



Strong or Weak?

The Open House Day in Leonberg on September 23rd

The motto of the special service for Open House Day is found in the second letter which Paul wrote to the Corinthians. It is the also the Bible verse for the year 2012:

"Jesus Christ says: My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

Pastor Gottfried Heinzmann, head of the Protestant Youth Foundation in Württemberg, talked about things which impair our life: limitations and barriers, weaknesses and illnesses, Jesus Himself promised Paul that His

strength would be perfected in Paul`s weakness, a promise which is still valid today. At the end of his sermon pastor Heinzmann read a text pertaining to the above mentioned scripture that he had written for young people: *"When you feel strong and want to show off what you can do, what you own, what you are, He is there. When you feel weak and want to hide what you cannot do, do not have and what you are not, He is there. Jesus passionately enjoys helping the weak, with pleasure He cheers for the losers and He loves working in you with His might."*

After the service the "Seehausdwarfs" gave an insight into their everyday life. As before, the young men had written their own piece of theater this year and performed it on this day. In a very funny and entertaining way they showed us who easily the rules and basic standards of the Seehaus can be applied to and incorporated into "Snow White's" world who



lives in the "Seehausforest". Everyone could see how much the young men enjoyed their show and the audience thanked them with an enthusiastic applause.

The children of the Forest and Animal kindergarten of the Seehaus also received a lot of applause for their happy and motivated song. They invited everyone to get to know their home in the forest.

In the afternoon, several teams participated in the Seehaus competition trying to successfully complete different tasks in the Seehaus. Each team consisted of a prominent person and someone from the Seehaus. State minister Dr. Bernd Murschel, President of the Police Christian Nill and Olympic winner Dieter Baumann did their best in sawing logs, separating waste, baking pancakes and sack racing, each trying to make first place. Regina Beck from the SWR (radio and TV channel) moderated the event and presented the hard earned winner's certificate to the best team. We look back on this Open House day with thankfulness. Many friends and other interested

parties followed our invitation and spent a beautiful day with us. The great weather as well as meaningful conversations and good encounters made this a very special day.



After the clean up in the evening everyone in the Seehaus agreed that all the preparations had really been worth the effort.

The Storm Subsides in Störmthal

After the Higher Administrative Court rejected the claim of the citizens' initiative seeking to prohibit the use of the Lutherstift in Störmthahl for juvenile delinquents, things have quieted down at the interim location in Saxony.

Talking to the neighbors one can hear the following over and over again: "You don't hear or see anything of the Seehaus – only the young men jogging down the street at 6.45 in the morning." Even though we don't know where our new location will be, the goal to move within the next two years still stands.



To reach this goal one needs negotiating skills, a feel for suitable locations, time and strong nerves. In fall Verena und Stefan Krehl took over the leadership of the Seehaus Störmthahl so Michael Richter can concentrate on location development. Clemens Breinlinger (construction) and Ruth Maria Wilburger (living community) joined us for a year.

Starting in November, the Steinerts will become house parents so Paul Schneider will be able to invest all of his time into his job as a house worker.

So there are quite some changes which on one hand mirror the dynamics and liveliness of the Seehaus and which we hope will have a continual calming affect in the future.

He´s Got Guts!

My name is Alex and I am 25 years old. From November 2005 until July 2007 I did my time at the Seehaus. Since then many things have happened. I learned the trade of a carpenter but during my apprenticeship I realized that I did not want to work in this profession. After my finals I worked for a temporary employment agency for a while and for the last two years I have had a permanent job as a fitter. A big part of my free time I spend at the volunteer fire department. Those ties were already established when I lived at the Seehaus and they helped me a lot to start a new life after my time there was up. Being from Baden (a region in southern Germany), I am of course an avid fan of the SC Freiburg soccer club and I try to attend as many of their games as possible! I don´t have many friends left from the time before I lived at the Seehaus, I intentionally broke of the contact to most of them and only meet with people I have been friends with for many years. I know that it is better for me to stay away from certain relationships and activities; it helps me to protect myself from bad situations. I want to live a good and transparent, clean life.

