



ALBANIAN  
**CHILDREN FOUNDATION**

DOMENICK SCAGLIONE

[www.albanianchildren.org](http://www.albanianchildren.org)

**April 2, 2016**

**WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY**

**AUTISM "SPOKE"**

**THIS YEAR FROM KUKËS**



2 PRILL DITA NDËRKOMBËTARE E  
NDËRGJEGJËSIMIT MBI AUTIZMIN



# Donate

to help us  
continuing our mission

**BANK ACCOUNT:**

**INTESA SAN PAOLO BANK:**

ACCOUNT NO. IN LEK: 1000231800  
AL45208110080000001000231800

ACCOUNT NO. IN USD: 1000231801  
AL18208110080000001000231801

ACCOUNT NO. IN EURO: 1000231804  
AL34208110080000001000231804

**QENDRA KOMBETARE MJEKESORE PER FEMIJE**

ACCOUNT NO. IN LEK: 1000231806  
AL77208110080000001000231806

Prepared by: Sonila Mlloja  
Design: Ladybird  
Printed by "KRISTALINA"

The Albanian Children Foundation "Domenick Scaglione"  
"Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit" Street, Pallati nr. 30, behind Carlsberg restaurant  
Tirana, Albania P.O.Box 8285;  
Tel/Fax: + 355 4 2 270 663



## Inside this issue you will read:



The foundation signs the Protocol of Balkan Inclusion Platform



New projects: Dentistry and a DVD package on learning



A reception honoring the founder of the Foundation Mr. Scaglione



Spouses of the diplomatic corps and 4 ambassadors visit the RCAs



The foundation certifies young professionals for ABA therapy



Financial Assistance of the Foundation for the sick and people in need





# AUTISM

## this year spoke from Kukës

**Kukës with a new center for autistic children.  
The foundation supports furnishing the center and  
staff training.**



Kukës spoke this April for Autism. For the first time the scope of services for children with autism spectrum disorder will also be in the northern part of Albania, Kukës, turning thus Kukës into the first city that embraces the social policies for this category, not only in the human dimension but also the institutional one.

Mr. Bashkim Shehu ,Kukës Mayor, during the announcement of the project for the reconstruction of the social center, said that in his city the phenomenon of autism spectrum disorder has increased significantly in recent years and the number of families seeking help for treating their children with specialized therapeutic services has increased.

According to Mr.Shehu, Kukës Municipality, the Albanian Children Foundation and the Swiss

Cooperation Office will modernize this service center to offer standardized internationally certified academic programs.

On behalf of the Albanian Children Foundation, Dr.Liri Berisha, congratulated Kukës Municipality for this initiative and expressed the generous contribution of the Foundation to identify social services that will be offered, provision with books and methods, as well as staff training.

In a message addressed to local professionals and parents present at the event, Dr. Liri Berisha emphasized the inclusion of these children in public educational structures and therapeutic delivery of free health services. Integration of these children is an investment for the future. Let us give them a hand today, so that tomorrow they may be independent- concluded Mrs.Berisha.



## The Foundation holds the Regional Autism Conference in Kukës

After the announcement of the project for the reconstruction of the social center for children with autism, the Albanian Children Foundation held in this city the Regional Conference “Let’s support them today, so that tomorrow they will be independent” which brought news on the status of this phenomenon in our country in various aspects. Speeches from the governmental representatives of the two deputy ministers Mr. Klodian Rrjepaj and Mrs. Nora Malaj presented a picture of what happens with the education and health services provided to these children, while the president of

the Albanian Children Foundation brought to the attention of the audience what the Foundation has recently done regarding regional centers for children with autism, but not only, while she posed some proposals regarding some new projects in view of the well-being of all children with autism. The conference was attended also by representatives from Kosovo Dr. Flora Brovina, chairwoman of the Committee on Health, Labor and Social Welfare, Kosovo, activists from Macedonia, as well as the most renowned specialists in the field of psychiatry for scientific references regarding Autism.





## LET'S SUPPORT THEM TODAY SO THEY WILL BE INDEPENDENT TOMORROW!



Dr. Liri Berisha

A decade ago almost all of us have been uninformed regarding the phenomenon of autism which silently affected children, shut down and handicapped spiritually and physically entire families, and which the stigma and guilt forced them to do what ought not to be done in the name of parental love – being silent and hiding the phenomenon. The feeling of pain, uncertainty, fear, economic devastation, and facing the unknown coexisted in an uninformed society that not only wasn't aware of the phenomenon, but neither accepted it, nor consequently knew how to help. Today this belongs to the past, though not so far, but we still are far from what it should be and is required.

Years ago I did not think that in such a short period of time we would be able to achieve a progress that we proudly judge as special, as well as very realistically we are convinced how much remains yet to be done.

Opening on 2nd of April, on the World Autism Awareness Day of the Autism therapeutic center in

“ We must appreciate the potential that they have and give them the chance as all children to education, employment and integration. ”

Kukës, ended our dilemmas that Tirana would remain the only oasis for a limited number of children, giving thus hope and support to parents. The model of work in Tirana is used in other centers such as Korça, Elbasan, Struga etc. The staff that will provide training for the therapists of the center of Kukës will be prepared by a group of trained professionals from the bigger organization “Autism Speaks”.

Service parameters will be consolidated gradually with methods and practices done in Tirana assisted by specialists of the field from the United States.

