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NO.8/15th FEBRUARY 2023.

# iskra

ANNUAL BULLETIN OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PARENTS  
OF CHILDREN WITH MALIGNANT DISEASES "ISKRA"

## **ANNUAL BULLETIN NO.8/15<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2023.**

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**General Assembly** is the highest body of the Association and consists of all full members of the Association. The Assembly meeting is held once a year.

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Dijana Beric, B.Sc. Economist

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Malignant Diseases "Iskra"

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IMPRESSUM

# WE ARE PROUD



On the occasion of January 9, the Day of the Republic of Srpska, the President of the Republic of Srpska, Milorad Dodik, awarded the Association of Parents of Children Suffering from Malignant Diseases "ISKRA" with Medal of National Merits. Medal of National Merits was awarded for contributions in humanitarian and spiritual work, which contributes to the general affirmation of the Republic of Srpska.

The Association President, Diana Beric, received the medal at the award ceremony on January 9, 2018.

It is a great honour for the Association, but also a responsibility for the future.

## Medal OF NATIONAL MERITS





*Dijana  
Beric*



ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

## Our dear friends and donators, Our dear children and parents

8<sup>th</sup> year of work is behind us, special in its own way just like the previous ones.

Our work begins with cooperation with parents and children, who are fighting their most difficult battle, and when we get their smile and gratitude for not being alone as a result of the cooperation, it is the biggest reward for our work and effort.

This was a difficult year for our heroes in white coats as well. At the Department of Pediatric Hemato-Oncology at UCC RS, many children were received and sent away with hope they would continue with their lives like their peers.

But we certainly must not forget our angels who did not manage to win against the cruel disease and who will always have their place in our hearts.

As we do every year, we marked February 15<sup>th</sup>, the International Childhood Cancer Day, with a series of activities, as well as Golden September, the month of raising awareness on childhood cancer.

Considering that we did not organize a camp in the previous year, we looked forward to and joyfully welcomed the rehabilitation camp for children who finished with hospital treatment and their parents, brothers and sisters. We were warmly accommodated on Mt. Jahorina by Mr. Đorđe Đokić. We participated in European conference CCI (Childhood Cancer International) in Vienna, Austria.

Also, representatives from "MladiCe RS" participated in PanCare conference in Budapest, Hungary.

To our great joy, starting with this school year, we have subject teaching aside elementary teaching at the Parents' House. In that way, we provided our primary school children with a chance to gain the necessary knowledge while receiving treatment, to be graded and to be able to continue with school with their peers after the treatment.

In the year behind us, we are especially proud of another legal solution in the direction of improving the position of children suffering from malign diseases and their parents. Namely, the National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska adopted the Law on Mandatory Health Insurance in which they included, on our suggestion, that a parent of a child with cancer, while being on a sick leave on those grounds, is entitled to 100 % remuneration.

And of course, we could not have achieved any of these things without help from our dear friends and donators. You can read about everything I have mentioned in more detail in our bulletin.

Kind regards,

Dijana Beric, B.Sc. Economist  
President of the Association



Preparations for marking the International Day of Children Suffering from Malignant Diseases at the Parents' House. Our diligent young ones and their mothers made the gold ribbons, which MladiCe and volunteers from our Association will give out to fellow citizens. This year as well, we will draw the attention in this way to our issues and the struggles our little heroes go through.



We thank Jasminka Vučković, the director of the Solidarity Fund for Diagnosis and Treatment of Diseases, Conditions and Injuries of Children Abroad, who has honored us this year again on the occasion of marking February 15<sup>th</sup> with beautiful words of support.



Spring 01/003-23/23  
 Expires: 11.2.2022

Удмуртские родители делят  
опытом од малышей болезни  
„Искра“  
Президент  
Ольга Козина

### Discussion

Свако дете има да изгледа у години, младост, расте број деце које болују од неким болестима, али свако дете има да постоји једно здравље, као што се он, изаваљујући који он породица цео изађе, јер онда можемо сте тога здравља за изваљујући здравље, али и здравље статуса има породица.

Риго сто глумицама значајно космополитизирао својим поријеклима, персије да поред мноштва државствама италијанско, јерменско, грчко поријеклама треба преглеати и поштовајући друштво како би се из њега бржебише јавили вратили у нормално друштвено стање. Сама мислила да је у Риго уживајући знаменито који на основу који су наставе "Христе пророк" говори Риго о томе колико желимо да сами поријеклима који амају Балканско друштво вратио назад и који да мишље да треба друштва. На томе био изврсно чувателом, да не постоје поријеклима што сто Риго савладатица да државствима у различито мислима, стања и постојећи Риго у иностранству приносила као још постојећи и којеко поријеклима који поријеклима.

Такође, већу правичност (те и протеклој) владети означава наш уставни, једини извор је горди, испрости, подизати овиј породицама велики и финансијски поддржа и да бар у том смислу подиже јуститијски. Сада, захваљујући, нашој уставној која постоји правичност због испрости гордије јединица, породица не морају да брину како ће да издате своје, јединица, у институцију. Горди, породицама издате финансијски, на своме испрости, како, јединица по добија јединица у правини да се једини у правини, јединицама јединицама јединицама и да не може јединица јединицама у такв област.

Način četiri podjane postojanje naše ustanove, namolost, momoiti da konstatujemo da su upravu maloljetni bolesni dječaci jedan od najvažnijih razloga zbog kojih se dječaci upućuju na daleka liječenja u inostranstvo. Svi su u prošlosti podjane Fond solidarnosti je izvorom 227 uplata za liječenje dječaci u inostranstvo za šta je jedinično iznos 7,9 miliona KM.

*И.И. Шендуровский и его деятельность в церковном образовании в СССР в 1920-е годы*



Перед ліцензійцем, який укладає фінансові та банківські угоди з іноземними фізичними особами, повинен мати певний рівень знань і досвіду. Крім того, він повинен мати певний рівень знань і досвіду в галузі банківської справи.

[illegible]

Ovo je pravilno i da se zavaljano na planu da prisustvujemo. Izazovimo „Za kršića mala crkva“, na koju nikad smo imali u mogućnosti da prisustvujemo, ali Van Fond solidarnosti kao i do sada stoji na raspolaganje da i u budućnosti razlikujemo sve ljude koji imaju takvo ljudsko – umjetničko društveno zajedništvo.

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**ДИРЕКТОР**

2019 International Symposium on Information Security and Privacy, pp. 1–12.



*J. J. J.*

*Jill Wang, a communications and organizational behavior professor at the University of Illinois, is the author of the book, *How to Be a Successful Manager*.*



To mark February 15<sup>th</sup>, the International Day of Children Suffering from Malignant Diseases, MladiCe and volunteers from our Association gave out gold ribbons, balloons, our Association bulletin and information leaflets on childhood cancer.

Gold ribbons are a symbol for the struggle of children who suffer from malignant diseases.

We thank everyone who wore the gold ribbon and showed support to children treated for malignant diseases.



For the eighth year in a row, the traditional art workshop "For brave little hearts" took place at the Museum of the Republic of Srpska.

To mark the International Day of Children Suffering from Malignant Diseases, the students from Gimnazija, Medical school and Catholic school center in Banjaluka sent messages of support with their drawings to children treated for malignant diseases.

We thank to all participants, as well as to the Museum RS and the Department for educational and pedagogical work for all the support in previous years.



We released gold balloons into the sky at the Parents' House at noon this year as well, to mark February 15<sup>th</sup> and to commemorate our little heroes that had left us. Our balloons flew away with one wish only - that all children were healthy.





International Childhood Cancer Day is marked on February 15<sup>th</sup> to raise public awareness and to create better understanding of the difficulties children with cancer and their families face. The General Manager of the UCC Vlado Đajić M.D., Ph.D visited our youngest patients and the medical staff at the Department of Pediatric Hemato-Oncology of the Clinic of Children's Diseases.



“Our youngest patients that are treated at the Department of Pediatric Hemato-Oncology are the greatest heroes. As a human being primarily, but as a doctor as well, I am truly proud and emotionally touched by the level of devotion that our medical workers show for each of the patients. When you see what the children, their families and medical professionals go through while facing this cruel disease, we are obligated as a society to make those struggles easier for them. I am proud that we are able to perform most of the diagnostic and therapeutic procedures here at UCC RS. Furthermore, thanks to good international cooperation and communication we have with pediatric oncology centers, we are able to use not only the Solidarity Fund, but also international grants to send patients where it is needed. For many years now, the number of children treated within this Department is between 30 and 40 on a yearly basis. Cooperation with the Parents' House, which is wonderful indeed, is also highly significant. The existence of the Parents' House is very important as it considerably makes life easier for the families of the ailed children and helps this Department to function.” – said Vlado Djajic M.D., Ph.D.



On Tuesday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, Iskra Association held the Ceremonial Academy in the Town Hall of the Cultural Center Banski dvor, honoring the International Day of Children Suffering from Malignant Diseases.

On that occasion, the president of our Association, Mrs. Dijana Beric, expressed gratitude to all the guests, representatives of public institutions, friends, donators, parents and members of the Association. The head of the Department of Pediatric Hemato-Oncology, Jelica Predojevic Samardzic M.D., Ph.D, who is one the most important people for the healing of our children, also addressed the audience.

