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ALBANIAN CHILDREN FOUNDATION BECOMES MEMBER OF "AUTISM EUROPE"



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Albanian Children Foundation

becomes member of Autism European Organization

Albanian Children Foundation participated The General Assembly of the leader organization in Europe for Autism “Autism Europe”, which was held on May 1- 3, 2015 in Barcelona, Spain.



In this Assembly, Albanian Children Foundation represented by Dr. Liri Berisha, received the highest praises by members of the Organization for the work done so far in these seven years in terms of supporting children with autism spectrum disorder.

Appreciating the leader role in Europe of this organization in terms of lobbying and supporting the autism issue, Dr. Liri Berisha presented the activities of the Foundation and the Regional Centers for Autism established in Albania, conveying the gratitude and appreciation for the international organizations that have supported so far the Albanian Children Foundation.

During her speech, Dr. Liri Berisha emphasized the reasons why the Albanian Children Foundation must be a member of the great European family “Autism Europe” promising closer cooperation in the future with its member organizations in order to exchange best practices on autism issue.

Ms. Zsuzsanna Szilvasy, President of Autism Europe praised the achievements of Albanian Children Foundation, progress which she said has personally followed since the establishment of the Foundation till now.

She said: “What the Albanian Children Foundation has done is a short time, in terms of supporting children with autism in Albania and the region



is a revolution compared to other European countries that have dozens of years of experience in dealing with this challenge of millennium, the battle against Autism”.

“Autism Europe” organization is the leading organization for Europe’s largest autism issues. It consists of 80 organizations and associations from 30 different European countries and has a strong influence in lobbying on the issue of the rights of persons with autism. The organization has a 40 year experience and is composed from the level of decision-taking to that of membership, by persons with autism spectrum disorder, parents of children with autism, doctors, clinicians, psychologists, psycho- sociologist therapists etc. that besides that produce services for people with autism spectrum disorder, are dedicated and mediate to their governments for better policies and more stable in terms of autism issue.



Dr.Liri Berisha, Global Autism Achievement Award

Dr. Liri Berisha, president of Albanian Children Foundation is awarded by the International organization “Autism Speaks” in New York with the Second Annual Bob and Suzanne Wright Global Autism Achievement Award.



Dr. Liri Berisha, president of Albanian Children Foundation is awarded by the International organization “Autism Speaks” in New York with the Second Annual Bob and Suzanne Wright Global Autism Achievement Award.

This award that was presented to Ms. Berisha during the Seventh Annual World Focus on Autism meeting that is taking place alongside the United Nation General Assembly meeting in New York City comes as a recognition of:

- Dr. Liri Berisha remarkable leadership

in autism community, for raising public and professional awareness of autism in Albania;

- establishing a state-of-the-art clinical center for services, training and research in Tirana;
- supporting the launch of Southeast European Autism Network of ministries of health from regional countries;
- participating in UN and World Health Organization technical consultations as well.

This award was personally presented to



Dr. Liri Berisha by the co-founders of the international organization “Autism Speaks”, Bob and Suzanne Wright, in the presence of many first spouses from Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe, Middle East, who have been inspired by Dr. Liri Berisha leadership and commitment.

Ms. Wright said: “Dr. Liri Berisha is a unique combination of a visionary and a fighter. I knew, from

the first moment we met at the Shafallah Forum in Qatar way back in 2008 that she would change the world. She has changed the future for people with autism in Albania and now she is working on the entire region. Ladies and gentlemen please join me and giving a warm applause to my girlfriend Liri.”

Dr. Liri Berisha, being very honored by this award, said: “Dear Suzanne and Bob, this

award is a tribute for you for lighting up the hope for all those who are challenged by autism in the world. As a mother, pediatrician and the president of the Albanian Children Foundation, I cannot think of a better recognition for the hard work and achievements we have made over the past years, improving the lives of all those affected by autism in Albania.”

The international organization “Autism Speaks” during the Seventh Annual World Focus on Autism meeting in New York, stressed the rapid increasing of children with autism in the world and the increasing needs of this community. Data suggests that autism affects approximately 1% of the global population. One of the essential issues for discussion were the opportunities of turning innovation into real actions, an effort led by Autism Speaks to address the universal challenge of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) through awareness-raising and service improvement.





International Autism Congress in Kuwait honors Dr.Liri Berisha with the Gartitude Award

The 4th International Autism Congress was held in Kuwait, an international event that takes place every four years with the participation of all countries around the world. In this Congress, Albania was represented by Dr. Liri Berisha, President of Albanian Children Foundation, as the guest of honor and as an activist on autism efforts.

In this congress, with World Autism Organization and Kuwait Center for Autism as the main supporters, representatives of various organizations working in the field of autism, doctors, clinicians, researchers and prominent authors on autism methods participated. At the opening ceremony of the congress, the invited dignitaries were received by the Secretary of the State of Kuwait, sister of the H.H Emir of Kuwait and representatives of Kuwaiti Centre for Autism.

An important moment in the opening ceremony was honoring Dr. Liri Berisha with the Gratitude award as a prominent activist on autism, on

the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of Kuwait Center for Autism. This center in Kuwait, as Dr. Berisha stressed in her speech, has served as a working model for establishing the Regional Center for Autism in Farka, which opened in November 2011 and was built thanks to the support of a very generous grant of Euro 250,000 by the Kuwait Public Foundation "Awqaf". This award was an appraisal of the Albanian Children Foundation's efforts in development and empowerment mission of children with autism in Albania. This award was given to several other world dignitaries who have provided valuable



The innovations brought by the best authors of the methods used today in the world for autism therapies, were the most important part of discussions at this congress. During these three days very valuable experiences were exchanged and developed a series of meetings between representatives of organizations dealing with autism and children with disabilities, from Spain, Qatar, Kuwait, Kosovo and other personalities of this field.



assistance in this field.