For the first time after a two-year period, the Albanian Children Foundation in cooperation with researchers of American Universities managed to develop a DVD that teaches parents gradually and step by step how to work with their children. Very soon this DVD will reach the most remote households as a therapeutic self-study program for parents who cannot reach out the centers.

This DVD will be accompanied with the appropriate books after the testing which is being performed by prominent American academic personalities. This study was extended in some cities like Tirana, Elbasan, Berat.

Meanwhile to the library is added another very important book which was completed a few months ago “100 days Kit,” a book that will instruct not only parents but also everyone who deals with this disorder. This book follows the translations of necessary books for parents, educators, teachers and therapists.

Following the publications the Foundation this year began publishing a series of children's books of this spectrum that will help them implement important and necessary processes. This series begins with

oral hygiene, a process necessary as well as difficult for all children. Earlier this year the Foundation set up for the first time dental service for the children of Regional Centers for Autism in Tirana. This was because these children unlike others have difficulty accessing this service and to assist them in dental diseases therapy is very useful with them. Studies have shown that to reduce phobic behaviors displayed by these children for dental treatment studied procedures should be applied, thus we suggest and propose the establishment of several units for dental services to children with autism where the Foundation is willing to provide therapeutic support for the staff that will serve these children. Today these children wander from one clinic to another to receive the service, because for dentists it is difficult to work with these children.

Together with the specialists on this field, after a serious study the Albanian Children Foundation was able to attain the therapy cost scheme of autism therapy. The study of more than a year was submitted to the Ministry of Health wishing of being studied and implemented as soon as possible.

Collaboration with Autism Speaks is an extraordinary luck for the autism community in Albania, as well as in the region. Cooperation with this powerful organization contributed to the establishment of "Southeast Europe Autism Network", in Tirana, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, where the Albanian Children Foundation plays the role of secretariat for this network.

Thanks to the services offered at the Regional Autism Centers opened by the Albanian Children Foundation today proudly we say that 40 children have been able to reach public and private system structures, being equal and mainstreamed with their peers. This dream almost un-touchable by their families, today sounds common in full public view. Thousands of hours of therapy, patience, and sacrifice, today translate into hours of knowledge and integration. But still much remains to be done in terms of providing these services. The doors of education should be more generous with these children. Our kindergartens and schools are having many difficulties to be welcoming for children of this spectrum, while children have a big need

to integrate with their peers. Stigma and discrimination, in many cases are a harmful barrier for parents and family members.

What I want to raise today and that would be of interest to all parties is the creation of a network of assistant teachers, to create for the children of this spectrum facilitation opportunities of education and integration. The Albanian Children Foundation is willing to lend its contribution to the training of these teachers, there remains only the call of the Ministry of Education and their identification.

Today, a big problem is the absence of official statistics which is a result of the lack of a national strategy. Often journalists, as well as foreign ask: What are your statistics? This question as well as many others because of the many unknowns of this phenomenon remains unanswered. The initiative we took 3 or 4 years ago with the primary health services for screening in some polyclinics of Tirana gave some surprising results.

An unusual flow of parents arrived at our evaluation centers. Children who were diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders began treatment, but this remained localized. Think about the effect that this study would have with a screening focus if it would be extended to all the primary system of the country. It is time that society does not only gasp showing mercy and pity, but to be aware that there are obligations towards this phenomenon. Today is the moment

to pose another question, what about all of those who are of working age? Will these parents continue to live with the fear of what will happen to my child when I won't be around anymore? This painful and difficult phenomenon demands more effort, knowledge and commitment of many stakeholders.

Let's get together, says the UN resolution to get involved and to give hope to this population, by affecting through the drafting of soft laws in their well-being. Therefore we must know the rights of the children with this disorder. We must appreciate the potential that they have and give them the chance as all children to education, employment and integration. Let us give them a hand TODAY so that they will be independent TOMORROW!



## Sarajevo: Albanian Children Foundation signs the protocol of engagement of the Balkan Inclusion Platform

### Dr. Liri Berisha honored with the Award of Appreciation for contribution to persons with disabilities.

Albanian Children Foundation became part of the Balkan Inclusion Platform that's was held under the patronage of Prime Minister of Turkey H.E Mr. Ahmet Davitoglu on May 5, 2016 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This platform is part of the World Inclusion Platform, known as an NGO to local government and the private sector aimed at spreading the culture of inclusion for persons with disabilities.

Balkan Inclusion Platform, involves all the Balkan states. It aims to promote more activities in the field of education, culture, social, technology, accessibility and employment for persons with disabilities.

At the opening of the conference, the participating

countries represented by the most powerful organizations in the field of disability and Ministers of Social Affairs signed the protocol of engagement.

On behalf of the Albanian Children Foundation, Dr.Liri Berisha signed the protocol addressing her personal commitment and the foundation that she leads to the fulfillment of the goals of this platform. "Given that Albanian Children Foundation has contributed over the years with the assistance of the social categories in need, it will continue to do so. For children with disabilities inclusiveness, who will be tomorrow's generations, should provide services and equal opportunities in all fields. This guarantees them the possibility of full



Given that Albanian Children Foundation has contributed over the years with the assistance of the social categories in need, it will continue to do so. For children with disabilities inclusiveness, who will be tomorrow's generations, should provide services and equal opportunities in all fields.



participation in community. Often, reality tells us that there is still a lot of discrimination and exclusion. “

Dr. Liri Berisha was awarded by Deputy President of the World Inclusion Platform for her contribution and assistance provided to persons with disabilities.