Then the Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Mr. Alen Seranic, spoke, followed by the advisor to the mayor of Banja Luka for social activities, Ms. Milada Sukalo.

During the Ceremonial Academy, we observed a minute's silence to honor all the children who succumbed to this horrible illness and their families.

The International Day of Children Suffering from Malignant Diseases is marked to raise public awareness and to create better understanding of the difficulties children with cancer and their families face.

We thank everybody who supported our work with their presence and showed that they are by our side in the mission of providing the best possible conditions to children treated for malignant diseases and their parents.





At the 20<sup>th</sup> regular session of the National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska, all deputies showed support for children suffering from malignant diseases by wearing gold ribbons.



The Social Democrats youth gathered and showed support at Trg Krajine to the little heroes currently dealing with malignant diseases. They wrote messages of encouragement and support to them, so also participated in marking The International Day of Children Suffering from Malignant Diseases.



We thank people from @milkybanjaluka who on the occasion of marking the International Day of Children Suffering from Malignant Diseases brought joy to children and parents at the Parents' House and at the Department of Pediatric Hemato-Oncology with sweets from their assortment.



Within workshops in schools, which were organized to raise awareness of the primary school students about the presence of childhood cancer, and on the occasion of marking the International Day of Children Suffering from Malignant Diseases, Primary School "Nikola Tesla" Derвента was one of the schools that took part in commemorating this important date. We want to thank the students and teachers of this school for cooperation and realization of the workshop.

On this occasion, the students showed support for their school friend who is fighting leukemia, and for all other children suffering from malignant diseases.

A story from the book "Brave stories", which was published by our Association, was read to the students. The story is about the personal experience of the girl from their school and her family with the battle against this cruel disease.

Once again, thanks to everybody who participated.



We thank the students and teachers of the Primary School "Branko Copić" Prnjavor for joining us in marking the International Day of Children Suffering from Malignant Diseases.

Students from the Secondary School Center "Istočna Ilidža", which our Katarina Kujaca is part of as well, also joined the campaign to mark the International Day of Children Suffering from Malignant Diseases..



We thank the students and the teachers for the support.

Workshops with the goal to raise awareness of the primary school students about the presence of childhood malignancy were also organized in the Primary School "Jovan Ducic" Kasindo, Istocna Ilidza, on the occasion of the International Day of Children Suffering from Malignant Diseases.

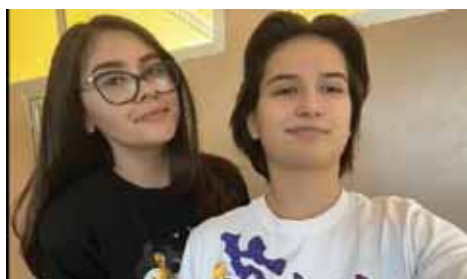


We thank all the students for participating, the teachers Alena Kesic and Mirjana Dragicevic who carried out the workshops, and to our dear Milijana Kujaca, who is also a teacher at this school, and who was once again our mediator in the communication.



Students of the Primary School "Sveti Sava" Banja Luka sent strong messages of encouragement to all friends treated for childhood cancer.

Thanks to the teachers and to all the students for their support and participation in workshops regarding the International Day of Children Suffering from Malignant Diseases.



"Vocational and technical school" Derventa also marked February 15th, the International Day of Children Suffering from Malignant Diseases.

This is the school our Magdalena Usorac attends, who fought against this ailment several years ago.

This year, she participated in organization of the workshops regarding marking February 15<sup>th</sup> at her school.

Thanks to all her school friends and teachers for the participation and support.





Within workshops in schools, which were organized to raise awareness of the primary school students about the presence of childhood cancer, and on the occasion of marking the International Day of Children Suffering from Malignant Diseases, Primary School “Ivo Andrić” Banja Luka was also one of the schools that took part in commemorating this important date.

We thank all the students and teachers of this school for cooperation, realization of the workshops and for all the beautiful messages of support.



We thank the students and teachers of the Primary School “Petar Kocić”, Kola, Banja Luka for the support and participation in workshops regarding February 15th, the International Day of Children Suffering from Malignant Diseases.



15. FEBRUAR, MEĐUNARODNI DAN DJECE OBOLJELE OD RAKA

**iskra**  
Hrvatska asocijacija roditelja djece s malignim bolestima

Najčešća maligna oboljenja kod djece su leukemije, karcinomi mozga, limfomi i solidni tumori. Stopa preživljavanja u razvijenim zemljama iznosi 80 odsto.

Dječji rak se, nažalost, ne može spriječiti, ali poboljšanje ishoda i procenta liječenja malignih oboljenja kod djece može biti postignuto ranom i tačnom dijagnozom koju prati efikasno liječenje.

Saznanje da dijete boluje od raka je šok koji u momentu mijenja život cijele porodice. U toj teškoj životnoj situaciji za dijete i njegove roditelje važna je podrška cjelokupne društvene zajednice.

**PODRŠKA JE KLJUČ KOJI OTVARA VRATA BOLJE SVIJETA**

Svijeta većih mogućnosti, veće stope preživljavanja i lakšeg prolaska kroz proces liječenja

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Vita  
Malesevic

I have been volunteering at the association of parents of children suffering from malign diseases "Iskra" for 7 years. I became more closely acquainted with the work and mission of this association at the summer rehabilitation camp, held in 2015. I had a chance to meet the parents whose children were treated for malignance, who founded the association the year before with the goal to make our and the life of our children easier during the period of treatment.

I became a member of the association in the same year and started participating actively in its work. I proved in time I was able to contribute to the realization of our plans and projects, so I was elected as a member of the Management Board. At the beginning, most of our work consisted of searching for donations to maintain the Parents' House, which was our most valuable but also the most demanding project. This work absorbed all the free time of our active members, but that was necessary in order to keep our operating standard in the desired level.

With the help from the Government of the Republic of Srpska, the Parents' House secured its existence, and with it, our horizons widened and we were able to focus on other problematic aspects of life during treatment. Our first focus point was solving the issue of schooling the children receiving treatment, during periods when they were unable to attend regular classes. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education RS and primary schools "Ivo Andrić" and "Sveti Sava", we managed to achieve legal rights of schooling children through organized classes at the premises of the Parents' House. With this move, we excluded the need for taking a stressful class exam upon the return to school, and provided our children with the possibility to continue with school with their peers, without falling behind.

When the Solidarity Fund was founded, our association was recognized as one of important participants; hence I was elected in its Management Board as a representative of the "Iskra" Association.

"Iskra" Association has grown in time, and our work has taken a new, more complex character, but our primary goal does not change. The Association was founded because of the need to ease the worst periods of our lives as much as possible and to save all who come after us from the same distress. Regardless of how much everything has changed and adjusted to the time, our work will always be based on mutual support and understanding.

Vita Malesevic, B.A.  
Association Board Chair



The time we spend at the Parents' House is made of many days. And days can be different, from those we tend to forget quickly about to those we remember for a long time. Some are nice, some are not. Some days last like a blink of an eye, and some are longer than a year. After the diagnosis, the whole life gets a different meaning and you soon learn you have to leave one day at a time from that point. So all of our days are filled with the usual things you do when you are ill - various tests, examinations, therapies... There are days filled with waiting - for the test results to come, for blood count to increase, for getting done with another crisis in a row. There are also hard and gloomy days filled with sadness, worry, dread and panic when you do not even dare to hope. You just grit your teeth and wait for them to pass. There are those that are angry with the whole world, with themselves, with the disease. There are happy days as well, for which you wish they would last as long as possible and when you feel joyous about the strangest things which "normal" people with normal problems do not even think about. And there you are feeling triumphant over a single thrombocyte, a small heap of leukocytes, neutrophils, erythrocytes and all those seemingly weird, yet vitally important things. All of those days are special because they lead you towards the moment when they tell you your treatment is finished and you can go home. And that is the most beautiful and special day at the Parents' House, the one we all look forward to and wait for with you. The day when your child goes home healthy.



**Katica Kerkez**, manager of the Parents' House "Iskra"

# FIRST VISIT TO A PSYCHOLOGIST

In the first days after they find out about the diagnosis, an appointment between a child and parents and a psychologist is one of many new and unfamiliar situations the family goes through. During this appointment, family members usually feel awkward and tense, because it is the first visit to a psychologist ever for most people, so they are unsure what the work looks like and what they can expect.

That is why the first visit mostly passes in introduction and gathering information, based on which a psychologist can make a personalized plan for assisting the family, which relates to helping in facing the illness, recognizing the needs of children and parents, informing and counseling on the situation they are in, and adequate preparation for hospitalization.

In the next appointments, the psychologist will emphasize creating an optimistic attitude towards the treatment, and direct the family to find and use personal strengths and sources of support. Individually, the psychologist works with parents first, helping them to process their experience correctly, to understand their emotions and how to deal with intense feelings of worry and fear. Then, they need to understand their proper role in the process of healing, as it is important for the wellbeing of their child. When parents are rational and calm and when they can control their emotions, they remain connected with their child and can serve as reliance to the child, and the embrace from a parent becomes the safest place in the world.

