

A Child's Garden of Peace 2006: Summary of Activities

By Illene Pevec

Our activities in 2006 relate to two areas:

1. Work in Brazil
2. Distribution of our documentary films to international festivals

Myra Margolin and Illène Pevec spent about 4 weeks working in the Bairro Centro Sul in Santo Ângelo, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil with help from volunteer, Larisa Sunderland.

1. We all lived with families in the community, paying room and board so that those families had us as paying guests. This was done to bring us closer to understanding community needs and provide B&B type incomes to the two host families.

2. We hired four community mothers to teach cooking, crochet, knitting and fabric painting because that is what mothers and youth wanted to learn.

3. We hired three youth to help with the children's afternoon activities of art, photography and English after we were done working at the Zelina school on art and gardening. We used the local Catholic church for adult and child activities and bought them windows for their community room as our rent.

4. We worked with the same Zelina Grade school with whom we have cooperated for six years to integrate gardening into curriculum for the children. This is now a policy for all grade schools in Santo Angelo.

5. Myra directed a beautiful mural project at Zelina school to involve all students in creating an environmental paradise on the wall that separates the school from the street.

6. We identified purses made locally with pop-tops and crochet as a potential product that many community members could engage in making for export as a micro-enterprise to provide fair-trade income to participants.

7. We took a group of youth from the neighborhood and the director of gardening education for the public schools to a one-week permaculture course in Bagé at the Pampas Permaculture Institute. (See www.permacultura.org) In return these youth are to provide help to the Zelina school to maintain and improve the Zelina school garden. The intention of this course was to teach natural home building techniques and permaculture practice to prepare the youth with job skills and experience in these areas.

8. We gave \$500. US to the Secretary of Education to support the implementation of a public park in Bairro Centro Sul, long requested by the community, still pending.

9. We spent two weeks in São Borja volunteering our time to the excellent program run by the nuns at the Centro De Formação Teresa Verzeri. This program serves about 200 children ages four to 14 in half day programs in supplementary education in the arts, technology and the environment. Myra taught the children to make dolls from yarn, an activity that we carried also to the local orphanage.

10. We worked with a university biology student volunteer who went to Bagé with us to start a medicinal plant garden at the convent with the children and to support further gardening efforts by the students in the convent's extensive food gardens.

11. The director of the convent, Sister Sônia, is from Bairro Centro Sul. Her program has been chosen by UNICEF as one of the 30 best programs for children in

Brazil. She arranged for us to meet with all the major programs for children in São Borja, where Illène was able to be a visiting guest instructor to day care programs and recycling and gardening programs to lay the foundation for future collaboration in São Borja.

The Documentaries: 2007

January, 2007 *A Child's Garden of Peace*, about the work with the children in Santo Ângelo, appeared in the Wild and Scenic Film Festival in Nevada City, California and has been chosen to tour with their touring festival sponsored by Patagonia.

April, 2007. The documentaries made by the youth of Bairro Centro Sul under Myra Margolin's direction are now being shown in festivals and Conferences.

Aspen Valley Film Festival: *Bairro Centro Sul* by Fernanda, Ferreira (14) winner of Honorable Mention

Aspen International Film Festival: *Bairro Centro Sul*

Cine Las Americas, Austin, Texas: *Tatiane* by Tatiane Vieira (18)

A Cultura dos Gauchos by Patricia Barbosa (13)

American Geographers Conference in San Francisco

May, 2007 Environmental Design Research Association Conference in Sacramento will show all four films by the youth

We are discovering that the films provide powerful communication tools to share the lives of the young people in Brazil with those who see them.

If you want information about showing the films in your schools or at a conference or festival please contact us: achildsgardenofpeace@gmail.com