Likewise Mrs. Berisha was given a certificate of planting a tree on behalf of its commitment for the inclusion of these persons in society. This tree was planted in an area reserved by the Ministry of Forestry and Water of Turkey, called as the World Inclusion Fores, where any organization, government or individual who gives his contribution to meeting the goals of this platform is sown a tree as a sign of gratitude.





# 100 Million People are affected of autism spectrum disorder



USA,  
8<sup>th</sup> annual  
meeting of  
World Focus  
on Autism

On the occasion of 70th anniversary of the General Assembly of the United Nations and 8th annual meeting of World Focus on Autism , President of the Albanian Children Foundation, Dr.Liri Berisha, was the guest of honor of wife of the Secretary General of the UN, Ms. Ban Ki - moon and co-founders of “Autism Speak” Bob and Suzanne Wright.

In this meeting which gathered First Spouses and dignitaries from across North America, Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East, was discussed how to increase more awareness about autism and improve services to people affected by this phenomenon.

The participating nations discussed the ongoing questions arising about autism and how all together must implement the 21st century goals. During the meeting, the Albanian Children Foundation was on the focus of each presentation through video footage of the activities developed over the years in Albania about this cause. The Co-founder of “Autism Speaks” Suzanne Wright, during her speech said: - “Autism is already a dynamic issue. The community of people with autism continues to grow with frightening rates. And today the people of this community



has reached to 100 million people suffering from autism spectrum disorder. What is necessary today is to be united and share the vision that we have and to turn each day as a World Focus on Autism”

The event provided first spouses and dignitaries with the rare opportunity to speak with one another about the state of autism in their home countries. At this 8th annual meeting, Autism Speaks presented the third annual Suzanne and Bob Wright Autism Achievement Award to Dr. Shekhar Saxena, Director of the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse at World Health Organization, Geneva.

To commemorate the third recipient of this award, Bob and Suzanne Wright, invited the wife of Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Mrs. Ban Soon-taek and Ms. Liri Berisha to be present at the prize giving and a concurrent picture. The second Suzanne and Bob Wright Autism Achievement Award was received last year by Dr. Liri Berisha.



## The Foundation at the Prague Forum on investing in young children globally



The American National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine and the American Institute of Medicine in partnership with the Open Society Foundation (OSF) and the ISSAP Organization gathered on 4 November 2015 in Prague, experts and heads of international organizations, universities and agencies, for the Forum on Investing in young Children Globally. We ended the 15 years era of Millennium Development Goals and from September 2015 the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals where the development of children and early intervention occupy a specific and important place for the 15 years to come. Prague Forum, with a view to reach out to recommendations on local and regional policies, future studies and new services, was built as a platform for discussion of global actors among the most important in the field. Dr. Liri Berisha President of the Albanian Children Foundation, was invited to the Forum to introduce the model of early intervention

on autism in Albania, chosen by organizers as one of the 'best practices' in the region. In her speech Dr. Liri Berisha, expressing her gratitude and appreciation for this invitation, said: "I think our history is generally a success story. Above all we have revived hope in a poor country with many problems where, despite progress, the burden on households remains high ". In his speech, Dr. Ariel Çomo Scientific and Research director of the Regional Center for Autism mentioned, inter alia, the importance from the beginning given to the research and data collection on implementation of the program in Tirana as a key element in the progress of early intervention programs in children with developmental problems.

At the conclusion of the Forum, the Final Report compiled on the basis of referred data and discussions will be sent to the American Government to develop further policies and initiatives in the field of developmental problems.

# Kosovo, 1 in 100 children with autism



## The conference on the rights of children with autism is held.

1 in 100 children is born with autism in Kosovo. Many of them kept the hidden for the society by their families and the cases appear not supported by anyone. This condition of children with autism spectrum disorder became known at the “National policies on protecting the rights of persons with autism in Kosovo” organized by the Office for Good Governance in the Government of Kosovo two days ago in Prishtina. The Albanian Children Foundation as the main guest at the discussion panel was represented by the psychologist, Dr. Oriola Pampuri.

Dr.Pampuri presented in this conferences the Foundation as an example of best model for treatment in the Region and the improvement of these children. The working model of this foundation, through the Regional Centers for Autism 1 and 2, based entirely on scientific standards of the international organization “Autism Speaks” said Ms. Pampuri, enabled over 40 children to attend school while the foundation’s role on raising awareness has convinced many families to seek help when they notice the first sign Due to the awareness, today the age of early diagnosis has decreased from 3.5 years that was some years ago, to 1.5 years.

## Dr. Oriola Pampuri: “COMMON EDUCATION, FASTER INTEGRATION”

In the scientific topic “Common Education, Faster integration” that Dr. Pampuri presented in this conference, was emphasized that Inclusion is a belief that all students can be part of general education. The philosophy of inclusion by Dr. Pampuri reduces the doubt between special education system and that of general education. The studies show that thanks to the inclusion of autistic children in public schools with the presence of a therapist, the child acquires an improved behavior and social verbal skill in the classroom. Autistic children, have the potential to improve as much as other children. Using the right strategies, many of them show a significant improvement in such an environment.

President of the Autism Society, Cene Krasniqi: “Children with autism are not supported.”