In time, the family creates a bond of trust and security with the psychologist. The psychologist becomes a person who is there for them, who understands and accepts them, who alleviates current troubles, who does not pity or judge them, but directs and leads them through the whole process of healing. And s/he is there later, once the child and parents return home after the treatment, to support them in full recovery of family balance and returning to normal courses of life.

Work with every family and child is a unique experience, because every family has its own story, tradition and life experience. Some parents notice the value of our appointments only when they return home, and some use the assistance intensively during the period of hospitalization.

For me, my profession is inspiring and makes me grateful for every day, makes me want to be a better person, because it reminds me of the only true values we live for. I am happy that I am able to use my knowledge, skills and positive energy to look after the most valuable cell of the society - a family, during their most sensitive period. In that way, I influence that the healing of children passes with as little stress as possible and I contribute the alleviation of traumatic experiences caused by long and exhausting treatment.

Mental health care of all family members is immensely important not only for themselves, but for the entire community, because every cured child is a stronger and braver person who knows better than us what it means to get a second chance and live it.



**Aleksandra Klindic**, MA in psychology



# ASK PSYCHOLOGIST

## PSYCHOLOGIST

Malignancy diagnosed in children is one of the hardest news a parent can hear, and the treatment period is one of the most stressful periods for any family in such a situation.

We are aware of the heavy thoughts and emotions that burden the children and their parents every day, so we have provided a continuous psychological support to them during the period of hospitalization.

Once the hospitalization ends, parents' concern for their child does not stop. On the contrary, it increases, because they lose the feeling of security due to the distance from the hospital and doctors. Knowing that, our care for you continues even after you leave the hospital. We remain your safe environment, where you can get all the needed psychological help and support in the new challenges you face with when you return home.

Some parents and children, adolescents especially, are struck by anxiety and fear from uncertainty only at that point and maybe they need help more than they did whilst in hospital. It is by all means a normal reaction, because every person reacts differently and at different times to high and lasting stress exposure.

The most common difficulties that parents and children state relate to: returning to work, returning to school environment, meeting their peers, fear from uncertain future, anxious and depressive moods, fearing from recurrence etc.

Apart from these expected situations, you can also get help in the following areas: preserving family system (because the family rejoins after a long time of being separated), partner relationships, parenting, children development phases, and psychoeducation on cognitive and emotional processes which happen in specific situations, including practical solutions.



**So, if you notice that you need additional support for a life situation, our psychologist Aleksandra Klindic is at your convenience on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10 and 11, when you can call her, tell her about the issue that troubles you and make an appointment for further work with her.**

**☎ Contact numbers: 066/589-991 i 051/304-600.**

**You can also write to her on the other days via social networks and the site of our Association.**

**We want you to know that we are here for you even after you go home. By taking care of your mental health, you do good for yourself. That way, you will be empowered to face everyday life situations. ❤️**

The Association psychologist Aleksandra Klindic gave a lecture at the Faculty of Philosophy for postgraduate psychology students within the subject Applied Psychology in Healthcare.

The lecture was given with the goal to present to the students the particularities of working as a psychologist with children suffering from malign diseases and their families in all stages of a malign disease treatment, but also during the period after healing.

On this occasion, we presented our work and activities from founding of our association until today to the students.

In this way, by speaking publicly and sharing the knowledge and experience, we are raising awareness on the existence of childhood malignancy, we educate individuals on proper ways of giving support and we are influencing the entire community.



# 12<sup>th</sup> CCI EUROPE REGIONAL CONFERENCE

**Vienna, June 3<sup>rd</sup> - June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022**



**Text: Milan Berić, B.A.**

We participated in the European conference of the associations of parents of children suffering from malign diseases - Childhood Cancer International, which took place in Vienna from June 3<sup>rd</sup> to June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022. We gained new knowledge on ways to improve certain areas of our work, and we confirmed that there are areas in which we do not fall behind other European countries.

12<sup>th</sup> CCI Europe Regional Conference of associations of parents took place in Vienna from June 3<sup>rd</sup> to June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022. It was the first conference held in-person after 2 years, as the previous one was held online due to COVID-19 pandemic.

By participating in conferences of this type, we have the opportunity to get acquainted with the ways of operating, and with projects which some other associations throughout Europe do, but also to present what we are doing. Naturally, many were surprised to see that we were able to achieve the realization of the Parents' House project in such a short period, considering the significant number of associations which have still not achieved it. They were even more positively surprised when we told them we have classes at our Parents' House. Furthermore, they praised our traditional summer camps which we organize in the mountains as an important aspect for recovering after the treatment. We found out that some associations have already been doing something that we are also planning, and that is organizing a race as a means of relaxation after healing. Such races are always organized in nature, and we attend camps in the mountains anyway.

81 members from 40 associations of parents from 25 different countries were present at this conference. There were talks about studies and innovations, diagnostics and ways of treatment, but also about psychosocial protection during the treatment process and especially after the treatment finishes. One of the sessions was related to late consequences, which is definitely not a subject which many want to talk or hear about, but which is nevertheless necessary to be talked and discussed about. Of course, one of the important points, particularly for survivors, is social networks and their use in proper intercommunication and exchange of necessary information, all with the goal of improving our position and mutual help.

Also, one of very important sessions was the one on the European standards of treating children with cancer.

One of the novelties that we have adopted at this conference is "Open communication - Ask the psychologist", so our psychologist Aleksandra is now available on social networks to everybody in need.

# PANCARE CONFERENCE IN BUDAPEST

It is our pleasure to have participated at the PanCare conference once again, which took place in Budapest.

Our Association was represented by Milos Malešević and Vladimir Pejic from MladiCe.

The topics of this meeting were: late treatment consequences and long-term follow-up program.

We are looking forward to obtaining new knowledge and we hope for future cooperation and projects for children suffering from and treated for malign diseases



## **Text: Vladimir Pejic, survaver MladiCe**

This fall, Miloš and I participated at the 28<sup>th</sup> PanCare conference in Budapest as representatives of MladiCe Banjaluka and Iskra Association. Different associations of parents of cured children and doctors participated at the conference presenting their work, various groups of volunteers and lastly as many young as the adult people cured from cancer, who all came to share their experiences. All of them come from different countries, from Croatia to Ireland and other European countries. They all had one goal in common - to share their knowledge and verified information and above all to meet each other while creating a pleasant atmosphere for people to feel safe, for the cured people who had gone through difficult periods in their lives to see that they are not alone, that there are people who understand them, who try to understand them and who fight every day to improve the conditions in which hospitals and doctors work, hoping to solve the problems that the attending parents had during treatment processes and make it easier for the future generations more than ever before. The topics from daily lectures covered a wide range, from serious medical studies and their results, new medications that are still being tested, influence of psychologists during the critical healing phase and how to optimize the exploit of physical and mental strength of the volunteers, to psychosocial adaptation of a child after the treatment to the schooling surroundings and reentering a society. After the lectures, social activities were organized so that the participants could get to know each other better and exchange experiences. In my opinion, the relationships that are created in events of this kind are really imperishable, because a painful and rare experience bonds you together and in time, through conversation, it turns into something beautiful and lasting. We met new people from Montenegro, North Macedonia, Slovenia and many others. The aspect from these events that leaves the biggest impression on me is that I constantly change the perspective of my personal experiences after, because I hear the other side of the story and find out things my doctors thought about during the treatment. Even more than that, I like to hear new stories from young people treated in other cities and struggles of their parents who gave everything they had to save them. It all gives me a different perspective of the whole situation. Understanding activities of other associations motivates us to work more and by cooperating with them we are able to open doors for even bigger projects which we would not be able to accomplish without their help. That is the key idea of these gatherings, cooperation, mutual assistance, because we are stronger together. At these events, we feel that our association is part of something greater, a bigger team with the same cause. There is a network of doctors, parents and cured people with a lot of experiences, of people who devoted their lives with a hope to make this world a better place than it was. We are one step closer to that with each conference.





## Changes and amendments of the Law on Mandatory Health Insurance



The Committee on Health, Labor, and Social Affairs of the National Assembly RS organized an expert discussion on the Draft law on mandatory health insurance on August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Association “Iskra” was represented by the president Dijana Beric at the discussion. After the discussion, we submitted the Proposal of changes and amendments of the Draft law on mandatory health insurance to the Committee on Health, Labor, and Social Affairs. We requested in our proposal that the sick leave for the parent of a child suffering from a malign disease lasts as long as the child is hospitalized and that the parent is entitled to 100 percent of the salary compensation.

“Iskra” Association has been dealing since its founding with the rights of children suffering from malign diseases and their parents’ rights. Bearing in mind the need for constant improvement of their position, we submitted our proposals for law amendments to the legislative bodies on this occasion, too.

The Association of parents “Iskra” first advocated these amendments in April 2015 during the public discussion on the Draft law on changes and amendments of the Health Care Insurance Act, which was adopted in the same year.

