is Sabina and I am very glad that you want to help us to pass a good time here at the seaside. I come from Tuzla and I am 17 years old. I am an excellent student. Here in Neum by the seaside it is really great, we are spending time together and make new friends. My mom and my sister are very happy that I came here. My sister is 19 and up to now she never had a chance to see the sea. I go to the highschool with focus in cosmetics. After that I hope I will be able to become a well known cosmetician.

In the war I lost my grandfather. I also lost a lot of dear ones to me, for whom I am still grieving.

We are children and we are not guilty for that. I hope that will never happen again and that everywhere there will be peace and love.

Greetings from

Sabina, 17 years old girl from Tuzla

Dear Donors,

My name is Mirela.. I come from Tuzla and I am 19 years old. I am a very good student. I go to the highschool. My brother is 11 and my sister is 16. My parents, brother and sister are very happy that I am here at the seaside. In the war I lost 3 aunts and 1 uncle. Also I lost many dear ones for which I grieve to this day, but we, the children are not guilty for what happened. I hope that will never happen again.

Here in Neum we pass a great time at the seaside. All day long we make new friends in the workshops and other activities. Thank you for the nicest holidays of my life!!

I am very thankful for your generosity. Lots of love.

Mirela, 19 years old girl from Tuzla

Hello,

My name is Nura. I am 16 years old. I live with my parents in Banja Luka. I go to Ugost. Trg. Tur. Highschool for touristic technologists. I finished the first grade. I have brown hair and brown eyes, and I am quite tall.

First of all I would like to thank you for giving us this divine vacation. I really like it here in Neum. The weather is nice and the friends are great. I met many new friends from different towns such as Gornji Vakuf, Tuzla, Sombor etc. We are never bored. Our facilitators always prepare for us some workshops, excursions, parties and surprises. We play different games in order to get to know each other better. I have to say that it is working. I don't know what else to tell you except that all is great.

I would like to thank you once again and wish you all the best.

Thank you

Nura, 16 years old girl from Banja Luka

Hello!

My name is Renata Orec. I am 13 years old and I just finished grade 7. Besides school I study English and Information privately. I live with 3 younger sisters, my mom and dad. My mom's name is Kata and my dad's name is Anto. My mom stays at home my dad is a carpenter and works in his own shop.

In Neum it is really good, we do many different activities and meet new friends. We also go swimming. Our staff is very good towards us. With your donation you give to the young generation the opportunity for better experiences, to come together and to work towards the same goal, make new friends, and take home divine experiences.

A greeting from the heart

Renata, 13 years old girl from Gornji Vakuf

Dear Donors,

My name is Jelena, and I am very glad that you had enabled me and the other children to spend 12 days here by the seaside. I am glad how the days are organized and that we don't have to get up too early. I am also glad that we may swim in the pool. The food is great, but I like the disco the best. The only thing I don't like are the workshops, I would rather spend that time in the room.

Everything is well organized in this camp, even the excursions. I spent some unforgettable hours in the wonderful city of Dubrovnik.

I come from Banja Luka and I am 16 years old. I finished the first year at the Medical School with a B average. My dad's aunt is a teacher, she helps me out in all problems.

When I was a little girl my parents separated. Since that time I live with my dad and my grandma. Unfortunately my dad doesn't find any job. My mom lives in Croatia and she could not even send my elder sister to school who is 22 (for financial reasons?). All these disasters happened after the war, causing mom and dad to have a nervous breakdown. Today they are better, but for me it is very hard to live like that. I just hope that I can finish the second grade because my school is very hard.

Thank you very much for this summer vacation!

Greetings from

Jelena, 16 years old girl from Banja Luka

Hello!

We are very glad about the opportunity to spend our vacation together at the seaside.

We have a great time here meeting young people from different ethnies, who were acid enemies in the war - 12 years ago! In this camp we are learning how to avoid conflicts and how to control them. We have the chance to correct the mistakes of our fathers. We come here to meet the others, to discuss problems and work together on their solutions, with no influence of religion and politics.

A lot of different activities, workshops, sports, creatif actions, art, theater, excursions, the beautiful seaside and wonderful honorary facilitators make this camp unforgettable.

We thank you again, dear donators, for your generosity!

With warm greetings

Young boys and girls from Bosnia and Serbia

Dear Friends,

A lot of greetings from the warm and beautiful Neum.

My name is Jasmina and I am sixteen years old. I am from Banja Luka. In September I will start the first grade of high school. I have a younger sister of 10 years, Selma, who will begin the 6 grade of elementary school. My parents are unemployed. Our life is very hard. I am so happy to write you this letter. THANK YOU that you send me from my home to the sea. I meet a lot of new friends and we have so much fun.

Thank you a lot for this holiday!

Jasmina, 16 years old girl from Banja Luka

Dear Friend!

I want to warmly greet you. Thank you from all my heart for giving us the possibility to take part in this wonderful summer camp here in Neum. This camp is one of the nicest experiences I've had, because here we are all together regardless of nation, faith and other differences. For everybody this is a unique chance to meet young people from other ethnies.

There are a lot of activities which help us to discover our talents and to facilitate our friendship by working or playing together.

It is important to stand side by side, to help each other, and always to think positively.

Once again thank you for everything. I hope we will hear or even see each other.

Warm greetings,

Mirzeta, 17 years old girl from Gornji Vakuf