“Society needs to know that we work with them in childhood, they can become contributors to the society; may become independent and contribute to this society, but if we do not do and if we do not work with them at this youth stage they will be quite a burden to the society even in the future. As such there is a need for opening many other centers to accommodate them or let them without support, “said Krasniqi.



Autism Conference aimed reaching out needs for those affected by autism and addressed in state institutions in order to develop policies to protect the citizens suffering of this phenomenon.



## Dental service for children of the Regional Centers for Autism

Albanian Children Foundation opened in the beginning of this year at the Regional Center for Autism in Farka, the dental service with a new dental cabinet especially for children of both centers. The service will provide screening, diagnosis and treatment of dental problems to children. New dental cabinet will be led by Olesia Duke, the doctor of “Shendi Dent” Clinic, already known to the public for its contribution to children with special needs.

On the first day of the opening of the clinic Dr. Olesia Duke and colleagues who assist in this mission, met with parents of children and conducted several visits screening children thus allowing the opening of cards for each of them.

### ***Why this new service?***

Children with autism, unlike other children, often are unable to tolerate dental examinations because of fears associated with the sights and sounds produced by dental equipment. This makes their dental treatment a problem. In their daily lives these children exhibit difficulties in providing the service for oral hygiene resulting to increased teeth morbidity. The studies have shown that to reduce phobic behavior that these children exhibit toward treatment, well-structured and analyzed procedures should be applied.

To better understand how this service will run and what the children will benefit we had a short interview with Dr. Olesia Duke.

### ***Dr. Olesia, what was the idea of having such a cooperation with the foundation?***

In fact this is an early friendship between my mother and Dr. Berisha. It has been my desire expressed to the doctor 5 years ago which was support by her. Becoming more professional over the years thanks to my experience in the “Shendi Dent” clinic opened from my parents, I thought was ready to say “YES” to this cooperation for this mission.

### ***Why did you choose to do this?***

I am dedicated to these children because they are first and foremost children, and children must be helped. Secondly, I see that people are more attracted to supporting children with special needs such as those with autism spectrum disorder or those with Down syndrome, etc. I like to give love unconditionally, to give my support and warmth; why not when I have an opportunity from my family.



**What specific work will be done with children?**

First we will build the social engagement doctor-child. This goes through some steps. Then the child gets used to the doctors, the doctor develops a full recognition and create a more reliable trust with the child. Then it goes on with the opening of the mouth which is difficult but not impossible. Secondly, the parent's role is very important. This means that if doctor-parent relationship is set, it means my successful work with children. So if a parent helps during the clinical process, since at children with autism spectrum disorder the jaw is on the weak points of their own, then we can achieve good treatment results.

**Specifically what feature of children with autism spectrum disorder in this regard?**

Children with autism spectrum disorder have difficulties in the first approach, at the first meeting. Those children are very smart and have sharp senses. Aggressiveness to these children is current and manageable. Thus if the problem lies in the white

shirts, the color can be changed until the child is briefly introduced. The studies has shown that "A" is the first sound that comes out to children with autism spectrum, which means that the opening of the mouth is realized through this. This is the first stage. The second stage is patience between doctor-child-parent. These children should always have their parent or their clinical psychologist.

Meetings will be three times a month, every ten days and will be divided into age groups. Children are divided into two groups,: 2-6 years and 8-10 years. 70% of the work in the first 6 months of treatment will be therapeutic and psychological process. In the second 6 months the clinical process will begin.

**This collaboration will be a contribution from you?**

Absolutely yes. It will be free. It will always will be. I take this opportunity to appeal to the business customer, friends, classmates and colleagues to invest a little bit for children who have health problems in our country.





## A NEW BOOK ABOUT ORAL HYGIENE

On the occasion of April 2, World Autism Awareness Day, Albanian Children Foundation brought a special edition about oral hygiene for children with autism spectrum disorder. Being one of the main problems of oral health to these children, the foundation through this publication aims to convey the right information on how this process, almost unbearable for children and their parents, become normal without phobic behavior. While visual pedagogy, that this book brings through the best images for the mouth rituals, today estimated by the researchers as the best model of improving oral hygiene in children with autism. Regional Center for Autism No.2 has already introduced it as a daily practice of this service enabling oral health for children. The book is distributed for FREE.





## “LEARNING SKILLS TO TODDLERS, A PROGRAM FOR PARENTS”

Foundation brings in a new didactic DVD package.

Albanian Children Foundation brings the new instrument in the field of therapeutic education for children with autism spectrum disorder. It is “Learning Skills to Toddlers, A Program for Parents”, a project which has come as a collaboration of the foundation and “Autism Speaks” and the University of “Connecticut” and is genuinely a research sponsored by “Autism Speaks” and National Institute of Health in the US.

The project which has already begun in December 2014, comes in the form of a composite material from 6 DVD 6 chapters and 4 chapters as a textbook. It teaches parents step-by-step how to work with their children. Filming materials of 6 DVD package presents concrete examples of therapy guidelines and processes with video clips recorded specially for this purpose, and correctly oriented toward the parents how to do the right thing with their children to succeed. This pack brings up to another level the foundation

work in the most remote areas of the country, where quality services will take time to be introduced. So families living in remote areas and have no possibility of being close to a therapist, can be informed and educated through this very worthwhile program visually.