Our next official plea with the same requests was in March 2017 when we addressed the Committee on Health, Labor, and Social Affairs NARS. We repeated then our suggestions then, among which were the two aforementioned. The Health Committee forwarded our suggestions to the Health Insurance Fund RS for them to make a statement on the listed points of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare RS. In their reply, the Health Insurance Fund RS stated it was necessary to provide the legal presumptions first, based on which it would be possible to plan the means in the financial plan of the Fund for the future period.

Our request that the sick leave for the parent of a child suffering from a malign disease should last as long as the child is hospitalized was included into the Regulation on the exercise of remuneration during incapacity for work of the Health Insurance Fund RS at the end of 2019.

Regardless of that, we believe that our request that the sick leave for the parent lasts as long as the child is hospitalized should be regulated by law. Only legal solutions are the solutions valuable for all of those who will face with a malign disease of their child in the future.

## Another legal solution in direction of improving the position of children suffering from malign diseases and their parents!

The National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska has adopted the Law on Mandatory Health Insurance which implemented, ON OUR SUGGESTION, that the parent of a child suffering from cancer, while being on the sick leave on those grounds, IS ENTITLED TO FULL 100 PERCENT SICK LEAVE REMUNERATION ( "Official Gazette RS", No. 93/22 , Article 83., paragraph 2).

The president of our Association participated in expert discussion on Draft Law on Mandatory Health Insurance organized by the Committee on Health, Labor and Social Affairs.

Having in mind the need for constant improvement of the position of children suffering from cancer and their parents, we suggested, among other things, that a parent is entitled to 100 % remuneration of sick leave, instead of 70 % as it used to be before.

The National Assembly RS adopted the mentioned Law and accepted our suggestion.

This is a great success in our work, because we contributed to the improvement of life of parents of children suffering from malign diseases, which is in line with our vision and mission.

Thanks to the Committee on Health, Labor and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the National Assembly RS and to all others who participated in enactment of the mentioned Law, who thus supported the parents of children suffering from cancer.

## Another success of our association!

Starting this school year at Parents' House, other than elementary teaching, we will also conduct subject teaching for hospitalized children.

On this occasion, we held a working session between the representatives of our association and teachers from primary schools "Ivo Andrić" and "Sveti Sava".

The Association of parents "Iskra" has advocated for several years that long-term hospitalized children should be provided with regular education.

This right was included in the Law on Primary Education and Upbringing in 2017, and the Rule-book of the Ministry of Education and Culture enabled schooling at Parents' House.

This has lessened the parents' concerns, and provided our children with the possibility to gain the necessary knowledge during their treatment, to be graded and to continue with school with their peers after the treatment.



# REHABILITATION CAMP

## “JAHORINA 2022”

**Text: Andrea Pecanac, Secretary of the Association**

We have another rehabilitation camp behind us, which was held on Mt. Jahorina this year and lasted for five days.

During the camp, our participants stayed at Hotel Dva Javora.

Selfless support in realization of the camp was given to us by the owner of the hotel, Mr. Djordje Djokic, who provided free accommodation for our group of participants.

We would also like to thank OC Jahorina, which granted us the use of attractions from their offer, and travel agency Globus Travel, which assigned their animators for us.

We had no shortage of adventure, fun and laughter.

Just like before, we gain unforgettable experiences in our camps.

Spending time in fresh air in nature had a beneficial influence on all of our participants and gave them an opportunity for numerous fun and healthy activities, through which we are trying to stimulate and create new healthy habits.

We enjoyed in exploring nature and taking walks through the forest together, in creative workshops with our dear Nataša who always has some new ideas for our little and big artists, who are able to craft beautiful creations with her help, which we can keep as memories to our unforgettable gatherings.

Children were thrilled to have a chance to enjoy the cable car ride, bobsled and to even give zip line a try. Within our Jahorina camp, we had a planned field trip to Sarajevo, where we also enjoyed in the city tour and spending time together. Our evening activities were filled with social games, music, dancing, joy and laughter. This has been 8<sup>th</sup> in the row rehabilitation camp that the Association of parents “Iskra” successfully organized for families of children treated for malignant diseases. Rehabilitation is extremely important for the strengthening process and for bringing the family back into normal course of life after healing. The experience exchange on its own is very important and has liberating and therapeutical effects. Friendships that last a lifetime are made in our camps and we are already looking forward to the next gathering. 🧡💙❤️





## SPORTS ACTIVITIES AT THE CAMP





## WORKSHOPS AT THE CAMP JAHORINA



## Summer rehabilitation and socialization camps of the Association “Iskra”

**Text: Danijela Stojcic, survaver MladiCa**

My name is Danijela, I am 19 years old and I am a member of “Iskra” Association.

Every year, children who were treated for malign diseases have the opportunity to enjoy in our camps during summer period. We always have great and interesting activities which are organized for us by members of the association and adults who were treated for cancer when they were children. We socialize, play, compete and have a great time during those 7 days. So far, we have had camps in Gučevo, Tara, Jahorina and Sutjeska. We also visit the surrounding areas and always return home joyful, with positive impressions. And we can't wait for our next journey.



### CAMP OF THE ASSOCIATION KRIJESNICA

Our dear friends from “Krijesnica” Association invited us to participate in their camp organized in Fužine this year. A small team from “Iskra”, Jelena, Ivana and Mateja, came back full of great impressions and positive emotions. They learned lots of things in camp, had a great time, socialized and, most importantly, were a great support to each other. We thank “Krijesnica” for their invitation.





## PROJECT “MY SAFE PLACE”

A project called “My safe place” was realized at the Parents’ House from April to July. We received the funds to carry out the project from the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports. During the project, four workshops were held for parents and children residing at the Parents’ House. With this project, we also acquired the means to renew our outdoor toys and the benches in our yard.





LJUBAV • PODRŠKA • NADA

**📍 September is the month of raising awareness on childhood cancer.**

The struggle that children suffering from cancer and their families go through during the long process of healing is rigorous, hard and uncertain. It is exactly why the goal of the Golden September is to raise awareness on all the aspects of fighting childhood malignance.

Let us give support to our little heroes with big hearts and to their families, because they need us. Let us show them they are not alone. 📍

Regarding the Golden September, the month of raising awareness on childhood cancer, MladiCe and volunteers of "Iskra" Association are handing out our bulletins, promotional materials and gold balloons at Krajina Square today. We will be here until 2PM.

We are also writing notes for our little ones, which we will release with gold balloons.

Take a walk to the Banski Dvor Cultural Centre and the Assembly of the City of Banja Luka tonight at 8 o'clock; they will be illuminated with golden light as a sign of support to children suffering from malign diseases.

The Green Bridge will also shine in golden light.

Take a photo of yourselves and support children suffering from malign diseases.

#lightitupgold #goldseptember











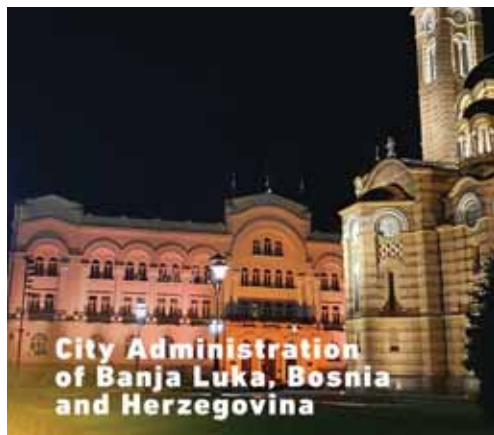
Banja Luka has joined the global campaign “Light it up gold” and shined in golden light just like many cosmopolitan centers as a sign of support to children suffering from malign diseases.

The color gold is the color of strength, courage and endurance, the symbolic color of children treated for cancer, and September is the month of support and hope for our little great heroes.

Tonight, the Banski Dvor Cultural Centre and the Assembly of the City of Banja Luka and the Green Bridge WERE LIT UP GOLD !

#lightitupgold

#goldseptember



# THE EIGHT BIRTHDAY OF THE ASSOCIATION “ISKRA”



Association of parents of children suffering from malign diseases “Iskra” is marking 8 years since its founding on November 4<sup>th</sup>.

In accordance with our mission and goals of our Association, we have been trying for eight years to improve the quality of life of children suffering from malign diseases and their families.

This year, we are especially proud of a significant legislative solution - the National Assembly RS has adopted the Law on Mandatory Health Insurance, which included our suggestion that a parent of a child suffering from cancer, while on a sick leave on those grounds, is entitled for 100 percent remuneration, instead of 70 percent, as it used to be.

In the previous years, we advocated that regular schooling should be provided for long-term hospitalized children, so we arranged to have subject teaching from this school year, aside elementary teaching, at the Parents’ House. We are also very proud of this achievement.

For 6 years of successful work of the Parents’ House, 160 families from all over the Republic of Srpska have found assistance, support and warm family atmosphere in it.

Our Association currently has nearly 200 members.

We have organized 8 summer camps and 1 winter rehabilitation camp for the whole family of children suffering from malign diseases, since we know how important rehabilitation is after the treatment finishes.

We have numerous cultural and sports manifestation behind us.

We are trying to participate regularly in European conferences, from which we obtain new knowledge to improve our work.

Since 2018, a network of young people treated for cancer called “MladiCe RS” has been operating within our Association.