The time at the Seehaus provided me with a good foundation for my life: I have learned that I am able to reach many goals if I put my mind to it. Every day life can be difficult and there are no hand outs. I have to make an effort daily and all the things I learned at the Seehaus help me to do that. I remember one situation at the Seehaus when one of the workers on a construction site gave me the responsibility for a certain task trusting me to do it properly. That was a key experience for me: to see that someone had confidence in me and my abilities!



If someone were to ask me now if I could recommend the Seehaus for another young man I would answer: One hundred percent "yes"! But he has to be willing; life at the Seehaus is hard, much harder than in Adelsheim (prison for young adolescents). He must be prepared to refine himself because only then the time at the Seehaus pays off.

I am looking to the future now! I a few days I fly to England to see my girlfriend. She works there to gain job experience abroad for her apprenticeship and I have not been able to see her for three months now. I am really looking forward to it!

We Feel Honored!

Our many volunteers made it: They won the German Citizens` Prize 2012!

About 1000 suggestions were entered for this year`s theme was "Project Future: Dedicated to (active for, committed to) young people" and a jury of 20 people decided on the category "Every day Heroes". On December 20th this Germany wide most important prize for volunteers was presented. We want to really thank the many volunteers from the bottom of our heart for their tireless efforts in so many different areas. This support is indescribably important for the life and work of the Seehaus and we really appreciate it!

Visiting “Bellavista”

I am spending two months in Medellin, Colombia as part of my studies. I live with the family of Lacides Hernandez, the president of Prison Fellowship Colombia and everyone lovingly welcomed me. Here in Medellin I get an insight into the work of Prison Fellowship Colombia.

From Luisa Feigl

I arrived here on November 2nd, 2012 and have been able to gather challenging and enriching impressions. Very definitely challenging are the pictures of the dismal and poor conditions in this prison. Two days a week I accompany the volunteers of Prison Fellowship (PF) into the prison “Bellavista”. About 8000 men do their time here in the most limited space. Sometimes up to ten inmates have to share a 65 square feet cell. Others don't even have a cell and have to sleep in the hall way. Their everyday life is marked by a lack of perspective, oppression, violence and fear for their families. Being a member of a gang, they have to expect the rival gangs to take revenge. One of the inmates, Daniel, received a call in prison one morning: “Tomorrow at 1pm we will kill your wife. If you tell and warn her, we will kill your mother as well!” The next day at 1pm his wife was shot leaving behind their then- 9 year old son Brayan. During this difficult time Daniel found stability in faith and when he was released from prison in 2006, he started supporting the work of PF. Two weeks ago though his past caught up with him and he was killed by two hired assassins. Unfortunately this is the sad reality here in Colombia.



Two weeks ago I attended the weekly church service in “Bellavista” which is held in the rooms of PF. The room was full of inmates who seemed to have an inner freedom and wholeheartedly praised God with their songs. It is so great to see how God changes people`s lives and hearts and grants them forgiveness. This really shows in the program “Victims and Offenders-a Dialogue”. A group of victims and a group of offenders meet in prison eight times. These meetings are led by a mediator and they talk about subjects like impact of crime and compensation. The inmates are invited to at least make amends symbolically. It is great to see how these meetings have a healing effect on both parties. With eight different projects, PF Colombia, contributes extraordinarily to the reconciliation between guerillas, paramilitary groups and drug cartel. They do an important work in society, in the families (supporting relatives and children of inmates) and in the personal lives of the inmates. A very successful and extensive prevention project run by PF Colombia is a soccer program in cooperation with the parents geared at integrating children and youth into society and protecting them from the dangers of crime.



I cannot describe the whole work in this letter but if you would like to receive more information you can go to the following websites: <http://pfcolombia.com> (Spanish) and

<http://www.pfi.org/national-ministries/americas/colomia>

Passing on the Good

Tanja and Daniel live in Herdwangen at the Bodensee. Quite a ways away from the Seehaus Leonberg and Störmdahl. In spite of that –or maybe even because of it – they are precious friends for the Seehaus. Why? They will tell you themselves:



What connection do you have to the Seehaus?