The Therapeutic program which is believed to be the best in the world for the moment, is designed by professors Deborah Fein and Lynn Brennan that a good part of our audience know them through their books translated and published in Albanian. Currently the project it is extended to 4 cities: Tirana, Elbasan, Korça and Berat.

The Foundation has the copyright to the text in Albania as well as the right to distribute this material and republish the material for Albanian speaking families in Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Greece, Serbia etc.



## A warm reception for Mr.Scaglione, the founder of the Foundation

On the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Albanian Children Foundation organized a reception in honor and Appreciation of the founder of the foundation, Mr. Domenick Scaglione.

This reception was held to respect the contribution and the human values that the founder and architect of the Albanian Children Foundation, Mr. Domenick Scaglione, has dedicated the last 20 years in terms of health and well-being of Albanian children witnessing tremendous encouragement not only for their families but for the Albanian society as a whole.

In this event, attended by friends, collaborators, donors and parents, President of the Foundation, Dr. Liri Berisha, in her greeting dedicated to this figure expressed her deep gratitude, for the contribution and humanism of Mr. Scaglione.

“Dear Mr. Dominick, I feel glad and privileged to have the opportunity today to express my deepest gratitude and honor, that of staff and parents, but even that of many, many Albanians for what you started to do exactly in their most difficult moments of their existence. . A considerable number of children, sick and hopeless for life, are living today along their family love, thanks to your generosity and tender-heart. Others, unlucky, orphaned or abandoned without any support were educated and work today thanks to your humanism You, dear Dominick, devoted to the Albanian pain because you believed in God and knew that no one appreciates life more than one who has seen the misery and the poverty verge. Like a missionary, you were beside those little and suffered hearts without words, without ado, without exaggerations.. “

Most touching moments were those of gratitude from

people who have benefited from the contribution of the Foundation.

Kristi Myhedini, student, who graduated through a scholarship as a result of cooperation of the Foundation with non-public universities, thanked Mr. Scaglione for the possibility that the Foundation gave her and dozens of young people, giving as a sign of respect, a silver pen.

It was a very emotional moment for Pranvera Bega, Sarah’s mother, who treated the girl with autism at Autism Center No.2. She thanked Mr.Scaglione for the opportunities that the Foundation has provided for the development of the girl, giving a painting made by Sasra, to convey a part her deeply spiritual world and unique talent she possesses.

Amid tears and emotion, Mr. Scaglione thanked Dr. Liri Berisha for the reception and meeting of associates and friends of the Foundation. He said that thanks to the humanity we all do better and that the mission must go on and more powerful. He advised that nothing else does a person richer in life except that of giving and the weakest. If we share more attention for the poor and people in need, according to him, then not only you will we be at peace with yourself but will make the lives of others more beautiful.

The reception was addressed by Mr. Genc Boga, representatives of the board of the Foundation, Mrs. Eva Mane, business representatives, donors of the Foundation and Michael Granoff, director of the Albanian American Fund. They appreciated the important role of founder Scaglione in building and growing of the foundation praising his vision and personal contribution invested in all these years.



## The spouses of the diplomatic corps visiting the Regional Centers for Autism

### Children gift handmade national flags

Throughout Autism Awareness month, Regional Centers 1 and 2 in Farka and Mjull-Bathore, Sauk, welcomed four ambassadors and spouses of ambassadors of the diplomatic mission in our country. Accompanied by the First Lady of the country Odeta Nishani, representatives of diplomatic corps were welcomed from the Albanian Children Foundation President Dr. Liri Berisha and the staff.

The spouses of the diplomatic corps were introduced with the centers, therapeutic services offered there and the work. A poignant and thrilling moment for this ladies was receiving as a gift their national flags, crafted from the hands of children with autism disorder with the assistance of therapists. These works have served not only as focus therapy for these children but also as a integration working model. Dr. Liri Berisha conveyed the ladies a brief explanation on this disorder, the opportunities that exist for their rehabilitation and the advantages of the early intervention.





## Ambassador of China, H.E Mrs.Jiang Yu visited the Autism Center



The Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, H.E Mrs.Jiang Yu with an invitation of the Albanian Children Foundation visited on the eve of holidays the Regional Center for Autism in Farka and joined the party organized with the children.

The Chinese Ambassador was introduced with therapeutic facilities, working methods used and current achievements with autistic children by Dr. Liri Berisha- the president of Albanian Children Foundation and scientific director Dr. Ariel Como.. Dr. Liri Berisha expressed deep gratitude to the Chinese Ambassador and highly appreciated the visit and its personal attention to the phenomenon of autism.

"I appreciate your coming in Albania. Your visit here is an appreciation for the center. You accepted our invitation immediately and it is impressive to us because it shows your interest as a woman towards problems of children and their parents. Your representative as the Ambassador of such a big and developed country like China, shows about the importance given to this disorder today. "

The Ambassador expressed gratitude for the reviving hope to families of children with autism spectrum disorder. "I am very touched by what I see here. This shows that you have worked hard to bring hope to these people who have lost it.. Here I see happy children who are not distinguished from other normal children, and it shows that you are on the right track. "

H.E Mrs. Ambassador. Jiang Yu, brought some gifts for kids meantime Dr. Liri Berisha between exchanges of gifts gave to the Ambassador as a recognition of a painting made by Sara.