Whenever we are able, and in accordance with our goals, we try to give assistance and support to the Department of Pediatric Hemato-Oncology at UCC RS.

By providing information, psychosocial support and a number of programs, we are trying to empower parents and children, and to inform the public on childhood malignance and ways they can help and contribute.

We would like to thank all of our friends, donators, institutions and to all of you who have been by our side, supporting us through all these years, because ailed children and their families really need the support from the entire community.

## SIXTH ANNIVERSARY OF PARENTS' HOUSE "ISKRA"



Parents' House is celebrating its 6<sup>th</sup> birthday!!!

Ever since it opened its door to all the children and their parents 6 years ago, Parents' House has been a warm home and a safe place for 156 families.

Other than free accommodation, we provided all of them with professional psycho-social assistance and support from parents with experience in treatment for malignant diseases. We carried out numerous campaigns, projects and various workshops, celebrated birthdays, marked holidays, celebrated happy moments,







waited for test results, feared, grieved and were happy to see you go home after the treatment. Our parents' house is much more than just a place to stay. Its value is also in the warmth it inspires. In the cheerful children's murmur coming from the playroom. In the sounds of the wheels of bikes and scooters roaming through its hallways. In the relaxed children who do not think about cannulas, lumbar punctures, therapies...

In the smiled parents, a family together, in the strength and support we give each other when it is hardest. Finding out that your child suffers from cancer changes your whole life in a single moment. The treatment is long, hard, exhausting and uncertain, but you do not have to be alone on that road. See you at the Parents' House!



## NEKTARIJE EGINSKI- The protector of the PARENTAL HOUSE “ISKRA”

We celebrated our Slava at the Parents' House and marked our St. Patron's Day, St. Nektarije Eginski. Together with the priest Aleksandar Savić from Paprikovac parish, we prayed for healing of all children.



### Thanks for the support!

My dear friends, citizens and colleagues from MUP RS, I am starting my cycling tour from the church in Milosavci to Ostrog Monastery on August 25<sup>th</sup> at 9AM, with a wish to say my prayers to the Lord and to St. Vasilije Ostroški for good health to all of us on August 28<sup>th</sup>, the Feast of the Assumption. I have also dedicated this journey to the prayer for the good health of all of our children, and above all the children suffering from cancer. I pledge my full support to the Association of parents of children suffering from cancer “ISKRA”.





**Text: Milos Malesevic,  
Board Member on behalf of MladiCe  
(Management Board)**

MladiCe RS is a network of young people treated for malign diseases from the territory of the Republic of Srpska, directed towards rehabilitation, psychosocial support and empowering of its members.

This sentence describes our work from the beginning in 2018, but it tells just about the surface of our group. Before MladiCe started officially, in the form it now has, there had been a tendency for working and spending time together. The will and motivation were expressed through numerous volunteer campaigns, socializing and workshops in our summer camps. Following the example of the large association from our region, with which we have great cooperation, we decided to make our work official in 2018 by founding MladiCe RS within the Association of parents "Iskra". Like all beginnings, ours was also exciting. In our first year, we took the responsibility to organize 6<sup>th</sup> regional convention of young people treated for cancer. We exchanged our experiences, made new friendships and learned how to deal with difficulties which life after cancer brings. This project was wind in our sails. In the period that followed, we organized numerous activities at the Parents' House, with the goal to help children who were treated for malignance at the time.

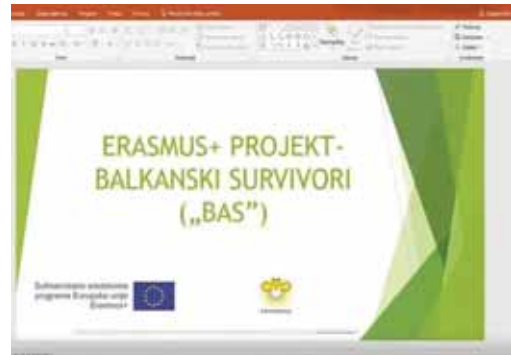
Together with the rest of our society, we were taken aback by Corona virus pandemic. We had to deal with masks again, with isolation and fear from illness. Our activities had to stop, in order to protect our own and also the health of the residents of the Parents' House. We had to accept that the most we could do for our community was to briefly stop with our work. Our work continued in the open, with volunteer actions which formed us as a group at the beginning. By marking days which are important to us, during Golden September and February 15<sup>th</sup>, we remembered our beginnings and what mattered most to us - mutual support and talking about difficult subjects with people who understand them. We still remained in touch with our international friends and associates, participating in regional and international conventions. By now, we got used to the fact that every day brings new challenges and that future is never definite. Bearing that in mind, it is easy to lose hope and motivation, but our existence is the proof that we are capable to deal with everything the life brings.

That is why I know there are great things for us in the future!





# Erasmus + project "Balkan's survivors"



On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 a project called "Balkan's survivors" started, co-financed with the EU funds via Erasmus+ Program! 🇪🇺 😊

The organizations that participate in the realization of the project are Krijesnica Association as the host (Croatia), and partner organizations Čika Boca (Serbia), Srce za djecu koja boluju od raka and Iskra (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Fenix (Montenegro) and SANO (the Republic of North Macedonia).

With the project "Balkan's Survivors", we wish to improve cooperation and strengthen the network between young survivors from partner countries with the common goal of improving the quality of life of children and youth during and after the treatment for malignant diseases. The goals of our project are:

1. To identify the problems of young people treated for malignant diseases
2. To educate survivors on possibilities of creating and carrying out the projects which would benefit all their users
3. To increase the users' motivation to participate in programs of their parent organizations as well as the survivors' involvement and proactivity on a local, regional and international level.

Preparatory meetings during which we plan and develop our ideas are ongoing. 😊

## Text: Marija Babic, survivor MladiCa

After the period of Corona virus, because of which our conventions were not realized the way we got used to, a large number of us gathered in Novi Vinodolski this year.

At the convention, which lasted from July 2<sup>nd</sup> to July 10<sup>th</sup> 2022, other than new friendships we made and the renewed old ones, we were active in projects, presented previous projects and exchanged experiences regarding activities of our organizations so that we could be wind in the sails to each other.

Aside formal meetings we were present at, our team building was contributed by creative workshops, and by interactive gatherings organized by Krijesnica, in which we all took part and enjoyed.

Everything mentioned so far has additionally enriched our experience at the seaside, which was in the near vicinity of our accommodation and where we were able to spend our free time, get to know each other better, socialize and sing.

Our organizer Mihael made the effort to satisfy all the aspects a manifestation of this sort requires, he fulfilled all of our expectations, and, with all of that, showed us the beautiful Novi Vinodolski to which we will surely return.



# The story of one mother

**Text: Tatjana Stojcic, Deputy Chair**

When doctors tell the adults that they have some sort of a malignant disease, they probably think at that moment that nothing worse than that exists.

Believe me, it does...When they tell you such news about your child. That experience changes you permanently...

The only positive thing about it is that we learn how to appreciate life, health, beautiful moments and we don't worry about some trivial things.

Although it has been almost nine years since my child was ill, I still cannot name a malignant disease the way people usually do.

It seems to me I can alleviate the disease if I don't use that ugly 6-letter word, and call it a malignant disease instead.

Thank God that all the bad things are behind us and all our children are healthy, smiling and happy. They look forward to every shared moment, because they know and understand each other best. They are especially looking forward to the summer camp like the one that took place in Jahorina last year.

There were different activities and most of all - laughter and songs.

We thank from the bottom of our hearts to Mr. Đorđe Đokić, the owner of the hotel Dva Javora, for providing free accommodation for children and their parents at the hotel.

We thank all of the employees for a warm and domestic atmosphere and for making the moments spent on Jahorina beautiful.

In the end, I have to state that I am so proud of all of our children. I am proud of their courage, strength, will and wish to find something positive in every situation. We taught them about life in normal circumstances and they showed us how to act in the hardest ones.



## *(the visits we made and our donations to Children's Hemato-oncology UKC RS)*

**AFFIDEA CONFIRMED THEIR SLOGAN "NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN HEALTH" WITH A NEW INVESTMENT INTO THE CENTER FOR RADIOTHERAPY**

### **The most modern equipment for treating malign diseases available in Banjaluka**

The Center for Radiotherapy (a member of Affidea Group) in Banjaluka, in accordance with their slogan "Nothing is more important than health" continues providing the best service and setting standards in treatment of malign/oncological diseases in the region.

Two state-of-the-art TrueBeam devices were put into service during the ceremony that was held at the Center for Radiotherapy Banja Luka, UCC RS. This health institution is the most successful example of applying the public-private partnership model that has been instituted between the Government of the Republic of Srpska, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the Health Insurance Fund RS, UCC RS and International Medical Centers Banja Luka (the founder of the Center for Radiotherapy and member of Affidea Group), which enables not only the oncological patients from the Republic of Srpska, but also the patients from entire Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region, to have access to health services based on high professional standards and innovations.

This health institution is setting standards and benchmarks for all other Affidea centers when it comes to new treatments, using new technologies and applying new treatment standards. Putting new devices into service and discussing further improvements of services and cooperation were the reasons for the first visit of the general manager, Giuseppe Recchi, who has been the CEO of Affidea Group since January 2018.