Dr. Ariel Como, Scientific Director of the Regional Center for Autism in Farka, participant in this congress and Dr. Liri Berisha had a working lunch with Mr. James Partington, the developer of ABLLS method – a method widely used around the world even in Albanian for children with autism. During the meeting with Mr. James Partington experiences were exchanged and discussed possibilities of providing a training package for our therapists in order to use this very useful method in the treatment of children with autism.

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Albanian Children Foundation empowers the techniques of intervention for children with autism

Now adult children suffering from autism do not feel abandoned anymore. Intervention opportunities for this age are becoming real for the first time in Albania. Thanks to the latest techniques being introduced by the Albanian Children Foundation, the Regional Center for Autism in Farka has provided its therapists with the most recently method, “Pivotal Response treatment” that helps adult children to easily develop skills acquired through individual therapy, in any other premises that the child goes.



Regional Center for Autism in Farka put another milestone in terms of treating Autism spectrum disorder expanding its professionals’ vision. With the support of the Albanian Children Foundation, the Regional Autism Center held a few day training for its staff of therapists with new methods of treatment for children affected by the autism spectrum disorder. For this purpose, with the recommendation of the “Autism Speaks” International Organization, the Foundation has invited to Albania two trainers from California, US that are part of one of the most avanguard communities in the application

of modern methods of autism spectrum disorder. They are Janice Chan and Tiffany Wang of the Child and Adolescent Services Research Center, Rady Children’s Hospital, San Diego, which are experts specialized in one of the latest and contemporary methods called “Pivotal Response Teaching” (PRT). Under the guidance and assistance of the two trainers, PRT methods is introduced for the first time in Albania by Albanian Children Foundation for the professionals working with children in the Regional Center for Autism in Farka. This training would not have been possible without the chain



of training currently available in the ABA, which principles are applied in the Center.

Ms. Tiffany Wang, Child and Adolescent Services Research Center, Rady Children’s Hospital, San Diego says:

The Pivotal Response Treatment pays much attention and takes advantage is that it focuses in motivating the child. First we see what the child likes more and after we receive these preferences, we keep the level of motivation so that he might be ready and disposed to be learned. The advantage of this method from the others is its naturalness. So, this can develop into any environment from teacher, parent or therapist and skill’s development is easier at the therapy rooms, at home or in class. But what are the benefits for children affected by autism spectrum by implementing this method?

Janice Chan, expert at the Child and Adolescent Services Research Center, Rady Children’s

Hospital, San Diego, says:

What we are doing at the Autism Center in Farka is moving this intervention from one to one therapy to group therapy. I was informed that the Albanian Children Foundation is preparing for the opening of a center with different classes for older children and what brings this training is to use this method in classes.

This model empowers the treatment received till now and raises it to a new level to intervene in more complicated and problematic cases of autism spectrum disorder.

This working model after learned from the therapists, adds the interventionist techniques skills, which in other words means: all this will be translated into interventions to a greater number of children, whether they are older or untreated before.





My child is autistic? What do I do?

Autism scares. The moment a parent learns from the doctor or a specialist that his child shows such characteristics or is autistic, he find himself in a confused and desperate situation. It has affected his child, the one that he wanted the best for, as all parents do about their children.

These parents, differing in character and personalities, do not react in the same way. The same with the roles in a couple, the mother has a different reaction from the father. One does not want to believe or cannot believe, although doubt that something is not going as it should has been tormenting them for a long time. The other cannot believe, because he or she has done everything for his child, has been a model parent, fulfilling every need and desire for his or her child. Others become so dismayed from this event that they

lose it. They change their lifestyle, abandon work and everything else, and dedicate themselves to the child, or more specifically to his problem, by making matters worse. There others who believe that now they should become and act as a specialist for their child and give up their so much needed role as a parent, a role that give them the desire to live. No one can teach you how to life, neither parents, because that is impossible. This idea comes from the young parents, who although in their 20s and 30s are still “childlike” because they still expect everything in life from their parents. For almost everyone the biggest question is Why us? Will our child become like their peers, go to school and become capable for himself? And they are right. The information available on autism is scary, shocking I would say. There’s no cure. These



children can find relief only in the States or the UK. The same with internet, where most of the parents go to so-called doctors who have nothing in common with the real profession, healers, or advisors on everything, bamboozle them even more. Thus begins the wandering from a doctor to a healer. In my opinion this is the most damaging period for the parent, because he or she is become part of a circle that increases autism, as well as for the child, who is losing his “best years”, this is what I’d like to call early childhood years, where wonders, even though in good faith do not result as such for them. It is easy to speak from your point of view, is what some of them think. But it is not. I am telling you that I’ve seen so many children in these years that even if I was made of stone I would be hurting, and I’m not being modest by adding that I do participate in their pain and love (using the words of Edmond Tupja). Who would dare act indifferent or worse mean before such a beautiful and innocent being as the child. When we grow up things change. Our thinking changes and we became angry and curse the other, oftentimes with reason, because those older than us usually in our everyday life make you. But childhood is the period when we are the best, we are still innocent, we lack the grown up world or they have not managed to teach us the filthy tricks of living. However, let’s go back to our problem. I would like to quote the words of some people, not ordinary, but very famous, some of whom have suffered from this problem on their own. Children affected from autism have the necessary abilities to move forward and evolve. Today, despite what some old fashioned practioner or literature says there is treatment for autism. It is important that this effective evaluation and treatment begins as soon as possible: the earliest the intervention, the better and fast the results. Only