Let`s put it this way: This relationship only exists through the Seehaus. From 2005 to 2008 Tanja lived in the Seehaus as a student and Daniel did his time there from 2005 to 2006 with the Schumann family. Ever since then we have been in contact with the Seehaus.

When did you get the idea to open your house for a

Seehaus alumnus and give him the opportunity to live with you and your family?

This idea emerged rather fast. After Daniel had been released he received help from several families but especially from the family he got to live and work with. We want to return this blessing. Daniel`s experienced the importance of having people support you after your release who walk part of the way.

One can imagine that this openness is a valuable help and a great gift for a young person. But for you as a family it poses quite a challenge. How is your experience with that?

Sure, it is a challenge to share your time, bathroom and kitchen with a young man. But it is a gift for us also to see that our DJ (Daniel junior for us) has really arrived in our family and feels at home now. We don`t take that for granted and it makes us happy.

Your two own small children and a young man in one family. How does that work out in everyday life? And what does a "normal day" look like?

Somehow "normal everyday life "and two small children are mutually exclusive to begin with. And the young man adds even some more diversity to the daily routine. It is very important for us to eat our meals together. DJ can even come home for lunch right now. It routine now as well to take Benaja (2 years) and Nele (11 months) along when we go to public offices and to always have the baby phone handy in case one of the children goes to sleep. This togetherness is normal for us.

Do you have to face challenges on your own or do you get outside help?

We can always contact the leadership of the aftercare program or other members of the Seehaus staff. And our church backs us up a lot, too which is very important for us. Without our faith we probably would have never had the idea to live like this but God gives us the ideas and the strength we need.

Is it important to have pedagogical training to accept a task like this one or can anybody do it?

Maybe we should ask DJ about that...☺. I(Tanja) honestly think that it is mainly Daniel`s experience which gives us the authority to speak into DJ`s life. Of course it helps to have a pedagogical training - but if you welcome someone into your family you have to first of all be true to yourself and not try to live a different life just because it seems to make more sense from a pedagogical standpoint. That won`t ring true with others. But to reflect things is very important and so a pedagogical training gives you an advantage after all.

Step by Step into Freedom

The aftercare living community wants to give a temporary home to young men who are released from the Seehaus and support them in their first steps into their newly won freedom. Here the young men have the opportunity to keep living in a community, take advantage of its stability and always have a place to go to.

For me this living community is a dream come true because I really care a lot about the young men. We cook, participate in free time activities, do the house and garden work and all everyday things together. I have lived in this community from the beginning and I am happy to see that more and more young guys take advantage of this opportunity and come live with us. We have room for two to three guys. Since November 2011 S.

lives together with us in this house. It is so special to see how he has been feeling more and more at home here during the last year, developing and getting his life in order (he goes to work, seeks conversation to share his thoughts and keeps his things in order). A young family with a one year old son also lives with us! There is always life and diversity in our aftercare community and think it is



my task to live together, learn how to communicate, be open to change meet the young guys at eye-level and act in love and with consistency. A second young man has been living with us for the last two weeks now.

Some of the young men who are living in the Seehaus at the moment keep talking about their desire to also move into the aftercare community. It is a priceless gift to be able to share your life and daily routine with others in a community like ours and I hope that it will be practiced more and more in our society.

By the way: We have room for others who would love to share their lives with the alumni from the Seehaus. Beate Haigis

Passion



Tuesday evening , 7.30, it is time for home work in the communities. The young men sit behind their books and study for school. Kushtrim has another homework which needs to be taken care of that night:

He has discovered his passion for the piano and takes the homework that Benjamin Spanic, a volunteer piano teacher, gives him seriously; he has already had first successes. Once the young guys reach the "Leo" level, they can participate in one of the weekly project groups to learn about new hobbies and discover hidden talents. Kushtrim opted for the piano group and does his finger exercises very intently. "I think the piano is a cool instrument and I could listen to it for hours. When I play I can often blow off steam and having to concentrate takes my mind off things. I always get a good mood from playing. And it is so much fun when a piece I have been practicing finally sounds really good." He grins: "Maybe I'll make it big one day or can impress my girlfriend."