- I am pleased that today, when we present and put into service the newest investment of Affidea, I can make an example to confirm our commitment to the partnership and more, to creating the best possible conditions for treatment of oncological patients in the Republic of Srpska, the whole country and the region. We believe here at Affidea that there is nothing more important than health and we have shown it during pandemics - when we worked around the clock. This investment of over BAM10 million is a continuation of our previous investments of over BAM30 million into equipment, building facilities and educating personnel. It is also an announcement to new planned investments of BAM5 million in the following three years. We remain a committed partner to the Government of the Republic of Srpska and competent institutions and we believe that our cooperation will continue to the satisfaction of all the signatories of the Agreement, but above all, to benefit of the users of health services we provide. - said Affidea CEO Recchi.

Investing into new devices and accompanying software for planning treatment, a new Oncology information system, reconstructing the existing bunkers, procurement of dosimetry equipment and resources for immobilization and fixation of patients, as well as medical personnel training, to which special attention is given, cost over 10 million convertible marks, completely provided by Affidea, the founder of IMC Banjaluka, from their personal funds.

- The work of the Center for Radiotherapy is the best example of how joint forces can achieve results, provide patients in our Republic of Srpska with the same quality of services as anywhere in Europe and constantly improve in line with the latest standards of modern medicine. Unfortunately, our patients' needs are growing. According to the data of the Health Insurance Fund RS, 1,700 patients used radiotherapy services in 2020, and there were 1,829 patients at the radiotherapy department in 2019. During 6 months from the start of this year, 819 patients used radiotherapy services. Thanks to work of the Center for Radiotherapy in Banjaluka, we no longer need to send our patients to radiotherapy outside the Republic of Srpska, there is no waiting list here and there was



not a single moment when providing this service was put on hold. Our patients recognized this; the level of success of the Center for Radiotherapy is the level of their satisfaction at the same time. - said the Minister of Health and Social Welfare at the Government of the Republic of Srpska, Dr. Alen Seranic.

Although the Center for Radiotherapy RS had already been recognized as a center with the most modern equipment and leading experts, constant investments and upgrading equipment, as well as investing into further training of experts, have placed this institution at the regional map of the most significant medical centers for treatment of oncology diseases.

I would like to thank all the doctors, physicians, technicians - to every person who is part of the team of the Center for Radiotherapy in Banjaluka, on behalf of all the members of ISKRA Association and on behalf of all the patients and members of their families who ever set foot in here. They say that good news travel far and today, I want to help to spread the news as far as possible, because to have this kind of service, of this quality, at the doorstep is an invaluable asset. That is why I want everybody to know, everybody who, unfortunately, needs to use services of the Center for Radiotherapy, you do not have to go abroad because you will get the best and the latest therapy right here, in Banjaluka, said while giving her statement the president of ISKRA Association, Dijana Beric.

Among the most significant features of the latest generation devices is that they can accurately track the patient's movements during treatment, e.g. breathing or smaller movements, hence they reduce the margin of damaging healthy tissue and avoid treating healthy body parts with electromagnetic waves. After a short tour of the Center for Radiotherapy and introducing the attendants and the media to the personnel, contents, capacities and features of the new devices, the Center for Radiotherapy continued with work confirming the commitment to interest and benefit of patients who are provided with access to the services of the Center at all times. At this moment, the Center for Radiotherapy (member of Affidea Group) International Medical centers Banja Luka employs seven radiation oncologists, two radiation oncology residents, six medical physicians, 12 radiology technologists and technicians and two service engineers. This small team has helped in acquiring the new technologies quickly and contributed the development of the medical setting of the Republic of Srpska and creating better conditions for treatment of oncological patients.



**Source: Frontal**

# "ROTARY CHARITY BALL 2022" BANJALUKA

**SOURCE: BANJALUKA.NET**

**PHOTO: RANKO CUKOVIC**

"Rotary Charity Ball 2022" took place in Integra Banjaluka.

Rotary club Banjaluka has been traditionally organizing this event as the jewel in the crown of all the charity work the Club does throughout the year. The funds collected by the purchased tickets and donations will go to charity purposes, and this year the destination is the Parents' House and "Iskra".

"We have decided to support the Parents' House project and "Iskra" Association this year. It is a remarkable idea that has not been overly advocated yet, so we have decided to support it. It is a home meant for children and parents who are not from Banjaluka and who are treated in our UCC. The idea is to accommodate parents and children who require a longer treatment and stay in Banjaluka. We are aware it can cost a lot and that many people are not able to afford staying here", said Aleksandar Savanovic, the president of Rotary Club. Savanovic brought to mind that Rotary Club Banjaluka has a number of charity activities and does a lot of community work in general. Members of Inner Wheel Club Banjaluka organize a charity raffle at the Rotary Club Banjaluka Charity Ball. As the members of Inner Wheel club Banjaluka stated, the aim of this raffle is to help the Association of parents of children and youth with special needs and persons with disabilities "Moja luka". Guests from Belgrade, Rotary Club Danube, were also present at the Rotary Club Charity Ball in Banjaluka.



## WE WERE AT...



This year again, we were present at the traditional manifestation “Proljeće u muzeju”, organized by the Department of Education and Pedagogy of Museum RS. Our children’s drawings were also presented at the art exhibition.



Representatives of our Association were present at the opening of the Center for health promotion and illness prevention at the Health Center yesterday. We would like to thank for the invitation and the opportunity to be present at the opening of the first Center of this kind in the Republic of Srpska, and we believe it will be of high significance for all of our citizens. We would also like to congratulate the Health Center Banjaluka, the largest one in the Republic of Srpska, for taking this great leap forward, and we hope other health centers will form centers of this kind. Primary health protection level is extremely significant for noticing the first symptoms of childhood malign diseases; early diagnosis, followed by timely treatment of the disease in its early stages, provide higher chances of healing.

This year again, representatives of our Association took part in the opening of the manifestation Children’s Week at the Museum of the Republic of Srpska.

The Department of Educational and Pedagogical Work of the Museum RS organized the Children’s Week for the 16<sup>th</sup> time, this time under the motto: “Share joy, knowledge, love”.





# SUPPORT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA INSTITUTIONS



President of the Republic of Srpska, Zeljka Cvijanovic, the Prime Minister, Radovan Viskovic, and the Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Alen Seranic, met with the representatives of the Association of Parents of Children Suffering from Malignant Diseases "Iskra".

The support to children treated at the Clinic for Children's Diseases, Department of Haemato-On-cology, the Republic of Srpska University Clinical Centre, their parents, program activities of the association, rehabilitation projects and the functioning of the Parents' House were discussed, the Public Relations Bureau of the Republic of Srpska Government reported. The commitment of the institutions of the Republic of Srpska to support the activities of the Iskra Association through current grants to humanitarian organizations and associations, but also through project activities that include rehabilitation was jointly confirmed.

We would like to thank the owner of the hotel "Dva Javora" in Jahorina, Mr. Đorđe Đokić, who surprised us with a wonderful gesture and provided us with selfless support in the realization of this year's camp, who provided free accommodation in his hotel for our group of participants.

We would also like to thank OC Jahorina, which granted the use of attractions from their offer, and travel agency "Globus Travel", which assigned their animators for us.



## DONATIONS TO THE ASSOCIATION

This is Mrs. Biserka Mrkic from Banjaluka, who left considerable funds in her will to 4 associations, among which is ours.

After she had died, her lawyer contacted us to brief us on the details of her will and informed us that this kind lady left KM10.500 to our Association.

We will certainly subsequently announce what these funds are designated for.

The fact that touched us most is that we never even met this kind and generous woman, and she did this great humane act.

We feel immense gratitude for this gesture that shows we should never lose faith in people and it gives support and motivation to us as an Association to continue and endure in our mission for creating better conditions for children suffering from malignant diseases and their parents.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.



We would like to thank the mayor of the Prnjavor municipality, Mr. Darko Tomas, for the financial donation and support in the work of the Parents' House, which was given again this year. The municipality of Prnjavor, led by the mayor, has the understanding for children suffering from malignant diseases. We thank them from their great support.



We thank dm drogerie markt d.o.o who decided to support our Association with a valuable donation of KM 5.000 on the occasion of refreshing their store in Kralja Petra I Karadjordjevic Street.

Support in our work is very important and we wholeheartedly thank you for it.







A humanitarian fashion show, entitled In a new life “With a heart for the spark” was held on July 3, 2022 in Teslić. All the participants of the show fought and fought with different forms of cancer, and it was they who, with their participation, provided support to all those who are currently facing this wicked disease.

We would like to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your support and for the monetary donation collected from voluntary income during the show, which was intended for the “Iskra” Parents’ House.



We thank SYRMIA d.o.o Banja Luka company for their monetary donation and support in work of our Association.



We thank the Preschool facility “Danilo” and wonderful educators who work there for the monetary donation and support in work of our Association.