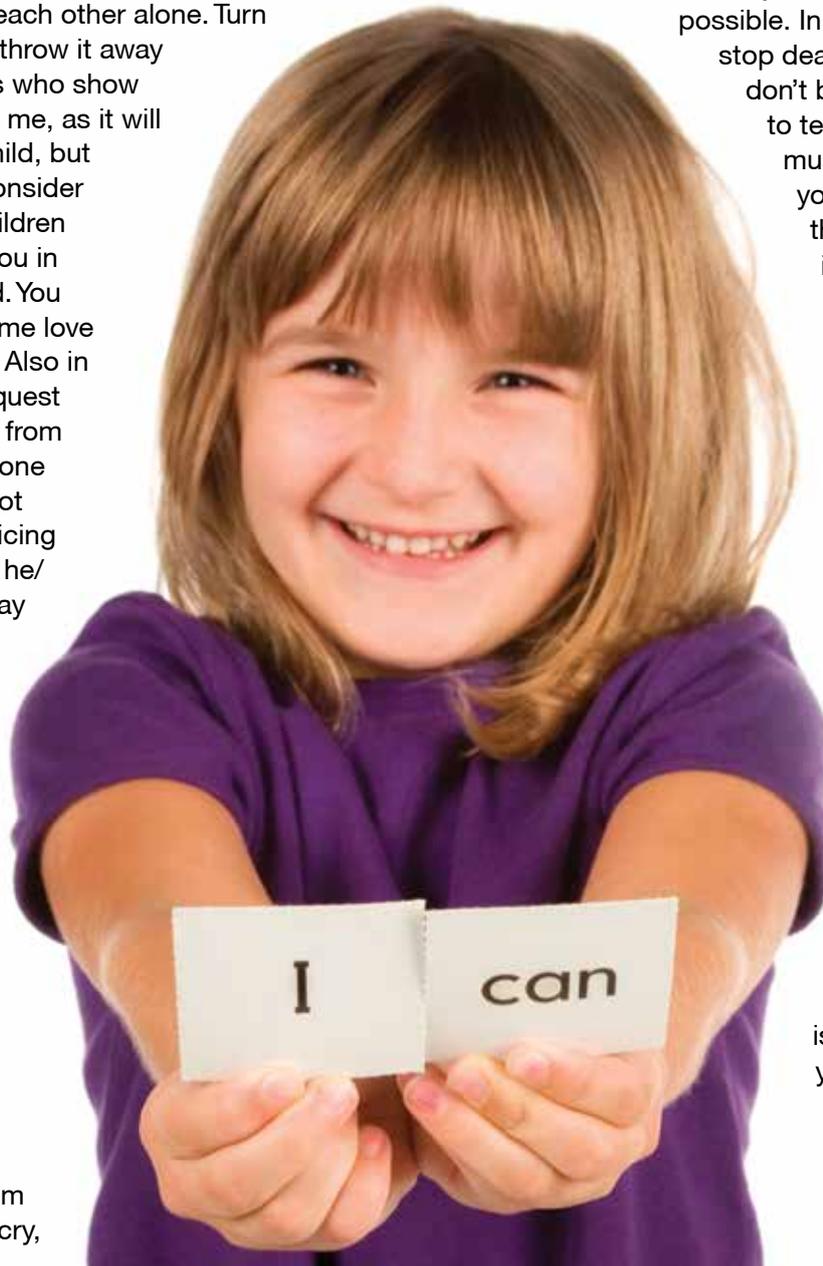
in this way, despite their slow development in comparison with their peers, these children will be independent. And as I wrote below, they have great knowledge about this field. They have faced autism and they have managed to become not only independent, but they have become the best in different fields of life. What I want to say is that the key for these victories, as well as smaller victories, are the parents of these children, not only the children with these problems. The way we act before our younger ones builds the next man or woman that they will become. The stance and the way you face with this problem, as dismaying and confusing that it can be, it is decisive. At first I would suggest to pull yourself together, and do this without being alarming, but look for health centers where the child is evaluated from a multidisciplinary team. This is the first step to take after the diagnosis, and half of the job in my opinion if you will pay attention to the people who are evaluating your child. Trust me, the old saying “He who thinks, wins” is a proper one because there’s not time to be lost, get the best information and trust in the real specialists and not the ones who pity you or give you false hope. Autism is mining for your child’s life, but if caught in early childhood or in time it becomes such if you let it untreated. Therefore the first step taken to learn from specialists who know what they are talking about and the belief that nothing goes away with complaining or suppositions, but being down to earth is decisive. Life goes on and the child though autistic, feels better when he/she sees that he has a father or a mother that act as such for him/her. The child with problems more than any other child needs to distinguish the way family works, the relations among its members. He feels them and is affected by those relations more than anyone else. When a child is affected by autism, you should



It is easy to speak from your point of view, is what some of them think. But it is not. I am telling you that I’ve seen so many children in these years that even if I was made of stone I would be hurting, and I’m not being modest by adding that I do participate in their pain and love.
(using the words of Edmond Tupja).



stand by them, encourage them play, and talk to them about everything and in a constant manner. To talk to them about the pie you're making, how you are making it, who will eat it and where they will eat it; what happens in this world; you should talk to him about the things that surround him, and then comment on them, starting with the tiny strands of grass on the ground up to the helicopter flying in the sky. The mother at home verbalizes everything that she does with him in his/her eyes, the father also, and this should occur daily and preferably only with the child. Together with that think about the environment. The environment belongs also to the child, therefore a home, a little "gym" where there are no risks and as a result no No-s the most appropriate place to perform all kinds of activities with the child. Do not be satisfied and do not encourage the maneuvers he makes to the computer, the mobile phone, or the fact that he gets distracted in front of the TV. You should not use it as a tool to achieve goals such as feeding or to leave each other alone. Turn off the TV, or better throw it away is what I tell parents who show surprise listening to me, as it will not only save the child, but also themselves. Consider him/her as other children and take him with you in the matrimonial bed. You should show the same love to him as to others. Also in the kindergarten request the same treatment from educators, as everyone else. Stay by him, not pitting him, but rejoicing in his childhood, as he/she won't be that way for long. Consider him/her a real interlocutor, although you are the only one speaking, he feels and records in very sensitive "ways". Spread peace for yourself and around him. Since language does not impress him much, notice carefully: he more visual. Help him with gestures, mimicry, but never neglect



