

Music and art group

Greetings, my name is Maja Ferkulj and I am teacher of German and some other subjects. I am also one of the three mentors of music and art group **which is on stage today**.

We dedicate our lives to exploration of our creativity. There are many ways of artistic expression. The basis which we all support and wish in our environment is creativity with food.. My passion for food struck me in my thirties... It has sure made myself and especially my loved ones happy.

If we are not creative, we are only half human. We neglect the essence of what we as humans are. We possess that unique feature called intuition which plays a crucial part in the creative process so we can find new connections between knowledge and experience. We often hear that the school system puts too much emphasis on the left hemisphere which has little in common with intuition and because of that we are losing entire generations that could contribute to more creative solutions for life's everyday needs from which we could all benefit.

Anyway, in our school we have many youngsters with attention deficit disorder or learning disabilities. The standard school system disabled them to follow others, but here they have the opportunity to test different approaches and some are offered by music and art group. The youngsters are offered activities to acquire skills that differ from those offered at school. They mostly test their productivity. Let me introduce our group.

Music and art group has three mentors: Boštjan Klemenčič, practical lessons teacher in the programme gastronome hotelier, Toni Skelin, also practical lessons teacher in the programme administrator, and I. Each one of us is a mentor for specific area, however, when an event is being organised, we cooperate and work as a team. In total we have participated in 11 events in the previous school year, mostly school events, but also three events outside the institution, for example performance at a seminar in a hotel in Ljubljana, performing at an event for special and rehabilitative pedagogues on the Slovenian coast and we have also performed when our president Mr Borut Pahor visited us.

Let me present the work of each mentor. Boštjan mentors a music band which connects youngsters who like to sing. Not long ago this band celebrated 20th anniversary. New talents, who dazzle everybody with their voices, continuously join the band. Those who are not as talented also join and are not ashamed to express themselves and opt to constructively spend their leisure time. The mentor notices that those who come to singing workshops have fewer problems in academic and

personal area which results in conflict avoidance. Music group repertoire includes various songs, some are chosen by the youngsters and some by the mentor. They rehearse for events, either school events or events outside school area, I will tell you more about this later. This year's goal is to record original songs in a real music studio. Some of the youngsters entered the music world and learning about different genres for the first time. They also learn how to behave when on stage. After leaving the institution some youngsters continue intertwining their lives with music.

Toni Skelin mentors audio visual activity (audio/video/photo recordings and data management, sound system, equipment setup, lighting). In the previous year there were three youngsters, **one of which is female**. What were they doing? Photographing, some of their photographs are exhibited in the lobby. Only those three youngsters were trusted to handle the camera so they could eternalise various school events, trips, excursions. Afterwards they were so proud to be able to identify themselves with something as cool as being the official photographer and to express themselves freely. Besides photographing they also explored making videos, like for example they learned how to make a video for Youtube. They helped recording and editing a video for a tourism competition. In general this group is very interested in all the action behind the camera: they have created portraits of all the pupils and teachers for ski-passes for a one week winter holiday in Pohorje or they made sure that a certain school event was recorded. Last but not least, mentor Toni always makes sure to have a school computer or any other technical gadget which needs some attention on hand. The two male members of the group showed tremendous interest in computers.

I am mentoring theatre and animation activity (event hosting skills, theatre group performances, scenery of the event). The group of animators, who hosted various events, consists of 4 girls and 2 boys. What we do is that we determine the script or those funny little details which spice up the event together. The youngsters actively participate in script making. Then we start preparing for the event and the youngsters learn the rules of performing in public. It gets quite crazy when the adrenalin rises before the event. Failure is also an important part of the lesson: for example two youngsters were very successful during the last event and became too confident, preparations for the next event are not taken seriously. Consequently they don't know the lines, lack practice, are nervous. The experience encouraged them to push each other harder, to practice more.

I am mentoring theatre group as well. Last year we enacted 4 skits, all of which were really exciting. Every skit involved youngsters who up to that time refused to participate. In the end they were the ones who enriched the whole stage happening. A boy once told me after the performance that he didn't know how I had managed to persuade him to participate. ... and this was a boy who

was silent, mumbling and hard to understand when he came to our institution. And now in his second year he also sang a song of his choice on stage all alone. Loudly. As mentor you sometimes get lucky and see a pupil from a completely different perspective. For example, I am a class teacher of a girl for the second year now, I know her, her problems, ways of dealing with problems and also the better side of her personality . In one theatre workshop she was so involved in the rehearsal that she completely forgot how important her appearance is to her and I could see her in a new light. I saw her as an excellent animator for both children and adults.

Since our youngsters deal with many emotional problems it is not uncommon if different youngsters attend each rehearsal, and I mean also the main rehearsal before the event. There is also a possibility that a youngster cancels participation at the last minute. We have seen it all. But somehow there is always someone who has up to that point only been observing and stepped into the role in the crucial moment. All's well that ends well. We are creators of happy stories.

The main goal is to increase self-confidence with small success stories they experience when doing what they like and what attracts them. We strive to encourage their employment by developing the talents they have. The goal for the youngsters is to develop those talents and at the same time to acquire practical knowledge with which they can make concrete products. The goal is for the youngsters to realise that they have different abilities they can use and make significant contributions to the community they live in.