## Ambassador of the State of Israel in our country Mr. Boaz Rodkin visits Regional Center for Autism



The head of Israel's diplomatic corps accredited in our country, Ambassador Boaz Rodkin, visited the Regional Centers for Autism 1 & 2. Welcomed by the president of the Albanian Children Foundation, Dr. Liri Berisha, Ambassador Rodkin was introduced with the facilities, therapeutic services and models of works.

The ambassador of Israel said He was impressed by the infrastructure and the work done at the center. I was surprised when I learned that such centers are working in the countries in the region with training staff and specialists.

Ambassador Rodkin promised to give his support in establishing contacts with institutions and professionals dealing with autism in Israel, a country with advanced standards of the work done with children with autism.

The meeting was also attended by Mrs. Linda Dean, representative of the "People to People".

Dr. Liri Berisha gifted to the guests their national flag, a paper craft, handmade of children with autism disorder with the assistance of therapists.





The new Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to our country H.E Mr. Fayez Mishari M. Al-Jassim visits the Kuwaiti Center for Autism and Child Development.(Regional Center for Autism No. 2)

The new Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to our country H.E Mr. Fayez Mishari M. Al-Jassim, visited earlier this year the Kuwaiti Center for Autism and Child Development (Regional Center for Autism No. 2 in Sauk,) in order to be introduced with the work that is done in this center.

The Kuwaiti Ambassador was welcomed by President of the Foundation Dr. Liri Berisha, who briefly introduced the ambassador about the work and activities as well as develops center environments where children develop occupational therapy. Dr. Liri Berisha The ambassador expressed gratitude for the help and financial support to the State of Kuwait has provided for the establishment of two regional centers for Autism as well as technical support in training offered during the month of 4 Autism therapists. Kuwaiti Ambassador, H.E. Mr. Fayez Mishari M. Al-Jassim. said that he was impressed with the quality and standards of the infrastructure of the center, calling it a rare facility in the Region, and praised the work done there as wonderful. He closely followed an hour of therapy and 2 hours of occupational therapy.

Kuwaiti Ambassador to Albania expressed hi swilling of support from embassy staff to help children and therapists in order to expand services through the Kuwaiti government donors.

Dr. Liri Berisha gave as a gift to the ambassador a painting of the talented little girl Sara and the crystal logo of the Foundation honoring him as Honorary Ambassador for the Albanian Children Foundation.





## Regional Center for Autism, excellence model for neighboring countries

A group of advisors to the office of Prime Minister of Macedonia have visited on 21 and 22 October 2015 the Regional Centers for Autism 1 & 2. The group consisted of the prime minister's adviser for work and social policy, Mr. Krste Maljanovsk and counselors Lidija Krstevska Dojnicovska and Jasminka Vaskova-Tashkova. They were welcomed by the president of the Albanian Children Foundation Dr. Liri Berisha, as well as directors and employees of the Centers for Autism.

They were previously introduced with the excellent centers by colleagues at the Special School and the Institute for speaking and hearing Rehabilitation in their country, visitors from Macedonia aimed at being introduced and getting the best experiences that Albanian Children

Foundation has applied in terms of establishing and their function in order to establish such a center in the state of Macedonian.

Within this interest, dr. Ariel Como, acquainted visitors with the treatments of children during therapy, equipment used in the center, literature, adopted internal procedures of the organization of work and the work done with the children's families.

The parties also exchanged gifts, where the Albanian Children Foundation donated books and DVDs to the visitor about the programs developed in our centers, while dr. Liri Berisha was given a gift, a painting by the Ambassador of Macedonia to Albania.

### SKOPJE PROFESSIONALS-A STUDY VISIT AT THE AUTISM CENTERS

26 teachers, therapists and special educators of children with special needs from Skopje, Macedonia were guests' of the Regional Centers for Autism in Farka and Sauk.

The team, part of a special primary school "Zlatan Sremce" in Skopje, in a study tours undertaken in the region, decided this year to come in Albania.

The group of teachers and therapists were welcomed by the President of the Albanian Children Foundation Dr.Liri Berisha who briefly introduce the visitors on the Foundation's efforts towards supporting children with autism spectrum disorder by sharing the belief that there is still much to do.

Dr. Ariel Como explained to the professionals from Skopje the clinical work of the centers in order to introduce the contents of activities and services carried out in them. Dr. Como said the methods and practices installed in these centers are part of the most modern standards brought by the Foundation thanks to cooperation with international organizations in the field of autism.

The group of professionals from Skopje assisted in the official opening ceremony of the 3-month training on ABA launched at the Regional Center for Autism in Farka for young professionals.

# FOUR THERAPIST OF AUTISM CENTERS 1 & 2 IN KUWAIT FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING



Impressive: The adults with autism in Kuwait working as teachers, secretaries, rug makers, carpenters, chefs etc.

With rare impression and not earlier presumed, four therapist of the Regional Centers for Autism 1 & 2 returned from Kuwait Center for Autism.

In a two-week training on treatment, education and theoretical and practical training of persons with autism spectrum disorder, four therapists Enklejda Zelaj, Dajana Bejko, Ola Minxhozi and Elisa Mino brought valuable experience to our centers.

Very efficiently working models, structured learning on REACH philosophy, observation of lessons in class, directly supervision of occupational therapy to students with autism and follow closely the workshops where these students work on wood, embroidery, weaving carpets etc - were these the few the key moments of staying active in the Kuwait Center for Autism, which are translated by therapists as new horizons for our autism centers.