using the word. Be talkative but pleasant, is what I tell parents, and never be insisting for him to talk. You are not experts, you are parents, and your role in his growth is another. Be careful with the way you behave. For me the greatest evil of autism is the fact that it has the ability to isolate you, meaning to make you the same and isolate you in its world and "plight". If you have fallen into this trap, it is difficult to come out, but not impossible. Start from the beginning by making it clear to him that things are not achieved by shouting or by being aggressive. If you let him have his way, even once, he will start to use these tactics to win things. Show him that some things are only yours, in the same way as some things are only his, for example: This man here is my husband and your father. In the evening we go to the room to sleep together and not with you. We love you, but your place is here. Continue with life as before, especially go to work and leave the child in the nursery or daycare as long as possible. In the afternoon don't stop dealing with him, but don't be annoying, trying to teach them things. You must not forget what you have been told by the specialists, daily intensive therapy according to the needs of the child. You must be patient, because the specialist will always give you homework, but slowly also skill. Act so, always having in mind the triangle that we mentioned in the beginning: structuring in the family, in day care and intensive therapy. It is a triangle that autism cannot avoid. Autism may come, and, as we have said, this is not your fault, but you must know that even if we remove the roots, all your and our merits is when you come and ask to help each-other.



No MMR-Autism Link in Large Study of Vaccinated vs. Unvaccinated Kids

Study of over 95,000 children included 15,000 unvaccinated 2 to 5 year olds and nearly 2,000 kids already considered at high risk for autism

In the largest-ever study of its kind, researchers again found that the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine did not increase risk for autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This proved true even among children already considered at high risk for the disorder.

In all, the researchers analyzed the health records of 95,727 children, including more than 15,000 children unvaccinated at age 2 and more than 8,000 still unvaccinated at age 5. Nearly 2,000 of these children were considered at risk for autism because they were born into families that already had a child

with the disorder.

The report appears today in JAMA, the Journal of the American Medical Association.

“Consistent with studies in other populations, we observed no association between MMR vaccination and increased ASD risk,” the authors write. “We also found no evidence that receipt of either one or two doses of MMR vaccination was associated with an increased risk of ASD among children who had older siblings with ASD.”

The analysis looked at autism rates and MMR vaccination at ages 2, 3, 4 and 5 years. It showed no increased risk of autism with immunization at any age. In fact, autism rates were lower in the vaccinated groups. However, this might be because

parents who see early signs of autism were more likely to delay or avoid vaccination, the authors speculate.

Lower vaccination rates among families affected by autism

Some 15 year ago, a small, now-discredited study sparked concerns about a link between the MMR vaccine and autism. Since then, a large and growing body of research has continued to find no association. Still, the continuing uncertainty around what does cause autism has left some people worried. Such concerns likely explain why vaccination rates have dropped in families that have an older child with the disorder.

In the new study, MMR vaccination rates for

children without an affected older siblings were 84 percent at 2 years and 92 percent by age 5 years. Vaccination rates for children with an older sibling affected by autism were significantly lower: 73 percent at 2 years and 86 percent at age 5 years.

In an accompanying editorial, Dr. Bryan King, director of the Seattle Children's Autism Center, writes:

"Taken together, some dozen studies have now shown that the age of onset of ASD does not differ between vaccinated and unvaccinated children, the severity or course of ASD does not differ between vaccinated and unvaccinated children, and now the risk of ASD recurrence in families

does not differ between vaccinated and unvaccinated children."

Study made possible by large database

The investigators performed their analysis using the claims records from a large US health plan database (the Optum Research Database). Participants included children continuously enrolled in an associated health plan from birth to at least 5 years of age between 2001 and 2012. All had an older sibling.

Of the 95,727 children in the study, around 1 percent (994) were diagnosed with autism during the study's follow-up period. Among those who had an older sibling with autism (1,929), approximately 7 percent (134) developed the disorder. This difference in autism prevalence – between children with or without an older sibling affected by autism – is consistent with earlier studies.





Today Drexel University released the first comprehensive report that describes what happens to youth on the autism spectrum between high school and their early 20s. “These statistics put numbers behind the stories we often hear from families describing the challenges of entering adulthood - often without help.”



Report: 1 in 3 Young Adults Disconnected from Work and School

Children grow up, and autism does not end when children reach adulthood. In the U.S., an estimated 50,000 youth with autism leave high school each year. As the numbers increase, so do the stories of pressing challenges families face as youth enter adulthood - the longest segment of their lifespans. Nationally, we have a lack of attention to issues of adult autism and many gaps in our knowledge about the needs of these young adults.

Our team just published the National Autism Indicators Report: Transition into Young Adulthood--the first comprehensive report that describes what happens to youth on the autism spectrum between high school and their early 20s. The report identifies the indicators now available and serves as a call to action to fill the remaining large gaps in knowledge.

THE KEY INDICATORS

The findings in the National Autism Indicators Report give us some indicators – baseline information about how young adults with autism fare in the transition into adulthood.

Over half of young adults work, and about one-third continue their education. Some do both. But one-third of all young adults with autism do neither. They are disconnected from the outcomes that special education was targeting. Many services decline when young adults with autism transition into adulthood, a decline that is aptly known as a “services cliff.”

Our study finds that 26 percent of young adults on the autism spectrum, and 28 percent of those who are unemployed and not in school, did not receive services, which could have helped them become employed, continue their education or live more independently. We looked more intensely at this issue of disconnection as young adults with autism have a different pattern of entering adulthood, taking longer to become connected and find adult social roles.

Further, this report is one of the first to look at issues of safety and risk.

The needs of people on the autism spectrum vary widely. The few indicators we currently have don't give us clues about who needs what types or help, or how much help they need. It will be infinitely difficult to plan on a large scale, evaluate efforts, allocate funds, and ultimately, improve quality of life for adults with autism, if we continue to exist in a data desert.