## Bojan Marčeta collected 20.000 coins and donated them to the youngest fighters

**Author: Milijana Latinovic, Glas Srpske**

**Photo: Velibor Tripic**

BANJALUKA - While most people blow out candles on the cake for their birthday and enjoy in costly presents, this humble and noble waiter from Banjaluka called Bojan Marčeta, decided to mark his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday by giving his 4-year worth of savings of KM1.000, all in 5 pfening coins, to the youngest brave hearts in the Republic of Srpska. He paid it to the account of the Association of parents of children who suffer from malign diseases "Iskra".

This unusual saver has been saving 5-pfening coins for years, wanting to show that people are wrong when they leave the change behind and consider it worthless. 4 years ago, "Glas" wrote about Bojan's uncommon act when he paid for his monthly loan installment with 7.400 5-pfening coins. This time, he has gone a step further and collected 20.000 coins. Life was not easy for Bojan. After he came to the town on the Vrbas in the turmoil of war, he had to start from the beginning like all other refugees. He learned what it meant to have and to lose something, and especially what it meant to fight against the cruel disease and to lose the battle. It is in this battle that Bojan lost his

wife 5 years ago. To commemorate her and her struggle, he donated his 54 kg heavy savings to the youngest fighters on Friday.

- I know how much money and care it takes when a man fights a serious illness. Moreover, my daughter Marija told me about her friend who got ill and spent some time at the Parents' House. It all got me thinking and I didn't have a dilemma about what to do with the money. The time was passing, there were more and more coins and I decided that I could do my small share for the bravest ones just



on my 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. My life's motto is to help others, I don't know any other way. - says Bojan for "Glas". Bojan, who has been employed in hotel Jelena in Banjaluka for 7 years, stresses that his colleagues were supportive and encouraging the first time he was collecting coins. He says that better personnel than his does not exist; they showed their humanity together in full swing of the COVID-19 pandemic when they set aside their daily allowances and donated them to the Pulmology Department of UCC RS. Bojan says he finds the motivation to collect small change in the fast pace of life and wastefulness, which we can all witness daily. People have become cold towards each other, there is no compassion, neither help, everything is observed through material benefit. I don't want to be part of that - says Bojan. He emphasized he would continue saving and that his next step will surely be colored with humanity as well.

- I don't know if I will collect 5-pfening coins or larger ones, but I would like to collect 550 kilograms of coins even if it took me next ten years, and help someone in need - said Bojan. When asked if he had any wishes for his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, this humble man from Krajina proudly said as long as one was healthy, happiness would be within one's grasp.

The president of the Association "Iskra" Dijana Beric thanked Bojan for such a kind gesture.

- People who went through similar situations have more understanding and it is easier for them to relate to everything we go through, which is understandable. I am grateful to him and I hope his example will be guidance for many - said Beric

## DONATIONS TO THE ASSOCIATION



We thank the Jewish Municipality Banja Luka for their donation.



We thank the lady from Banjaluka for the donation of toys for our young ones.

On the occasion of the upcoming Easter holidays, Jelena Petrovic, brave little Sofija's aunt, made children who reside at the Parents' House happy again, with the help of friends and kind people. She organized a donation of healthy sweets, small household appliances, hygiene products and other supplies. A beautiful decoration made of balloons thrilled our little ones. Thank you so much.





## Green oases for the youngest in Banjaluka and Sarajevo: INFINITY GROUP IN A NEW HUMANE CAMPAIGN.



Green oases for the youngest in Banjaluka and Sarajevo: Infinity Group in a new humane campaign. Green oases for the youngest in Banjaluka and Sarajevo: Infinity Group in a new humane campaign. Three Japanese cherries, two maples and 190 bushes along fence adorn the yard of the Parents' House "Iskra" in Banjaluka. While socializing with our workers and young ones who were curiously peeping out, these were all planted by the employees of Infinity International Group member companies. Adorning a yard for parents and children treated for serious illnesses is the most humane ending to our campaign "Month of Health", state the planters from this Group who did a great job with shovels in their hands as well. We have always supported humanitarian actions, especially those that help children, and it is a particular pleasure to be useful in the surrounding such as the Parents' House, says Aleksa Bošnjak from Prointer ITSS. He is one of the oldest employees in this company and he is a proven environmentalist in his community. "I always have time to devote for such a cause and I am quite involved in similar campaigns in Laktaši, waste removal mainly, but also planting new trees. Every donation to the Parents' House is a big thing and I am proud that our organization was part of this campaign. It is not easy to come here and see these ill kids, so every smile on their face is precious", says Aleksa. Through work on renewable sources of energy







and electromobility, our groupation is indeed oriented towards “green” industry and healthy environment, adds Nikola Karan, the director of the EP Mobile company, an IIG member. “By working on the development of electromobility in our country and raising awareness on harmful effects of carbon dioxide emissions, we are working daily on environment preservation, too. This is why this campaign is especially significant to us, because the new plants will not only decorate this yard, but also make the whole town greener. Each of us can make that small and yet important step”, emphasizes Karan. Jelena Kušljic, who has been in the house since the start of the year accompanying her 3-year-old son, can say how significant this step is. This is their second home now. “Children relax here physically and mentally during breaks in between their daily therapies which are painstaking, especially for those who are a bit older and aware of everything they go through. However, when you find a sanctuary like this where we also have support from employees, from our Andrea, Aleksandra, Katka, it becomes a second home. Once they grow, these plants will also provide a nice shade for children who cannot be exposed to the sun due to chemotherapies“, says Jelena. Whenever the weather is nice, the children are outside, because they need to spend time in the open, explains Dijana Beric, the president of the Association of parents of children suffering from malign diseases “Iskra” and she stresses that each donation is so significant for them. “We will fence our yard in a way with these plants, which is particularly important as this area is becoming more urban; you can see that we have a lot of cars parked nearby. Once the bushes and trees grow, we will have quite a peaceful and green oasis for our children and their parents“, says Dijana. We chose plants which would fit best into these surroundings and be beneficial, emphasizes Ivana Zivkovic, the manager of human resources at Infinity Group and adds that socializing with the young ones was very emotional for all. “Our goal was to help somebody to whom it would really mean a lot, and we will remember socializing with these children for a long time. What was very noteworthy to us is that we gained some information from those conversations which can serve as a guide line for our further charity work. We believe that this cooperation with the Parents’ House, to which we had helped before, will become a tradition, so that we can still count on each other. This is the best way to end our health campaign, which we dedicated not only to our employees, but to the whole environment“, says Zivkovic. People from Prointer Sarajevo also talk with special emotions about their planting mission. They did their planting in the yards of the Primary School and kindergarten in Vogosca, and there are also 6 new trees decorating the SOS Children’s Village. Seeing how this home that provides shelter for children without parental care works has touched us in a special way, says Bojana Omerović, the director of Prointer Sarajevo and she stresses that the employees became motivated to help the children personally. “We wanted to motivate all the people, and especially the children and youth to think about the environment they live in and how to preserve it. Care for nature has to become part of our everyday life and that is why we decided to end this health campaign with green gifts among the youngest ones“, says Omerovic. And that is how three important yards in Sarajevo got 11 new trees; once they grow, they will be beautiful birch, elm and crab-apple trees, and thick canopies of the peculiar parocia and sorbus, shrubs of the rose family.

## DONATIONS TO THE ASSOCIATION



We thank the Medical high school Banjaluka for their monetary donation raised within the charity manifestation called “Kreativni ispad”, which started with the project “A Week of Health”. Thank you for choosing our Association as well to be part of your project, which carries a significant message of common care of health and of all those people who need help, under the slogan “Hold out your hand - give love”.

.....



Rotary Club Banja Luka organized a charity campaign in 2022, during which they raised KM2700. The full amount was donated to our Association, for the needs of the Parents' House and the Pediatric Hemato-oncology Department. We used the aforementioned donation to purchase pulse oximeter, educational material for working with children and a bookshelf for the library of Parents' House. The handover of the donation was held on September 28th, 2022, attended by the members of the RC Banjaluka, the president of the Association and representatives from the Pediatric Hemato-oncology Department.

Thank you so much for the support.



## DONATIONS TO THE ASSOCIATION

Srdjan Kuljanin, artist, donated one of his art works to our Association on account of his first independent exhibition at the Museum RS in Banjaluka.

We thank him for this beautiful present and shown consideration.



Thanks to dear Jelena Petrovic, an aunt of a brave little Sofija, for remembering our children and their parents this year, too.

She organized presents, healthy groceries and other gifts, and a beautiful decoration made of balloons that thrilled our children.

Thanks to all the good people who participated together with Jelena in preparing the presents for our children.





## THEY VISITED US



We thank the Leitner family from St. Gilgen, Austria. They have donated groceries and hygiene products via our friends from Kolo srpskih sestara Derventa to our mothers and young ones this year again.



We thank Zoran Kovačević, Mirela Roljic and Petra Milanovic and their friends from Vienna for bringing joy with toys for children at the Parents' House.



Thanks to Mr. Nenad from Banja Luka who gave us handmade wooden toys.



Thanks to Ms. Gordana Pejcinovic who made the residents of the Parents' House happy with fruit and cookies.



Representatives of the Cabinet of the Prime Minister, Mr. Radovan Višković, visited the Parents' House "Iskra" today on the occasion of the upcoming Easter holidays and made our children happy with Easter eggs, fruit and presents.