### **Enklejda Zelaj:**

This training brings new innovations in the treatment of adults' in our centers, for this age group we had a need for emergency intervention.

Professionalism, serenity, seriousness, patience and dedication of the staff of teachers and principals in Kuwait Autism Center was visible. I'm excited to watch adult with autism who were teachers, secretaries, rug workers, carpenters, chefs and other skills, to develop practical skills and be independent during the daily operational activities.

### **Ola Minxhozi:**

"Beyond the lectures, I had the opportunity to see a teaching classes with few students in the class. All work in the school, was structured and based on visual reinforcement. They did not want to challenge their students. They helped them through the pictures (figures, symbols or short words) and used different tables with pictures, so students are more comfortable because they knew where to go and what will happen next. .The whole school used this method and different picture or table were present everywhere in school.

### **Dajana Bejko:**

All the way the work was organized also gave us the





opportunity to open new horizons for our center. All their philosophy of learning (REACH) are new opportunities to explore and become part our work. I was impressed when they said that some of the teachers of the children were former student of this school. They had grown up in center for years and already had the opportunity to be teachers and guides of other younger children.

**Elisa Mino:**

Our challenge for the Regional Centers for Autism Now

is to structure the ways of implementing those technical levels we saw in this center. The time spent in the center was dedicated to knowledge and new skills.

This training was made possible by the Ministry of Waqf affairs and Kuwaiti state Foundation. Kuwait Autism Center was established in 1994 by Dr. Samira Al-Saad and managed simultaneously from her. Also dr. Samira Al-Saad is the vice president of the World Autism Organization.

This training was made possible by the Ministry of Waqf affairs and Kuwaiti state Foundation. Kuwait Autism Center was established in 1994 by Dr. Samira Al-Saad and managed simultaneously from her. Also dr. Samira Al-Saad is the vice president of the World Autism Organization.

# 23 professionals certified on ABA method



23 young professionals from Albania and the region successfully completed a 3-month training at the Regional Center for Autism in Farka on the Applied Behavior Analysis method or otherwise known as ABA.

The training was not based merely on theoretical grounds but also practical ones. Practical training was built in a way where each therapist of the Regional Center for Autism in Farka involved in therapeutic sessions a candidate participating in the this training. The supervision in a therapeutic session was at least 7 hours every week, and the participants were given the opportunity to work supervised by the respective therapist even with the children in the process of therapy.

During the certification ceremony of these young professionals like speech therapists, special educators, psychologists, etc., the Albanian Children Foundation's

President, Dr. Liri Berisha expressed satisfaction that the Centre gives you these new training opportunities to many therapists that are increasing in number, and moreover those of the districts, so to support those parents that these services are not reachable.

A very special group in this course were those from Kosovo, where 5 professional of the "Autism" association have a small center in their country for their children in the autism spectrum and are in the first steps of building services. They stressed that this kind of exchange gave them the true values of professionals and for them it was a very important thing.



## Professionals from Kosovo three-month training

Starting from 12 February 2016 a group of young professionals from Kosovo were trained for three months for the most contemporary method today in the treatment of autism, ABA.



The uniqueness of this training was that the participants were from the cities of Kosovo, an initiative that started from the last year training, where some of the participants were qualified to work in the newly opened center of Pristina and Prizren. To support the initiative of Kosovo, the Albanian Children Foundation supports these centers providing vocational training and supervision.

Participants were provided with concrete work with

children. The trainees were also provided with the development of Individual Education Program (IEP) and evaluation tools to identify and analyze problematic behavior presented by children. At the end of the training the center conducted theoretical and practical knowledge test, where trainees underwent a written assessment and direct work with a child receiving therapeutic services at the Regional Center for Autism.



## At the Sisters of Mother Teresa with children for the holidays



Albanian Children Foundation for the tenth year in a row visited for the holidays the house of the Sisters of Mother Teresa. Here is given sheltered and receive services persons with disabilities as well as those with various social problems and health.

Part of the New Year eve greetings were also some kids who besides preparing gifts for the elders, delivered to them more love, gratitude and esteem .Dr. Liri Berisha said that their visiting in this house is an example for all other adults.

“This year we fulfilled the wishes of these children apart from curiosity to visit the house. They wanted to be part of your holiday to show you’re not alone. They have come here to convey to you love and gratitude

and to show that while receiving gifts from parents and grandparents, they are equally sensitive to people in need, sick friends, orphans or poor who cannot celebrate . These children are here as a beautiful and poignant example for their peers. They learn from you because they can see specifically what they read and learn in books, there are the sisters of Mother Teresa that serve these people voluntarily. When they will learn about her becoming a Saint, they will know why, and will show how you can change the lives of people in need if you devote time, dedication and love. “

Children appreciated this visit to the house of the sisters of Mother Teresa and the elderly expressed gratitude for the attention of the foundation.

### 5000 Euro for the toddler Kristi ...

Albanian Children Foundation showed solidarity to help the boy Kristi Maze by donating a sum of Eur 5000. This sum assured Kristi guarantee to start preliminary proceedings for a liver transplant at the hospitals in the neighboring country, Italy but unfortunately Kristi couldn't have good results of the surgery. Our condolences to Maze family.



### 2000 Euros for Klajdi Spahiu

Albanian Children Foundation supported Klajdi Spahiu, the 20 year old boy who was diagnosed with Leukemia AML. .After concluding the three cycles of chemotherapy in Germany worth Eur 80,000, Klajdi family had no financial means to proceed payment for two other sessions of Eur 60,000. The Foundation joined the call for assistance and contributed to the amount Eur 2000. Wishing you a quick recovery Klajdi!