Families, service providers, policymakers and adults with autism themselves need credible information for making informed decisions about adulthood. We need a foundation of knowledge upon which to build supportive public policy, and private-public partnerships, addressing services, living arrangements, social participation, employment, postsecondary education, physical and mental, safety and other domains.



Early Intervention Helps 1 in 14 Toddlers Overcome Autism Symptoms



But almost all of these children still need special-education services for emotional, behavioral or learning issues in grade school. One in 14 toddlers entering an early intervention program in the Bronx overcame their autism symptoms by grade school. But the vast majority continued to struggle with emotional or behavioral issues that warranted special-education services.

Lead researcher Lisa Shulman, of New York City's Albert Einstein College of Medicine, presented her team's findings today at the annual meeting of the Pediatric Academic Societies, in San Diego.

Previous research has shown that autism symptoms resolve in a small subset of children, most of whom have received intensive early intervention. It's not been clear, however, if these children continue to struggle with other emotional, behavioral or learning issues.

The researchers tracked 569 children diagnosed with autism as toddlers. They re-evaluated the children before they entered elementary school – on average 4 years after they began receiving early intervention services.

The re-evaluations showed that 38 of the 569 had improved to the point that they would no

longer receive a first-time diagnosis of autism. Autism is considered lifelong. So children don't "lose" their diagnosis, even with dramatic improvement.

In addition, most of the 38 children had tested as intellectually disabled (IQ below 70) as toddlers. On re-evaluation, all of them scored within a normal intellectual range.

But despite these improvements in social and intellectual abilities, 35 of the 38 children (92 percent) still needed mental health or special-education services.

Rough two-thirds of these children had some type of language or learning disability. Nearly half had behavior problems such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder or disruptiveness. One in four had emotional disorders such as severe anxiety or obsessive-compulsiveness. And nearly three out of four still needed some type of special-education services.

"When an early ASD diagnosis resolves, other learning and emotional behavioral diagnoses often remain," Dr. Shulman concludes.

"Understanding the full range of possible positive outcomes in this scenario is important information for parents, clinicians and the educational system."



THE DELAYED INTERVENTION

*An opinion by Spiro Saqellari
Speech Therapist, RCA 1*

It would be great if all children with developmental disorders will be assessed in time and will be treated immediately. Then everything will be much easier.

But unfortunately is not always the case. Many children that suffer from this disorder are left untreated or neglected, let's say it without fear; their problem cannot be assessed in time or subject to a non-reliable treatment; they live in rural areas where even the voice of the professional reaches too late and structures do not work. And then when they visit a doctor, psychologist, logopedist, the "gold" time has passed, however, an answer must be given.

In most of the literatures that represents this fact this kind of intervention is called delayed. I think that, according to the country where we live, it differs greatly from early intervention. If in this case the child was subject to more or less equal procedures, in the case when it is delayed depends more on the living level of the society, therefore the place where we live; the care or the budget spent on this category of people.

In Albania, where every man faces the issue of integration and employment, dealing with difficulties of a person with disabilities in general and mental delay in particular is understood. Therefore, even though the goal is the same everywhere: practical training, for them to be integrated in society, in our country, for the reasons that we mentioned above, there are some features in

the treatment of these adolescents or adults. There is no structure to do so and the worst none bothers for them, except a conference taking place in Tirana where the so-called experts are self-invited and self-dinned, after whispering and read the "brightest" prospects for these children which end with lunch, and assistance to them is diminished as its crumbs.

I will describe below what I do with these adult "children" that come for the visit when the "gold" time really has passed. Once I ask in details about their daily activity, where they live, what they do around people, their skills in every direction; what they do and what not ... and what they would like to do and after a detailed testing, I do insists that parents try to teach him some basic elements that will help him live such as nutrition, self-serving, knowing the environment and other practical activities to help themselves and others.

In order for the "child-adult" to handle his life when parents grow old or are not with him, the point is: let's do something that tomorrow he is not included in an institution but to know how to use and obtain benefits from goods that are inherited to him: land, the cow in the village ... and the house and other opportunities in the city.

Everywhere is different and according to the place; gardening, taking care of goat, cow or if you're in town, working after a craftsman, kindhearted and so there

are plenty that will initially treat as an apprentice and slowly, with a dual effort, they gain simple crafts skills and likes it. Many adults with mental delays already have come and continue to come to the clinic. I notice with pleasure that they like something from the work that people around them do. They like to deal with tools, stone, iron or various repairs. Let us take advantage of this desire, although we are later, because after a time it will give its fruits.

In the city, we try to find and pay for a master such as: a chef, shoemaker, watchmaker, and mechanic etc. to teach them skills. He will wipe the dust, clean, will be under his guidance. But later gradually, he will justify the work there and day why not hope and be rewarded by this work.

But these do not happen by itself; it takes work, patience, skills through masters and people you known, and I believe that the most hard-hearted man in front of such a problem, shows awareness, provides help and wants to do something good.

But be careful! According to the country; the village is often easier. If he still have not yet learned how to milk, boil and make ready the milk for cheese and butter, act quickly! He will be earning a life with it tomorrow. He will distinguish the Leeks from bad weeds. Cabbage, tomatoes, also; even know when planted and harvested. And many other things...