We thank them for the care and support they warmly give us.



We thank Ivana from Novi Grad who gave our children warm hand knitted woolen socks, which will keep the feet of our children warm in the winter days.



## THEY VISITED US



We thank our citizens who gave toys and books to children at the Parents' House, wishing that the time until they can go home passes more quickly while reading and playing



Many thanks to friends and teachers from Koprivna, the local branch of the Primary school "Sveti Sava", who sent educational and entertainment games to our children at the Parents' House on the occasion of the Children's' Week.

Every type of peer support means a lot to children who have to spend time isolated due to illness. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.





We thank Hotel Courtyard by Marriott for a beautiful cake they gave to our children and their parents at the Parents' House and the Department of Pediatric Hemato-Oncology and made their long hospital days nicer.



We thank the Retired Teachers Association "Rana jesen" for the variety of fruits with which they made our children happy. These lovely retired teachers remember us every year.



EuroExpress Company brought joy to children at the Parents' House with New Year's presents, which were received by the Parents' House manager. On this occasion, the president of our Association thanked EuroExpress for many years of cooperation and for their readiness to recognize our needs.



Thanks to Ms. Gordana Pejcinovic who made children at the Parents' House happy with presents and fruit.

We were visited by Moto-Club "Voodoo FreeRiders"; they made our children happy in a special way: they came on their bikes dressed as Santa Clauses, which was quite an event for the children.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.



## THEY VISITED US



Representatives of the Cabinet of the Prime Minister, Mr. Radovan Višković, visited the Parents' House this year again and gave New Year's presents to our children on the occasion of the upcoming holidays.

Many thanks to them for the care and support they constantly give us.



Ms. Jelena Kurtinovic, Acting Assistant Minister for the Family, together with her advisor Ms. Bosiljka Bosnjak, visited us on the occasion of the upcoming holidays.

They made the children who reside at the Parents' House happy with toys and educational material.





Thanks to the neighbors from GRI-VENT Company, who made our children happy with New Year's presents.



Humanitarian organization "Budimo ljudi" visited us with Santa Claus and brought presents for children at the Parents' House. Thank you for your care.



Our hard-working students Ivana and Anas-tasija were made happy by a big teddy bear, which brought them presents.

Thanks from the bottom of our hearts to our teddy bear @Bearoflove BL for the joy and love he brought into our Parents' House. We all enjoyed in time spent with teddy bear.



Thanks to the Primary school "Dositej Obradović" Kneževu for the presents with which they made children at the Parents' House happy and for the groceries.

Thanks to dear students, their parents and teachers from this school.



## THEY VISITED US



We thank EKC IHTUS for visiting us and for the New Year's presents.



Thanks to Spin Up Studio for making our children happy with presents for the upcoming holidays.



Students from Medical school Banjaluka visited us and brought presents for the children who reside at the Parents' House.  
Thank you for caring.



Thanks to little friends from the Primary school "Branislav Nušić" Srpske toplice who visited us together with their teacher and made our children happy.



Thanks to the teaching staff of the Primary school "Ivo Andrić" Banja Luka, who prepared presents for our hard-working students who attend classes at the Parents' House.



Good neighbors from the association of property owners in Duška Koščice 25 Street, made the children happy with presents.



Students from the Construction High School Banja Luka made beautiful cards for children who reside at the Parents' House with messages and wishes for quick recovery. Thank you so much, dear students.



Thanks to Pole Sport Studio for presents for children at the Parents' House.



## THEY VISITED US



Dijalogos centar, a foreign languages school, visited us and brought presents and educational material for children who reside at our Parents' House. Thanks for the presents.



Thanks to Master BC Company for the presents for children who reside at the Parents' House.



We were visited by a team from Alphabet Group Company, and they made our children happy with the New Year's presents.  
Thank you for caring.



## A folklore evening marking seven years of existence of “Iskra” Association and five years of work of the Parents’ House

On this occasion, we want to thank the National Theater RS for cooperation, all the folk ensembles that participated, and our media partner RTRS which recorded the show that will be broadcasted on their channels.

Thanks to all who took the time and were there with us last night, and we want to express our gratitude to all of you who have supported us through all these years.

**Your “Iskra”.**



## The First international volleyball tournament for women “Iskra nade”



The First international volleyball tournament for women “Iskra nade” took place in Oblicevo Sports Hall on May 29th, 2022, organized by the Association of parents of children who suffer from malign diseases and OK Borac Stars Banja Luka.

We congratulate the winners, our guests from OK “Mikas” Tuzla.

Damen Volleyball Verein “EX YU”, Wien won the second place, and OK “Borac Stars”, Banja Luka won the third position.

We thank all the participants for a wonderful gathering.





# Humanitarian race Fun Run

In organization of the Recreational Running Club, in honor of our Association, a charity race called Fun Run was held at 2nd Banjaluka Marathon. We thank everyone who participated in this race and supported our little great heroes and the work of our Association.



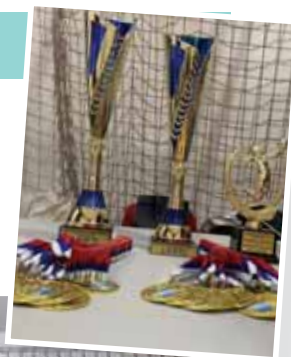
## Charity dance evening “Heart for Iskra”



We hereby want to thank again the Dance Club Ladies for an amazing cooperation, our friends who appeared and to all of you who took the time to support our brave children, and the work of our Association.



## New Year's Festival of Volleyball "Laktasi 2022"



Association of parents "Iskra" in cooperation with OK "Laktasi" organized New Year's Festival of Volleyball "Laktasi 2022" on December 24<sup>th</sup>.

250 children of all age groups participated at the volleyball festival.

We thank the volleyball club "Laktasi" for the successful cooperation for many years already.

We owe our gratitude to the Town of Laktasi, our media partner RTRS, OK "Kozara" Gradiška, OK "Inova" Banjaluka, OK "Derventa", and to all participants who by taking part supported the work of our Association and children who reside at the Parents' House, and who are treated at the Pediatric Hemato-Oncology UCC RS.

A big thank you to the OK "Kozara" for the presents that made our children happy.

## CREATIVE WORKSHOP



With the New Year's holidays approaching, we have organized a workshop for making New Year's decorations with our lovely Natasa Masta. Our hearts are full when we see with how much care and patience our children and their moms are creating their little works of art. We spent beautiful moments filled with laughter and good mood, and such moments are precious for children who are receiving treatment.

## CHRISTMAS at the Parental House



President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska, doctor Nenad Stevandic visited the Parental house "The Spark" at the day of Christmas and gave Christmas gifts to its young residents. In that way he brightened them up this great Christian holiday. We are grateful for such a nice gesture, which brought smiles to the faces of our little tenants, who were not able to celebrate Christmas in the warmth of their homes.



Milan  
Beric



ADDRESS BY EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

## SPARKLE OF HOPE

A sparkle is, as an occurrence, very small and negligible. Yet, however small it might seem, it is full of strength, energy and drive; it is actually full of hope.

Once a man faces an issue such as injustice, betrayal of any sort or a disease, he has to know then that there still exists something substantial on his side. And it is always there, with all of its determination and explosiveness, with all of its speed and brightness, with all of its strength and beauty, the one and only SPARKLE OF HOPE.

It will never abandon a man even in the hardest times, and when you know it is in you, that you possess it, then you rise again and move on. It is your SPARKLE OF HOPE. It is enough to create hope in the man for something better, this first, small and yet so powerful sparkle. After it awakens hope in us, it still remains with us. Just in case, to keep the hope from falling asleep, or giving up on you, or betraying you.

There are times when this SPARKLE OF HOPE does not appear on its own and it seems you do not have it within yourself. Then you need to search for it. A sick child looks for this sparkle in the parents' eyes, while they are already looking for it in the doctor's. So what about the doctors, do they always have this sparkle of hope within themselves?

Parents' eyes will certainly show their child that the SPARKLE OF HOPE is there, in their eyes. And by all means, the child must see it clearly, to know for sure it is there. As for the parents, they are unquestionably trying to find it in the sometimes mysterious look of the doctor, to spot the glimpse of it at least in the corner of the doctor's eye; and regardless of how small and insignificant, for them it will seem like a huge SPARKLE OF HOPE.

SPARKLE OF HOPE may be very small, but it is bigger than the biggest mountain for the one who is expecting to find it.

Editor-in-Chief  
**Milan Beric, B.A.**



## EVERYBODY, SOMEBODY, ANYBODY, NOBODY

A team had four members called  
Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody.  
There was an important job to be done  
and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it.

Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it.

Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job.

Everybody thought Anybody could do it.  
Nobody realized that's Everybody's job.

Everybody wouldn't do it.  
It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody  
when Nobody did what  
Anybody could have done.

Unknown author





## HOW TO DONATE

The Association is funded exclusively through donations granted by organizations, companies and individuals. If you want to help us, please do one of the following:

- Make payment to our giro account
- Volunteer with us
- Donate things and non-cash contributions

Support our work by contributing to our account:

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It is our full responsibility to spend donor money responsibly, transparently and strictly for purpose.



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