



Jesus says "Peace I leave with you;
my peace I give to you. I do not give to you
as the world gives. Do not let your heart
be troubled and do not be afraid."

John 14:27

Dear Peeteli children's friends and supporters!

Christmas time has arrived and the year is coming to an end. Along with warm greetings from all our centre's children and staff, we will give you an overview of this year's work and activities.

Daily life in Peeteli kiriku sotsiaalkeskus

Social center works around the clock (24/7) to support children who need help to continue their education. We offer children and young people a safe learning and living environment, healthy and varied food, the opportunity to have a peaceful night's sleep and spend meaningful free time with their friends. We follow children's progress at school, help them study and motivate them to go to school.

During the year, a total of 22 different children lived in the student and youth home and more than 25 children received support from the day centre. At the beginning of the year, a single mother with her three children (ages 3, 7 and 12) came to live with us. She did not have a stable place to live nor the financial means to rent an apartment. We offered them 6 months of free accommodation so that they could put aside money each month for their new home.

We are very pleased with our small garden area, which we started last year and continued this year with the support of our children and staff. In addition to the greenhouse, we also tidied a small patch of land where we grew flowers, parsley, zucchini and raspberries. There were eager planters, waterers and harvesters throughout the season, and some children were able to write their school papers about the growing process. We teach children to take care of the environment around us and direct and encourage them to sort the waste both in the social center and in Saaremaa camps. Children have helped to make sandwiches for people in need, helped out in Estonian Food Bank, participated in charity fairs and local district days in Kalamaja, where they offered their own homemade food, crafts and pastries, practiced working in a hamburger restaurant, etc. One of the centre's former child is now the owner of a hair salon, and a few times a year she organizes a "beauty day" for the children with her team and friends. It is always a much anticipated and joyful day.

Children can learn and practice Estonian language in Peeteli, which is especially important because our Estonian education system is transitioning to fully Estonian-language based education. Unfortunately, in many families there are no adults who speak Estonian and who are able to help children with their schoolwork. In order to make children feel more equal with others at school, we have distributed school supplies every year before the school starts. This year, 50 children got new school bags, notebooks, pencils, circles, scissors, glue, paints and other necessary things.

We live in a time where mental health issues are more relevant than ever. We have talked to the children about how to cope with stress and tension, and discussed topics such as school bullying, self-harming, eating disorders, smartphone and internet addiction, depression, dangers in social media, etc. Together we have also discussed how to support friends when they are in a difficult situation.

Camps and hikes

We take children out of the city and into nature as often as possible. This year we had a 15-year-old boy in the camp who said that it was his first time to travel out of the city. We have organized walking and cycling trips. At the beginning of the summer school holiday, we went canoeing with 40 children and 18 adults. Our Saaremaa camp center, where we have been organizing children's spring, summer and autumn camps for over 20 years, is a great help to us. This summer, four 10-day camps were held there, with a total of 47 different children participating. Children were divided into shifts according to their age groups. In Saaremaa, children have the opportunity to acquire practical skills in addition to having a good time. Together with the children, we built new seating to the campfire, sanded and varnished the dining table and benches outside in the yard, mowed the lawn, sawed, split and stacked firewood, made crafts and cooked together. Camp days started with morning exercise to give the day a good start. We have seen that the joys and sorrows experienced in the camps unite. This is also how we get to know and support each other better. The camp, that our 17-year-olds attended, was a bit nostalgic as it was their last summer camp with us due to their age.

Over 330 children have received support from Peeteli kiriku sotsiaalkeskus during its 26 years of operation. More than 200 of them have become adults. We know that at least 65 of them have become parents, and that in total their families have at least 101 children. This last number, of course, is constantly increasing, and this makes us glad. About several children who have received support from Peeteli have at one time or another been told that they cannot be helped any more. Today, many of them have become independent self-sufficient people and good members of the community. All of this has been a manifestation of God's love, which has given hope, encouragement and inspiration to the new children who come to Peeteli to overcome the difficulties that have arisen in their life.

In the last few years, the number of children and families in need of help has increased significantly, but at the same time, unfortunately, our material possibilities have steadily decreased. We are sincerely grateful to everyone who supports social centre's activities and helps us to help the children!

We wish you and your loved ones good health, many blessings from God and a happy new year!

Best wishes on behalf of all your big and small friends,

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www.peeteli.com/sotskeskus

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Peeteli kiriku sotsiaalkeskus A.D. 2023 Bethel's Centre of Pastoral Care
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Suur tänu toetuse eest! Thank you very much for your support!