In the city, the master will teach him skills as he knows, the desire and love for the work. However, I stress that these things are easily spoken but are not easily done. Would you like for a child to succeed tomorrow, even without you, although he has a problem? Do what we said above! Only with work, patience, passion! Only this way you will feel calm that he will be

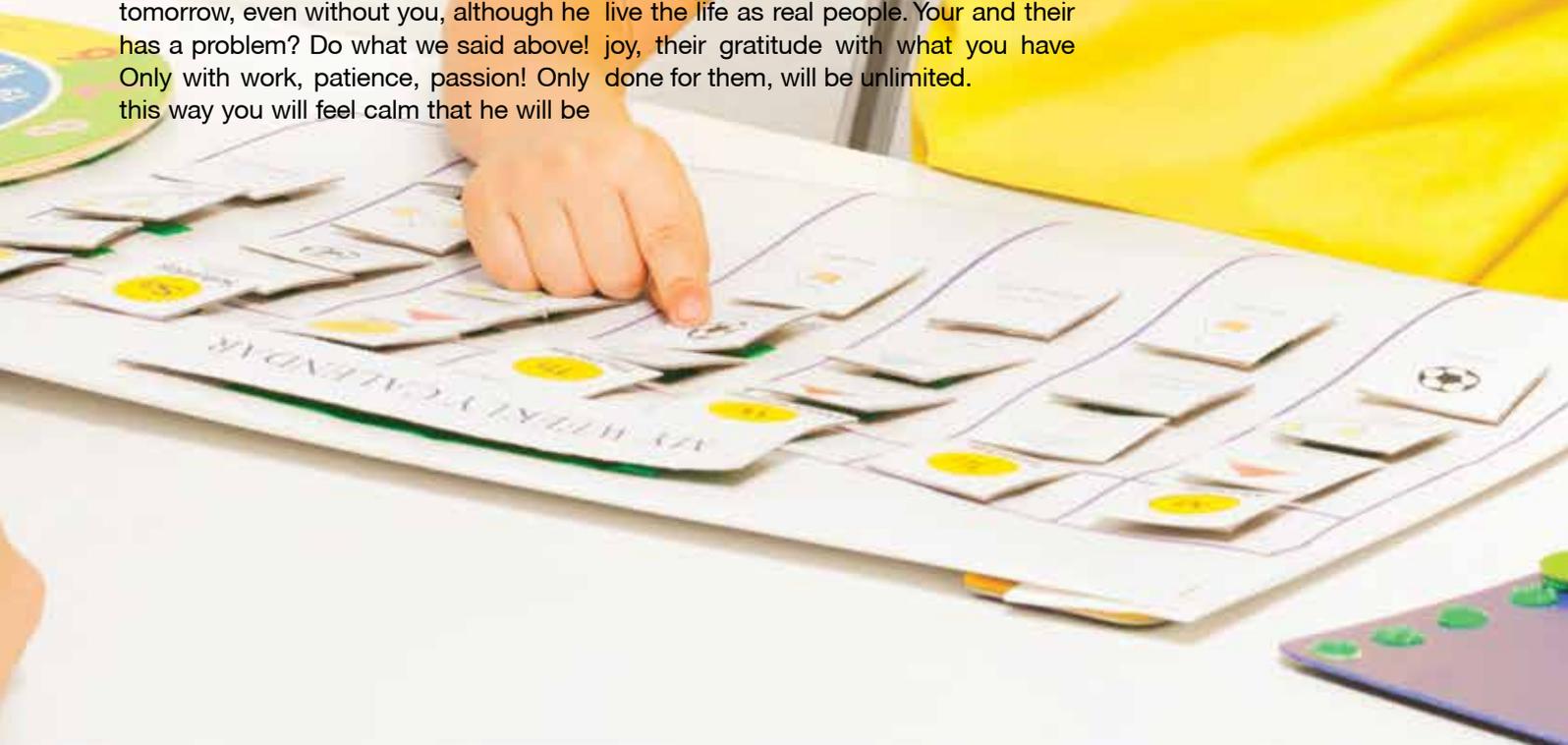
able to benefit from the blessings of life, and what you will inherit him. But even the brother, sister, cousin, why not the spouse who will accept for what he is, when noticing him trying, will give a hand and he would never feel alone.

When was writing these lines I thought hard worker Vito, in a southern village, who although facing many problems, managed to guard the village's cattle and to rejoice today its retire payment. Even feeling good with his fellows. There is no event he is not invited. He is supported by his family and others.

Finally, I think that is the only way to help these "children" adults with developmental disorders and not only them ... Of course, we will never give up the knowledge, such as for the money, the world, the good people of but this on the daily basis.

I have many examples such as Kleon from Saranda whose mother, beyond the specialist, has carefully introduce to him the desire and love for her profession today by working together; Ani from Shkodra that sew now for the "moderns" of the neighborhood; Don that "caress" the tomato before harvesting and a salad made of his hand is same as the chef of "tourism".

But unfortunately the opposite cases are more numerous. Institutions are full of "children-adults" that expect the teacher to peel the egg and the banana. They have ended up there for many reasons. It's not the case to analyze them, but believe me that even the child with the most serious problem has the desire to communicate and to do something. Do not miss this opportunity. Give them the opportunity to live the life as real people. Your and their joy, their gratitude with what you have done for them, will be unlimited.





Holidays, the Albanian Children Foundation visiting children with thalassemia in Lushnje



“Since I took the presidency of the Albanian Children Foundation, we tried to furnish the laboratory with equipment for analysis not only for children in Lushnje but for the entire region. Also we put tremendous efforts to replace painful blood transfusion therapy with Ex-jade and have worked continuously worked on raising awareness campaign about voluntary blood donation.”



With a special responsibility as an honorary citizen of the city of Lushnja, Dr. Liri Berisha and actress, People’s Artist Margarita Xhepa, they have paid a special attention to the New Year Eve to children suffering from thalassemia in this city.

With a dual mission, as head of the Albanian Children Foundation, dr.Liri Berisha reserved at the Centre of Hemoglobinopathy, which is returned as their second home for these children, a festive atmosphere for the holidays for Christmas and New Year.

Albanian Children Foundation’s staff prepared special gifts for 30 children. After meetings with children and their parents who often face the problem of lack of blood, Dr. Liri Berisha wished them for a healthy life, happiness and success in school.

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I am here today as part of this city together with Mrs. Margarita, who is a citizen of yours, greater artist and an honored name of the Albanian nation, to celebrate together, to wish you the a happy New Year; wishing you happiness and joy, happiness but you saw your children’s mothers; to have as healthy and as happy. Once again Happy New year and may it be a great year for all citizens of Lushnja but



especially for the children of this city “- said Mrs. Berisha.

