

About Polisportiva Aurora

Dear Friends,

best wishes to you, from my colleagues to all public authorities who are here. My name is Alessandro Balzani, nurse of Prato's Mental health Department (Trust) and representative of Polisportiva Aurora. Prato is an Italian city near Florence.

I am here a Platting for the third time in few months thank to contacts I had with the team of Bavarian Red Cross's psychiatric service. Very soon a very strong personal and professional contact was made especially with Mr. Schneider, Mr. Skibbe and Mr. Spatz. Relationships became very strong and I received a welcome very warm as in Italy. A particular greetings to these three.. On behalf of our Sportsgroup's President, Mrs Vanna, I bring greetings from our association and of our 180 members. They are waiting to see you in September in Prato. I extend this greeting to the friends of Pro Sport, Munich, Coasters and Didier Botton and his new sportsteam.

I haven't a lot of time for my speech and I am trying to keep it short.

I am the only member of Polisportiva Aurora because our association participated – last week – at the national sports Festival – organized by the National Association of Sportsgroups for social integration (ANPIS) in Pesaro (a town near Rimini). In this event about 1100 person took part from 9. until 14. June.. It was impossible then for our team to leave again for Germany.

For us is very important to be here. We want to learn from you: your employment opportunities for your clients and from your festival besides comparing our experiences.

Our association and our mental health Trust strategies and mental health community care attempt to insert disantvantaged person again in territorial area where he's living through projects called "life's project" wich is often not included in psychiatric health institutions' programmes

This includes a building a supporting network, improvement of relationship through socialization during freetime, repossession of an identity, (empowerment).

Polisportiva Aurora has 180 members. About 33% are composed of disantvantaged persons besides professionals, voulantaries, citizens, politicians. Etc...Most of them are working. About 60 persons have a sheltered or a paid job, is working in

cooperatives, public offices, firms. Polisportiva - usually - isn't an enterprise; on the contrary, Polisportiva looks for job, creates working network occasions in the city for disadvantaged people. Directly Polisportiva manages a football field and participates in a project of management of two public sport gyms. A group of disadvantaged people are working in the forests and maintain pathways around the town. Soon this group is going to become an enterprise. It self.

Polisportiva – in its sports project (calcio, pallavolo, hiking) and in the organisation of international and national festivals is managing a budget of €1000 (previously ~~thousand~~ thousand). This doesn't come from not public health funds, but from regional authorities, municipal authorities and private donations.

Our trust permits some professional work part of their time for polisportiva. This is the only contribution. We are preparing scientific research to show that our model could be valid in helping/contributing to the improvement of health of disadvantaged persons. For years most of them didn't know acute phases in their illness.

We are member of the Association of Sportsgroups for Social Integration (ANPIS). This national movement has about 60 sportsgroups and 3500 members. In Italy ANPIS is an Association very recognized and respected. It has been very influential on reconsidering the proposed reform a proposal of our law about actual organisation of Mental Health Services. This was about the worse proposal against mental health community care since closing of Italian psychiatric hospitals in 1978.

A few words – to conclude – about our Festival in September in Prato. This year our sports event is something else; besides sport there is place for culture (arts, music and theater). Many Italian and foreigner delegations are participating. Plattling, France, Essex – England, Albania, Finland and Denmark. These participants are active encouraging disadvantaged persons to express themselves emotionally through painting, theatre or music. In some countries this has actually led to employment in the arts, as in theatrical groups from Argeles – France – and Bologna where disadvantaged persons actually share the stage with well known professional actors. They are well paid and enjoying life again.

Q.E.E. (War zu beweisen war)

The best wishes.

Alessandro Balzani