## Foundation visits Cala quadruplet family on the New Year Eve



They came to life together 9 years ago, bringing joy not only in their home and relatives, but also many dilemma and uncertainty about their wellbeing.

At the end of this year they were not surrounded by the love of their Mom Lindita that brought them to life after a serious illness which took away her life a few months ago. Albanian Children Foundation which has supported parents every year in the growth of these children, together with board representatives Elisabeta Gjoni and Elvana Hana visited quadruplet's house on the eve of celebrations by bringing joy to children with personalized gifts.

Dr Liri Berisha said that everyone wanted to come to see how much these children were grown and the entire staff of the Foundation participated in the preparation of gifts” She said: - “Today I would like to believe that the tale of

angels in the sky and seeing what goes on the world. Today, I would like for Lindita to see how many friends have come to your home today, how happy these people make New Year. I would like you to feel happy today and enjoy not only with each other but also with your friends. “

Cala family which had an older son when the quadruplet came to life at that time was assisted by the government with a house and father of Mario, Albion, Luis, Simon and the older son Eni, and their grandmother, thanked the foundation for the valuable assistance to them at birth.

During the conversation with the unemployed father, Dr.Liri Berisha and representatives of the Board said to support the family in-kind for their children as well as in health care with the purpose of their welfare.

### Social assistance for triplets ...

These beautiful and healthy triplet children with their birth have given joy to family and their relatives in Dibër. Upon the request of the family, the Albanian Children Foundation came to their rescue



by contributing a modest financial support to face the economic burdens with their wellbeing. They wrote this thank you message to the Foundation: “Thank you very much Madam, on behalf of my sister and her family for supporting us ... also have the pleasure to send our wishes for the holidays. May God be with you!. Thank you very much”  
May you be blessed!



## How we celebrated this June 1st..

The Children of Regional Centers for Autism celebrated June 1 along with several children of "Turgut Ozal" college. Children have attended performances prepared by the centers and the college. Children with autism spectrum disorder through recitations, songs and dances gave strong emotions to college kids. Likewise, the latter with an admirable performance brought a joyous atmosphere for children and their parents.

At the end of the performances, the Albanian Children Foundation gave gifts for all children while the representative of Regional Center no. 1 Ariana Bekteshi on behalf of the Foundation presented to the college, the Turkey's national flag, a paper craft, handmade of children with autism.

President of the Albanian Children Foundation Dr. Liri Berisha conveyed a short message:

*"Your visiting today has given a great value not only to your education but also to the training of our children. So this is mutual. This is because for children with disabilities is very important to feel included in the community where they live and where they learn. Being with you, makes these children to be equal, to feel included and not isolated as is usually happens, be respected and not discriminated, integrated and not to be forgotten. As for you, this joint party, grows you up and matures you more. It teaches you how to accept, adjust and respect any peer that is not like you. It educates you how to interact with them without hurting and rejected any of them. Makes you more knowledgeable and more emancipated. Today, there are children and youth with disabilities that no one invites in their birthday. There are children and teenagers who want to be part of a team, but are not accepted, because it is more important the victory of a team than the inclusion of a child. Thank you for becoming part of our party."*



# Happy birthday Klaud, Ram and Ambla



Cohabitation or share pieces of your life is the most precious help that you can give to a child with autism spectrum disorder, to make it inclusive. For this purpose the feast organized by the Regional Center for Autism No. 2 on Klaud Drazhi and Ram Lasku birthdays born in February, was joined by the 11-year-old Amla Maltezi who also was born in this month, sharing together special emotions for all the other children of the center and parents.

Amla chose that in this party organized for children born in February, play in the piano Aria by "Carmen" opera by Bizet thus creating an artistic atmosphere that was followed with great interest by all. In a short message Amla said that in all birthdays, children are very happy and receive gifts. "I wished for my birthday to make a gift and this is a small piano concert for children of this center born in February". Happy Birthday!...



## Happy Halloween's holiday!

Children love the Halloween's holiday ... from candles to the costumes of different characters. This celebration of the Regional Center for Autism No.2 full with their works depicted and made in materials like paper, pieces, zucchini, tainting, which not only presented the therapists work with children in the center, but also encouraged the children imagination in the creation of as many artistic portraits.

Halloween's celebrations brought together many children and parents. The latter became an active part of this celebration performing with their children with their selected characters. Supported by the therapists of this center, performances with characters provided fun to kids and adults invited there. Congratulating the staff, but also the parents, Dr. Liri Berisha wished this wonderful work will encourage children and enriched in order to provide skills to them.





This is how we celebrated the New Year Eve holidays at the Regional Center for Autism in Farka



# Donors



“Acknowledgement and gratitude to all donators who supported the activities of Albanian Children Foundation, represented in this issue of the magazine.”

1. THE MINISTRY OF AQWAF AND ISLAMIC AFFAIRS

2. KUWAITI FOUNDATION AQWAF

3. SWISS COOPERATION OFFICE

4. TURGUT OZAL COLLEGE

5. SHENDI DENT - OLESIA DUKA

6. MEDIA PRINT

7. OMBRA GVG

8. DELTAPHARMA

9. MUNICIPALITY OF KUKES