Actress Margarita Xhepa, very dear to all citizens in Lushnja with a greater sensitivity towards these children said:

“I came with a great joy to be here today. When Mrs. Liri invited me to come here today, and is Mrs. Liri merit to be here, that extended the invitation, because without being inviting today you cannot go even to visit your child, so this great lady, this noble lady who has given through the Foundation a great help everywhere, but especially for my suffering Lushnje, when I said that would come here, I said I would be here even if I was impossible to do so. So we come with love, simplicity, pain and participate in every feeling of the people. Therefore I thank her from the heart who brought me near you today. I wish you a prosperous year and much happiness, prosperity, joy and health. From the bottom of my heart, Margarita came among you to wish you the best in your life. I’m am from this town and I never forget this lovely city that has given me much “- said Mrs.Xhepa.

Albanian Children Foundation has a direct contribution of continuous improvement of life of these children. Thanks to earlier efforts of the Foundation is made possible the furnishing with modern equipment for laboratory screening and tracking of patients with Hemoglobinopathy in order to improve the quality of the clinical treatment of patients with thalassemia. Thanks to the continuous efforts and persistence of Albanian Children Foundation was made possible the inclusion in the list of reimbursable medications of Ex-jade, which have substantially improved the quality of life of these patients. Meanwhile, the Foundation, with a special sensitivity has worked hard for raising awareness campaigns by organizing dozens of activities for voluntary blood donation in order to facilitate their lives.

A touching story by the speech of Dr. Liri Berisha:

As was coming upstairs to come here and heard the voices of children, I was reminding a story that happened years ago and I would like to tell it shortly. I had just finished my studies as pediatrician and was assigned to do the practice at the Hematology session in the hospital. It was December 29th and had just finished my work shift. An emergency arrived. She was an 8-year-old girl in critical condition with thalassemia who had not done the blood transfusion in time. We put her under medication and stood with her until I it was finished. Every time we entered to check on her, we observed how both of them were in tears. Being worried that this concern was probably due to her illness, we told them that the danger was over and everything would be fine. But in fact, their concern was something else. We realized this the next day, where around 11 o'clock some children filled the pavilion with their noise, and voices that I heard here today made me remember this story. They were the classmates of Bruna-that was the name of the girl, who had come to organize the show that Bruna, had failed to present a few days ago, because she fainted while she had the leading role in this concert. It was really very moving to see the solidarity between children, their seriousness, and patience, love that they give. I swear, the show that Bruna and her friends gave that day for children hospitalized in the pavilion and the staff of doctors was very emotional.



Albanian Children Foundation celebrates the New Year Eve with the Sisters of Mother Teresa