The project groups are offered by volunteers and are a real hit in both houses. Kushtrim: "It is absolutely awesome that there are people who teach us such great things without getting paid for it."

Looking into the future

My name is Marcel and I am a representative: that means I am a spokesperson for the guys and also represent the Seehaus Störmdahl to the outside. I have been here for 13 months now and I am doing well. I have a good contact with my girlfriend and my family. I am looking for a therapy place at the moment and for a job after that. I want to go into therapy because I used to drink a lot of alcohol. I committed many offenses under the influence of alcohol and I want to learn now how to handle drinking. That is why I want to participate in a 3-month therapy. Mid-February I will be released and I think that with therapy, finding a job and the support of my girlfriend and family I am well prepared for freedom. I also want to take advantage of the aftercare program of the Seehaus e.V. to stay in contact with the Seehaus and to always have someone to go to when I need help.

My goals for my time in freedom are to move back together with my girlfriend, start a family, go to work and lead a regular and structured life without crime and without my old friends.

I found the Seehaus to be very exhausting and challenging; mainly the sports program but also the confrontation and group pressure. But I had many good experiences here as well, like my promotions, the winter retreat, the canoe tour, going home on weekends and my birthday party. I think that the early morning exercises at the Seehaus were the most difficult thing for me because I had never done sports before and was overweight.

For the future I wish that I take care of my appointments, go to work regularly and be open and frank with my girlfriend. I have learned a lot at the Seehaus but I am looking forward to being free and to the challenges that will come my way.

Yours Marcel



With confidence

An intensive year is coming to an end! With a new name for our registered association

something has very clearly changed on the outside, within the Seehaus we has many great experiences and several challenges to overcome. We had helpful and active support in many areas and with all these experiences we made we confidently go into the New Year. We wish all our readers, friends and interested parties a merry Christmas and a confident start into a blessed New Year!

Warm regards,

Tobias Merckle and the whole Seehaus team

Christmas Tree Sale with Extras

For the first time you have the opportunity to buy a Christmas tree at the Seehaus Leonberg this year. We a great variety of trees in different sizes and types - for any room and taste you can find the right tree. But of course punch and sausages are also called for at such an event.

We heartily invite you and hope for many good encounters: on Dec 14th and 15th and on Dec 21st and 22nd from 10am to 6pm.

Jobs

You want to be a part of the teams in the Seehaus Leonberg or the Seehaus Störmdahl?

- » **Socio-pedagogical professional** (Seehaus Leonberg)
- » **Sports teacher/coach** (combined with other tasks, Seehaus Leonberg)
- » **Deputy for the night shift** (fee basis, Seehaus Leonberg)
- » **Aftercare** (fee basis, close to Langenau/Ulm)
- » **Principal/(vocational school)teacher** (Seehaus Störmdahl)
- » **Garden and landscaping instructors** (Seehaus Störmdahl)
- » **Construction instructor** (carpenters, construction technicians e.g.) (Seehaus Störmdahl)
- » **Voluntary Year of Social Service, Federal Volunteer Service, One year Internship for**
- » **Construction instructors** (carpenters, construction technicians) for the Seehaus Störmdahl

Further information at www.seehaus-ev.de

- in the enterprises (cabinet making, carpentry/construction, metal construction, garden- and landscaping, preferably with a completed vocational training)
- in kitchen, household and childcare
- in the administration
- in caretaking (transport service, cleaning, skilled manual work, sports)

The male participants of the Voluntary Year of Social Service stay in a living community together with young men.

Warm regards,



Tobias Merckle with the Seehaus team