

Short history of the Civic Association Villa Vallila



1996 – The Civic Association Villa Vallila (hereafter VV) was found. Its goal was to build up a community house as a home for handicapped people. A community L'Arche of Jean Vanier was a great inspiration for our activities.

1997 – We were searching a building suitable for our plans and for the original project.

1998 – We bought a run-down house (a villa in Art Nouveau style) in Červený Újezd near Votice; a great adventure started. We seek money for reconstruction, write projects for subventions and live out miracles!

1999 – Preparation works for house reconstruction began – cleaning the godforsaken garden, felling old trees, cleaning out the house, repairing the roof.

2000 – A complete house reconstruction began in the beginning of the year (electric wiring, water duct, central heating, sanitary installation, window replacement, building of rooms..).

2001 – Basic reconstruction was finished very quickly with limited budget thanks to the help of volunteers. First two assistants moved to the house in May and the house running commenced – at the beginning as a accommodation for groups from schools and social institutions, which were coming for short-term stays.

2002 – First two inhabitants joined the two assistants – young men 18 and 30 years old. Various culture and salutary events were organized in the house.

2003 – A seed of a community of young people (Villacs) was created in the Villa. They learn to live together. Civic Association VV was registered as a provider of social services (protected living, lightening service). Villa accepted more inhabitants, predominantly young people with health or social problems. A community inspired by those of Jean Vanier was created.

2004 – We launched another phase of house reconstruction thanks to sponsor donations – rebuilding of the attic enabled increase the accommodation capacity, new rooms were equipped with facilities and a multi-purpose space was created as a place for meeting each other and other activities. Seven inhabitants lives in the Villa and five assistants work with them.

2005 – We organized a beneficial New Year concert in Prague. Reconstruction of the attic was finished and put into running. A young director created a movie about people living in the Villa. A small farmstead was found, a vegetable garden was established, a greenhouse was built. We organized lightening stays garden parties, meetings, gatherings.

2006 – Creative project began – assistants with Villacs recorded an interesting video adaptation of a book *Bylo nás pět* (We were five), which is up to now very popular. They prepared also other theatre performances, which were successfully presented during various culture events. The farm produced first lambs and kids. A playing field was built in the Villa's plot. We spent a vacation in Croatia together. The year of changes culminated by information, that two girls had become pregnant.

2007 – two baby-boys were born in the beginning of the year. Both mothers moved to new homes. Some of the inhabitants and assistants moved in, some moved out. The new playing field was officially opened. The movie „We were five“ took part in a contest and show „Mental Power Film Festival“, the protagonist won the first prize as the best actor. Czech TV visited the Villa.

2008 – More people were coming for lightening stays and they well took part in the community of permanent residents. New assistants came and the head of the house changed. A beneficial concert of a philharmonic orchestra of Hradec Králové was organized in Prague in June to support Villa. Already traditional garden parties were enriched by a performance of interesting bands and street performers. Volunteers from an association TAMJDEM came to help us.

2009 – It was a year of changes – new inhabitants, new assistants, new projects. We succeeded to buy a „house below Villa“ and two protected living apartments were built there. Some of the Villa's inhabitants joyfully moved there. We organized a meeting „At the doorstep of the Villa“ in May, many friends and Villa's supporters came and we discussed the future of the association, the future of the Villa. We met people from the association Benediktus from Chotěboř in autumn and gained some new ideas and stimulus and also important contacts to L'Arche of Jean Vanier.

2010 – The main concert of the association this year was to ensure smooth running of the community house, acquire enough money and support the existing community of the Villa's inhabitants.

2011 – We celebrated 10 years of the community life in the Villa on a beneficial concert and on a garden party; everyone, who had participated in the community life, had lived there, had worked there or had been visiting Villa during the last ten years was invited. A coordinator of L'Arche visited Villa for the first time. We expressed our wish to become a community of L'Arche, as we would like to join this movement.

We built a workshop for baking of cookies for dogs in the presbytery.

2012 – New assistants joined the team and the whole community in the Villa. The coordinator of L'Arche came in the spring and fall this year. She met the board members of the association in Prague and we scheduled next steps for incorporation of Villa Vallila into the international movement L'Arche of Jean Vanier. Small group of people from Villa visited community L'Arche in Trosly in France. They spent nice time with other communities from the world and met Jean Vanier. It was wonderful meeting.

A sauna was built in the Villa's garden and preparation works for façade reparation started (building of a scaffold and removing of the old plaster). We started to bake the cookies for dogs in the bakery shop. We still struggled to gain funds for running of the house, for wages of our employees and for building projects and we are glad, that finally, we somehow always so far succeeded.

2013 – The main project for this year was a facade reconstruction – northern and western parts are almost finished. The Villa is still a thriving place, we spent a nice week in the mountains; we learned how to process sheep's wool from our sheep. We organized a garden party at the end of the summer. We gather fruits and vegetables from our garden and we are preparing for a long winter.