

Maximilian-Kolbe-Werk

Hilfe für die Überlebenden der Konzentrationslager und Ghettos



Help for the survivors of concentration camps and ghettos

Maximilian-Kolbe-Werk is a relief organization for the survivors of concentration camps and ghettos. It supports the former prisoners in Poland and in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe irrespective of their religion, denomination or world view. Altogether about 25,000 survivors are still living there. Maximilian-Kolbe-Werk organizes projects of assistance locally, stays of recreation and encounter in Germany, lectures and interviews with contemporary witnesses in schools, parishes and educational centres. The organization and its work is financed primarily by private donations.

Assistance

Maximilian-Kolbe-Werk supports the survivors of concentration camps and ghettos in Poland and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union in concrete ways. In 2010, for example, the relief organization was able to help almost 1,000 persons in Poland with financial aid, including the disabled children of former prisoners. In the countries of the former Soviet Union over 1,300 survivors of concentration camps and ghettos were supported. Among these, almost 1,100 survivors in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus received help in projects of assistance and encounter. Maximilian-Kolbe-Werk invites its guests to treatment at health resorts in Poland, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Moldova and Ukraine, as many survivors have become too old and feeble to travel to Germany for a recreational stay. With the treatment at health resorts near their homes Maximilian-Kolbe-Werk can bring its offers of help to them.

Encounter

Each year Maximilian-Kolbe-Werk invites more than 230 survivors of concentration camps and ghettos living in Poland and other countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union as guests to Germany. During the two-week stay the survivors can recover from the oftentimes hard everyday life in their home countries. They are taken care of lovingly by volunteers. Since 1978 altogether more than 12,500 survivors of concentration camps and ghettos have accepted the invitation to spend some time in Germany.

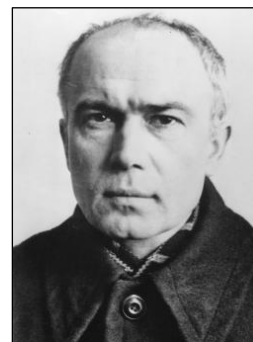
Remembrance

In 2010 alone, 18 projects with contemporary witnesses took place in Germany, among others in the cities of Cologne, Dresden, Leipzig and Mainz. In these projects 55 witnesses, all of them former prisoners, told thousands of pupils and adults about their fate. These encounters help to build bridges between the witnesses of the past and the young people whose task it will be to shape the future.



Saint Maximilian Kolbe

Maximilian-Kolbe-Werk was named for Saint Maximilian Kolbe (1894 to 1941). The Franciscan monk died in the Concentration Camp of Auschwitz in 1941: As a punishment for the flight of one prisoner ten inmates were picked out at random. Maximilian Kolbe offered his own life for that of the father of a family, Franciszek Gajowniczek. Instead of him he went into the hunger cell, where eventually he was killed after two weeks, on August 14, 1941, with a lethal injection of phenol. In 1982 he was canonized. His feast day is August 14. He is the patron saint of journalists and amateur radio operators.



Dates and facts about Maximilian-Kolbe-Werk

Foundation: 1973

Founder and first Director: Alfons Erb (1907 to 1983)

President: Peter Weiß MP (since 2010)

Vice-presidents: Bishop Heinz Josef Algermissen, Dr. Oliver Müller

Director: Wolfgang Gerstner

Total sum of donations since foundation: over 65 million Euro

Volunteers in Germany: 80

Volunteers in Poland: 50

Maximilian-Kolbe-Werk has been awarded the **DZI Seal-of-Approval**

(„Since 1992, the German Central Institute for Social Issues (DZI) awards the DZI Seal-of-Approval to deserving charities which voluntarily submit themselves to an extensive examination by DZI on an annual basis. Among other examination criteria, crucial emphasis is placed on truthful and respectable methods in fund raising as well as verifiable, prudent and statutory deployment of funds.”)

Information for donors

Account for donations: IBAN DE18 4006 0265 0003 0349 00

Bank: Darlehnskasse Münster

BIC/Swift: GENODEM1DKM

Contact information

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