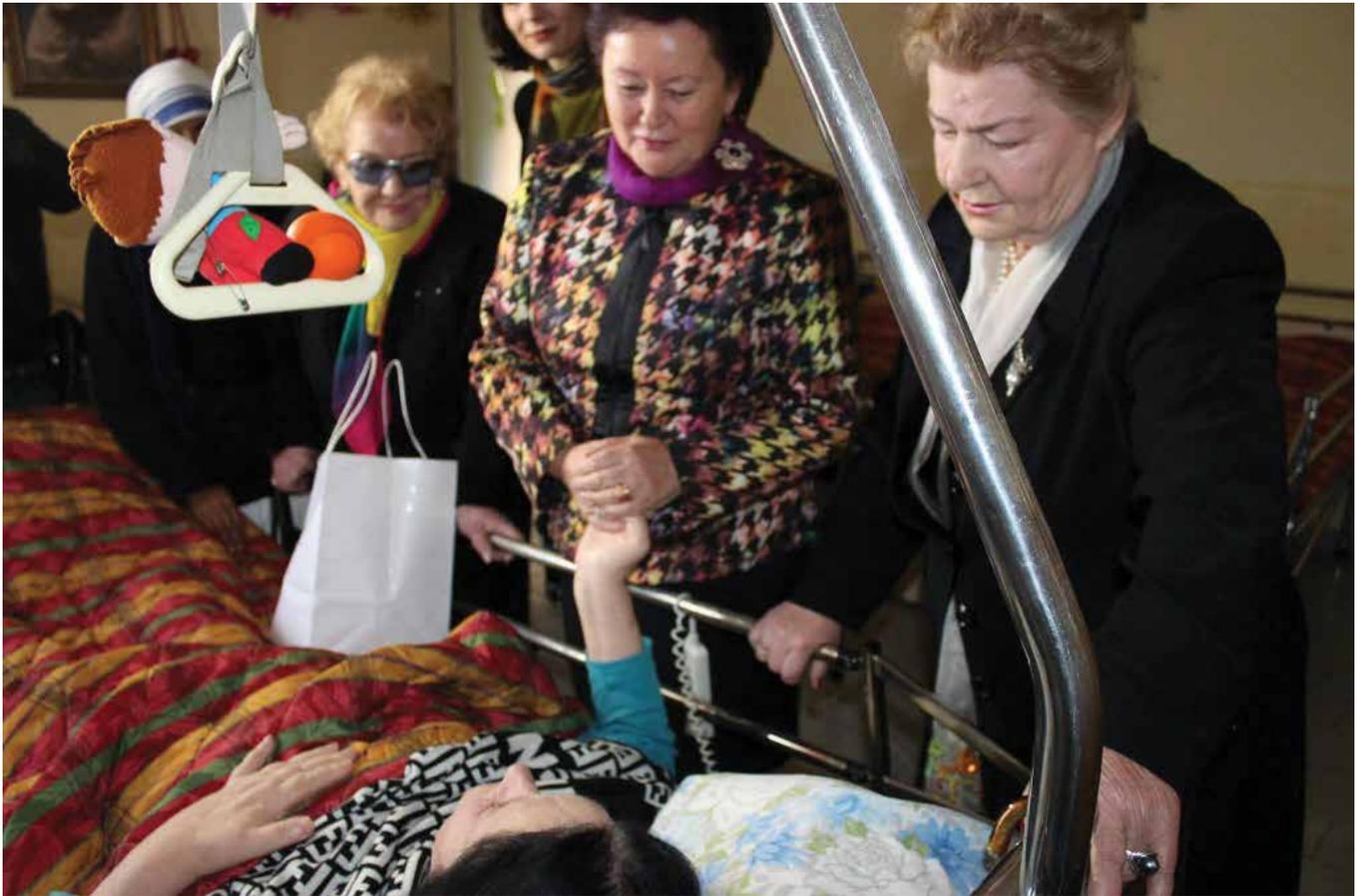


“When the mother leaves the home, you have a sister. Sister become a mother. The name of the Sisters of Mother Teresa here is fully deserved and mother’s love can be felt here, seen and touched. The service, cleanliness, order and care are so visible. I see you are so clean, cheerful, well-dressed and it is sisters’ merit. Thank you sisters for doing this!”

Margarita Xhepa



Two People’s Artist Tinka Kurti and Margarita Xhepa have become part of the New Year greetings of the Albanian Children Foundation reserved for years in row now year, celebrating it at the House of the sisters of Mother Teresa in Tirana. Visiting each and every bed of ill and paralyzed individuals that are being provided with dignity service at the center, artists and Mrs. Berisha conveyed wishes and gifts for each of them becoming then also part of a warm and friendly meeting with all women who are sheltered and are provided with essential services here by devoted missionaries of Mother Teresa. Dr. Liri Berisha said: “Everyone knows that loneliness and pain if passed together, become easier. We have come here today to make the joy the most beautiful and most easy way. I would like to wish you from the bottom of my hearts Happy Holidays. Today to wish you are two honorable and loved ladies, two artists to dear to you and to all the Albanian people, who accepted the invitation with much love and pleasure. I would like to wish you a prosperous year and enjoyable one, I want to thank the sisters of Mother Teresa that with great dedication and care work for you for years and years. Happy holidays again! “



Actress Margarita Xhepa said: “When the mother leaves the home, you have a sister. Sister become a mother. The name of the Sisters of Mother Teresa here is fully deserved and mother’s love can be felt here, seen and touched. The service, cleanliness, order and care are so visible. I see you are so clean, cheerful, well-dressed and it is sisters’ merit. Thank you sisters for doing this! Happy New Year and Merry Christmas! May you always be healthy! “

Actress Tinka Kurti said: “It is a thrilling emotion and pleasure to be here. Thanks to the Foundation and Mrs. Liri Berisha that invited us. Maybe one day we will be here with you. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and May you all be happy with each-other. Happiness and prosperity and may the New Year be sweeter, peaceful and beautiful for all of you. “

Distinguished actors gave the gifts and food that the staff of the Foundation had prepared for 50 people at this center and joined the warm welcome improvised by the residents of this center with songs and dances.





Foundation food aid to flooded families Novoselë

Albanian Children Foundation showed solidarity with the difficulties of families flooded in Novosel Vloora. Dr.Liri Berisha and staff of the Foundation donated to the municipality 200 packages of food for these families and milk packages for families with young children. At the meeting with the Mayor, Dr.Liri Berisha said that this is a modest aid and that the solidarity now needs to be fast, has not only moral but also vital values.

“Today I think there is no need for words. Less than anything there is no need for words. We are here for solidarity with these people who have suffered this disaster where water flooded their life investment. Albanian Children Foundation is here with some modest food aid to about 200 families, daily food and especially for their children.

I would say that this is a very difficult, very painful, especially for children is very disturbing. Solidarity today has not only moral but also vital value, and I think that it has to be fast. It’s really sad to see children starving and children with unchanged diapers during these days that they need medication, as well as elderly people in the same situation, and I think that solidarity today is worthier than ever for these people who have lost everything and need everything. All of us, according to our ability, we can contribute to ease a bit this great pain.”

Novosela mayor Mr. Kanan Shakaj, thanks the Albanian Children Foundation solidarity with the families of the village and assured Ms. Liri Berisha that they will go to the appropriate destination where families with young children will be a priority.





Vatican Shines a Light on Autism

The Vatican held the first ever conference on autism,
“The Person with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Animating Hope”



With an invitation of co-founders of Autism Speaks, Bob and Suzanne Wrigh, the opening of this 3 day important conference was attended by Dr. Liri Berisha, President of Albanian Children Foundation. The conference addressed the genetic field studies and acceptance by the community of about 70 million people affected by autism across the globe. Topics addressed included: brain and behavior, environmental factors, early diagnosis, technology such as I-Pad that can improve their quality of life and

how volunteers can help.

This meeting was the largest medical conference on Autism and gathered 650 experts from 57 countries.

This conference was supported by the Pontifical Council for Health Care.

At the close of the conference the President of the Albanian Children Foundation attended the morning prayers and testimonies that the Holy Father reserved to families of individuals with autism spectrum disorder.



In his speech, the Holy Father emphasized the need to break the isolation and stigma that weighs on people with autism spectrum disorder.

Mass was attended by about 1500 people with autism, families, volunteers and guests.

An important moment of the days of the conference was the opening of an exhibition with the art works of a child with autism, Leland Lee.

He, together with his mother addressed to the scientists, doctors and parents telling about his life journey. Before speaking, Lee painted, such showing an example what the benefits of early diagnosis and intensive therapy are. During the Morning prayers he presented the Holy Father a painting dedicated to HIM, providing the Vatican to recognize the young artists with autism.



New Year Eve celebrations







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

1. SHENDI DENT - OLESIA DUKA

2. SHTYPSHKRONJA KRISTALINA

3. EXTRA MARKET

4. MIELL PRIMA

5. VEXHI DINAJ