



Christmas traditions and Christmas charity actions

Christmas in Poland

Wigilia- Christmas Eve is an important day in our tradition. From the early morning families decorate their homes with christmas trees, prepare the meal, which traditionally consists of twelve dishes. The Christmas Eve dinner starts just after we see the first star in the sky and it includes many kinds of fish, beet or mushroom soup, dishes made from cabbage, mushrooms, dried fruit compote and pastries for dessert. An extra place setting is added on the table in the memory of those who cannot be with the family for Christmas Eve and the hay is put on the table and covered by a tablecloth. It is related to the fact that Jesus was born on a hay in the



stable. Next a prayer is said first and then the family members share the wafer (opłatek) and exchange wishes, before sitting down to the table. After the dinner we exchange gifts and sing carols. Next we go to Midnight Mass called Pasterka.

The Christmas Day in Poland means going to the church for the Christmas Mass and showing children Nativity Scene – Szopka the wooden figures that are hand-carved and beautifully decorated. They include the Holy Family, stable animals, shepherds, and angels and present the story of the birth of Jesus. In the afternoon there are a lot of family gatherings, the family members meet, have some festive dinners, chat and sing carols.

Christmas charity actions in our school

The oldest tradition in our school is preparing a Christmas Fair during which they sell Christmas decorations which are made during Art. Classes. The money raised from the fair goes to the Hospice in our town.

A week before Christmas our volunteers go to two places: the Daily Adaptation Centre and The Centre for mentally ill people. They prepare Christmas decorations, sing Christmas carols and exchange wishes.

Our students take part in various charity events to support people in need, for example they sell candles for Caritas- the Catholic Charity Organisation . Another action is „Szlachetna Paczka” during which people buy products of basic needs for the families in need. What is more, our school help the Homeless shelter in Puławy by collecting food. To make the christmas time more pleasant for these people our students visit the place and sing Christmas carols together.

Polish team



Special points of interest:

- * Christmas traditions
- * Christmas charity

Inside this issue:

Christmas in Poland	1
Christmas in Czechia	2
Xmas voluntary activities	3
Christmas in Hungary	4
Today you give!	5
Activities at Hebel Gymnazium	6
Romanian Christmas Customs	8

Advent in Czechia



Advent is Christmas time which comes 4 weeks before Christmas Eve. Every Advent Sunday we light a candle on a Christmas wreath which is made of fir branches and some decorations.

On 5th December comes Saint Nicholas with angels and devils. He gives out some sweets and small presents

to good children; potatoes and coal to bad ones.

During Christmas time we bake sweets like gingerbreads and cookies. We sing Christmas carols on squares and streets. In the cities there are Christmas decorations like Xmas trees and light chains on lamps. We also visit our relatives and give and get gifts. The most important final part of Advent is Christmas Eve. .

Tábor Team

Christmas in the Czech Republic

Christmas is a holiday of peace and love. We should celebrate them with family and people we love.

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We celebrate Christmas on 24th December.

During the day we watch fairy tales and movies with Christmas themes, for example, Three Nuts for Cinderella, Goldilocks and No Jokes With Devils. We eat sweets and enjoy these moments.



or a Christmas cake. After dinner, the bell rings and we come to the Christmas tree.

There are lots of presents for us and we open them with joy. Carols are heard in the background all the time. This day ends with a midnight mass in church.

We have numerous traditions in the Czech Republic, e.g. if you don't eat all day, you will see a golden pig and you will be lucky. But most of people

In the evening we have our traditional dinner with whole family. Dinner starts with fish soup, as the main meal is served carp (for those who don't eat it – schnitzel or salmon) with potato salad. And then we have sweets

don't do this.

Tereza, Linda, Adéla, Tábor Team



New Year's Eve in the Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic we call the event Silvestr, it's a name in the calendar on 31st December. Silvestr is based on old traditions and it's very informal for most of us. Usually we celebrate it community of our friends or families at home, clubs, restaurants or on squares. On television there are funny New Year's Eve special programs or comedies. When it comes to midnight every medium is counting down the seconds. There is no special food for this event, but we all drink alcohol (18 + only). The most common drink for the toast is champagne or sects. Together we countdown the very last seconds of the old year and then we welcome the new one with a toast. At midnight we fire fireworks and other pyrotechnics! Such fun! Celebrations last to

morning hours or sometimes even longer.

A lot of people hate the midnight fireworks, because of the danger of fire or hurting animals. There are a lot of hurt people too, because they do hit and hurt themselves. It's one of the wildest nights of the year.

