



VAIKO VARTAI Į MOKSLĄ /CHILD'S GATE TO LEARNING

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Dear members and supporters,

It's hard to believe that another busy year of activity has passed...In 2016-

- **February:** The annual update session was held... We moved our organization's information to a new website...
- **March:** The Florida Lithuanian Golf Open donated part of its proceeds to our organization... The support group coordinator coordinated a fund-raising table at the Washington, D.C. St. Casimir Fair...
- **April:** Officer Ramunė Kubilius from Chicago and our coordinator in Lithuania, Žydrūnė Liobikaitė visited the supported center in Rukla (Jonavos Region), Ramunė also visited the "Vilties angelas" center in Vilnius... The support group in Cleveland organized a successful fundraiser that featured homemade take-away lunch boxes, and the support groups in Washington, D.C., Sunny Hills, FL, and Detroit, MI, also each did fundraisers...
- **October:** The annual fundraising fall lunch „Derliaus pietūs" was well attended by supporters...
- **October:** The first meeting was organized for 16 high-schoolers who plan to travel to Lithuania as volunteers during the summer of 2017 m. Parents attended the first meeting and will meet again prior to the departure of the volunteers... Officers and directors had the opportunity to network with Sister Daiva Kuzmickaitė, OFM, PhD, during her visit to Chicago from Lithuania. Sister Daiva has served as an advisor to "Child's Gate to Learning" since her days as a doctoral student in Chicago and she is well acquainted with the work we do. During her visit, she provided highlights of new Caritas projects in Kaunas including work with at risk families and with families who are considering adopting children in the social system...
- **December:** "Child's Gate to Learning" participated in the World Lithuanian Center annual holiday fair, selling homemade cakes as well as Lithuanian souvenirs donated by members... Lithuania's General Consul, Marijus Gudynas, and members of his family attended the winter fundraiser "Open Your Hearts" ("Atverkite savo širdies duris"). Generous donors and supporters enjoyed a tasty meal and a nicely performed musical performance.

In 2016, "Child's Gate to Learning" remembered the passing of various supporters, among them **Ernest Raskauskas**, who in recent years was generous in supporting the after-school center in his father's birthplace, Šateikiai. During the year, we kept in touch with our supported centers in Lithuania. We thank the **Lithuanian Foundation** for its support of the 2016 project, "Lithuania, My Homeland" ("Lietuva- mano namai"). We thank the **Kazickas Family Foundation** for its support and to all supporters who donated in memory of their departed family members and friends.

We thank our support groups in Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Cleveland, Detroit, and Sunny Hills, FL, for their fund-raising efforts. To all, we repeat words of thanks often repeated by supported centers, „Ačiū, kad Jūs esate!"

- "Child's Gate to Learning"



VISITS

While in Lithuania, officer Ramune Kubilius and Lithuanian coordinator, Žydrūnė Liobikaitė, visited the center in Rukla, played, sang, and did homework with the children.

A visit to the "Vilties angelas" center in Vilnius was an opportunity to visit with mothers of some of the children, who are creating crafts for sale as a fund-raiser for their children's summer camp. One evening adult volunteers gathered for their monthly networking meeting.



WE REMEMBER

In October, we mourned the passing in Washington, D.C. of generous donor,
Ernest Raskauskas.
(In the photo, the Šateikiai center he supported)

In July, poet **Julija Švabaitė Gylienė** died in Lemont, IL. We remember her generosity in 2002, when she donated funds from sales of her poetry book "Where Will I Sleep Tonight" ("Kur šių naktį nakvos").



ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORT

Photos:

2016 m. "Derliaus pietų" (Lemont, IL). Attendees were introduced to the group of high schoolers preparing to travel to Lithuania for volunteer work in Summer 2017.

The center in Žemaičių Kalvarija, „Vilties vėrinėliai“ received a letter of thanks from Lithuania's Social Ministry (Socialinės Apsaugos ir Darbo ministerija).
Congratulations!





Photo: Lithuanian Foundation funded project “Lietuva-mano namai” scene in Vilnius (5 centers participated)

WITH THANKS:

- Lithuanian Foundation for the project, „Lietuva – mano namai“, in 2016 (Project coordinator: Žydrūnė Liobikaitė)
- Kazickas Family Foundation- 2017 project.
- New webmaster, Tomas Mackevičius and previous website owner, Žibute Pranckevičius, for a successful website content transfer.
- Support group coordinators: Cleveland (Egle Laniauskas), Detroit (Rita Giedraitis and Rasa Karvelis), Washington, D.C. (Terese Landsbergis), Sunny Hills, FL (Judita Mamaitis and Brone Nakas)
- All who helped at the fund-raising events, including Lithuanian Catholic Association „Ateitis“ high school chapter members who volunteered at the fall harvest lunch.
- Lithuanian General Consul in Chicago, Marijus Gudynas, and his family for their participation in the December fundraising event and for his donation of an item for the auction.
- Florida Lithuanian Open (FLO-XVI) Golf Tournament organizers and participants.
- The Lithuanian American press for publishing articles & news items we sent.
- Our coordinator in Lithuania, Žydrūnė Liobikaite.
- The program directors at supported centers for maintaining contact with our organization, reporting to us on their projects, and for their work with Lithuania’s children.
- Thank you to all supporters ! Thank you for all you do !