

A Dose of God's Grace

ACCTS, along with the military Christian fellowship (MCF) of Moldova, led an English program in July for military children which “shared a dose of God’s grace” with the participants and their parents, according to ACCTS’ executive director Phil Exner: “The MCF was asked by the Moldovan Ministry of Defense to carry out this program for children of MOD employees, and we were grateful for the opportunity to help the MCF fulfill that request. The participants ranged in age from 8 to 18, and they were such a remarkable group of kids. They bonded well with each other and we were able to create relationships with them which shared a dose of God’s grace. We incorporated parts of our English Language Training program with team-building activities, skits, plays, and songs. At the end of the program, the comments by participants’ parents were uniformly positive, and they want their kids to participate again if we hold similar programs in the future.”

Staff member and program teacher Cheryl Kaltenbach noted that one of the Moldovan helpers initially was doubtful the program would have enough of a spiritual impact. Because the program was run at the request of the MOD, improving participants’ English skills was the primary focus while Bible lessons were optional. Even so, many participants attended the Bible lessons and there were other opportunities to share spiritual matters such as the morning devotional (led by ACCTS staff Dick Barnes), Christian songs and skits, and one-on-one conversations. At the end of the program, Cheryl reports that the helper who was initially doubtful was excited to see God working: “This helper saw that God can work in different ways and use many things for Him, and she saw that God had started sparks of spirituality in the kids’ lives because of the program.”

Opportunities to share Christ also came at unexpected times, as Sue Exner shares: “I walked to the beach with one girl in my class and she said, ‘I want to ask you about being a Christian.’ She was curious where I was coming from. I told her how I became a Christian, how to be a Christian, and that Christ gives meaning and a greater purpose to our lives. I asked if her family went to church – they didn’t, but she said, ‘I think I would like to.’ I gave the students in my class my email address and two of them have found me on Facebook. I’m looking forward to staying in touch with them.”

The English camp was also an important way to increase the MCF's visibility. "At the end of this program, several of the children's parents said they wanted to join the MCF and become involved in its mission," ACCTS' deputy director Bernhard Kaltenbach shares. "In some European countries, non-church related Christian groups are viewed as too 'radical', but this program showed the MOD and its staff that the MCF is doing good in their nation and for its residents."

"Toward the end of our time in the camp a Moldovan, Jon, was talking with several participants. One of the kids said to him, 'The Americans spent their own money to come over here and teach us English! Why? It doesn't make sense!' Jon told them the ACCTS team was there because we loved Jesus and loved them, and we wanted to share that love with them and the nation of Moldova."

Please pray that all the sparks of spirituality which this program started in participants' lives will continue. Pray also with Moldovan MCF members as they follow up with program participants and their families.

2019 Volunteers Needed! ACCTS is planning several English programs for 2019 and native-English speaking volunteer teachers will be needed. No experience or formal training is necessary to teach at these camps – ACCTS provides the lessons and basic training in how to teach conversational English skills. Volunteers will be responsible for their own expenses, which are tax-deductible, and need to be available for approximately 10-12 days.