Tábor Team



Xmas voluntary activities in Tabor

Christmas time is time when people have open hearts and donate money and different things to charities and people in need. Our school takes part in two money collections which help ill children and raise awareness of AIDS

„Days of Hearts“ Collection

It's a collection for seriously ill children, children without a family as well as for handicapped children, it takes place 3 times a year all over the Czech Republic.

You can donate money on the NGO bank account or in a form of a donation text message all the year round, but our school helped collecting money on the street on **7th December**. We got into 13 groups of 2-3 people. We got a sealed cloth bag and



a plastic bag with many items such as plastic hearts, biros, CDs and fridge magnets. Every product cost € 1,17. We collected money for about 4 hours in the centre of Tábor and its vicinity.

When we asked people for donating money somebody was kind and gave us more than he had to, but others were a bit reluctant. So altogether, we collected a sum of € 417.

So far (since the year 2000) the Czech Republic has collected € 8, 406, 000, 000. This year, we know that Lidl supermarket joined the event

and provided ill kids with a huge sum of over € 971,000.

Adam, Ingrid, Barbora (*Tábor Team*)



World AIDS Day, Red Ribbon Day

It has been reminded every year on 1 December since 1988.

In the Czech Republic is an organization called the House of Lights, which helps people with AIDS.

But the main reason of this collection day is to inform people about the danger of AIDS and HIV.

By the way, when a doctor says you're HIV positive, it's only 50% chance that you're really positive.

On 1st December... we walked through the streets and asked for money from people.



They didn't really want give us money, because when they heard about AIDS, they weren't really happy. They started to blame the people

that they're ill with AIDS.

But anyway, our school collected about 5, 000 CZK, which is € 195.

Petr, Kristýna, Simona, Verča
Tábor Team



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Christmas in Hungary



Our school's Christmas tree with shoeboxes for charity

In Hungary, Christmas Eve is very important and is called 'Szenteste' which means Holy Evening.

Christmas in Hungary is celebrated with traditions similar to those found in other Central European countries as well as customs unique to the region. In Hungary, Christmas Eve is very important and is called 'Szenteste' which means Holy Evening. People spend the evening with their family and decorate the Christmas tree. Sometimes only the adults decorate the tree (without the children there),

so when children come in and see the tree, it's a great surprise and they are told that angels brought the tree for them!

The main Christmas meal, which is also eaten on Christmas Eve, consists of fish (often fish soup called 'halászlé'), stuffed cabbage (the leaves are stuffed with rice, minced pork, onion, garlic and other spices) and a special kind of poppy seed or walnut roll called 'bejgli' is a popular dessert.



Walnut and poppy seed bejgli

Gingerbread is also a traditionally eaten at Christmas in Hungary. The gingerbread is often wrapped in very bright colours and decorated with Christmas figures. Traditional Christmas drinks are alcoholic drinks such as beer, wine and, *pálinka* (Hungarian fruit brandy) and soft drinks.

The Midnight Mass service is very popular in Hungary. Most people go to church after their Christmas dinner.

On Christmas Eve children also hope that they will find presents under the Christmas tree. They're told that the

presents are brought by Baby Jesus, called "Jézuska". Children wait outside the room where the tree is and when they hear bells ringing, they can enter and the presents await them under the tree.

Hungarians like singing and listening to carols such as "Silent Night" and other traditional songs. We also light candles on the Advent wreath during the four weeks before Christmas. On Christmas Day people visit their families

On the last at school day before our winter holiday we give each other some small presents.

A group of lower class pupils call at each class and perform a nativity play. At midday we go a nearby church and listen to our school's choir's concert.

In Hungarian we say: '*Boldog karácsonyt (kívánok)*' - it means I wish you a happy Christmas or '*Kellemes karácsonyi ünnepeket*' (pleasant Christmas holidays)

Sass Dóra, 10. A *Hungarian Team*



Sources:

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Pupils from 7G performing a nativity play in our class

Christmas Charity Fair

On the 7th of December, we got into the Christmas spirit at the Christmas Charity Fair held at the "Drăgan" European University of Lugoj.

Students from all the schools and high-schools in town created handmade Christmas decorations which



were sold that night. There was also a tree auction

and all the money we collected was sent to charity.

In the middle of the event a choir formed of students performed, singing carols but also starred in a theatre play.

The whole event was a success and the atmosphere was amazing.

Evelina Frățilă, *Romanian team*



Students from all the schools in town created handmade Christmas decorations which were sold and all the money donated to charity.

Today You Give!

"Today you give!" is a food rising campaign organized by members of Rotaract and Interact, with the support of Rotary Lugoj. This two youth clubs are for volunteers willing to make a difference, teenagers fighting for a better world, starting with our own town, Lugoj.

This project is now at its ninth edition and every year, near Christmas and Easter holidays, it invites the good willing citizens to come and share whatever they can afford with the needy families in the city and its surroundings.

Volunteers are collecting donated food in one of the city's supermarkets, for three days. Afterwards, they make packages to be distributed to the

families in need.

This year, before Christmas, the campaign managed to raise food for almost 250 packages, each of them hav-



with the principal of the school, came to donate in order to encourage the students and the world to try bringing a ray of sunshine on the faces of the less lucky ones.

This project is one of the most beautiful actions taking place in our town, providing volunteers the opportunity to make a change and encourage people to good deeds.



Raluca Trandafir, *Romanian Team*

ing approximately 10 kilos, bringing a huge amount of joy on the faces of many families. Our school, The National College Coriolan Brediceanu has shown once again its support for the young volunteers, many of which are students of the institution, and genuinely promoted the action. Moreover, many teachers along



Activites at Hebel-Gymnasium Schwetzingen in November and December



their mouths were taped to make the other students aware of the importance of freedom of speech, which is not guaranteed in every country

From 11th to 15th December 2017 students and teachers organized a “Human Rights Week“ at Hebel-Gymnasium in Schwetzingen, with different activities to remember 10th December 1948, when the United Nations passed the Declaration of Human Rights.

At the beginning of the week a group of students sold home-made cakes and donated the money to the Catholic charity organization / aid agency “Malteser“, who send staff members to crisis areas all over the world to help people in need, for example refugees.

During the rest of the week students started a campain for Amnesty International; they put up partitions in the assembly hall to inform students about human rights violations in different countries. All students of our school could sign letters to the governments of

these countries to support, together with Amnesty International, the liberation of wrongfully imprisoned people.

A group of students presented a little theatre play during which their mouths were taped to make the other students aware of the importance of freedom of speech, which is not guaranteed in every country.

The week ended with a big charity run. Two students of each class ran in the gym of our school for 45 minutes and thus raised money for “AIDS-Hilfe“ in Heidelberg, an organization that does research on AIDS and its prevention and helps people who suffer from this disease.





Apart from the “Human Rights Week” our charity club supported Schwetzingen’s local food bank with an event on 16th December, when our club members collected food for the food bank in front of several local supermarkets.

Finally, the charity club invited refugee children and their mothers to our school on 21st December. We had a great afternoon playing games with the children, doing handicraft with them, making and eating cookies, while the children’s mothers had time to exchange their experiences.

German Team



We have a logo!

All project participants were involved in our logo competition. Three logos, created by Adam, Bianca, Georgiana and Raul, were proposed on the designated page in Twinspace. To vote, we used Tricider and some of us added comments together with our votes. The competition was tight, but, in the end, the most “human” logo won! Congratulations, Adam!

We are going to use it on our further documents and materials, as you already noticed on the first page of this newsletter and on Twinspace as well.

Romanian Christmas Customs

Since in Romania the majority of the people are orthodox, Christmas is a cherished holiday, almost everyone celebrating it. It comes with its traditions and although they may vary from one person to another there are some preparations we are all involved in.

The Christmas tree is the star of every house and it is especially loved by children.

For those who strictly follow the unwritten rules of Christmas, the tree is only decorated on the Christmas Eve. Not everyone can wait that long, but no matter when this is done everyone is sure to have around them family and friends, entertaining themselves. The tree has a special role in the holiday's spirit because when Santa Clause arrives he leaves the presents underneath it, to be found by those who have been good and kind.

Santa is quite special; usually, a parent or a neighbor comes disguised and talks to the children. Before receiving their gifts they have



to confirm that they have behaved and, sometimes they are asked to recite a poem. Of course, they might get nervous and not even remember their name, but that's fine because Santa knows they are good kids.

But that is not all that happens during Christmas Eve. The kids go caroling, either by themselves or with a priest who coordinates them.

This also involves the grown-ups since they have to be at home, preparing to meet the carolers. They bring wishes of health and good luck, so they are rewarded with fruits, sweets and, if they are lucky, money.

Finally, on the big day of Christmas most people go to church, expressing their gratitude for what they have been given; after which they gather and have a good time with their relatives.

Sergiu Novac,
Romanian Team



Partners

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