

# NURDOR

## National Association of Parents of Children with Cancer

### Love Heals – NURDOR's Action to Mark the International Day Recognizing Children Suffering from Malignant Illnesses

The central event of marking the International Day of Children with Cancer organized by NURDOR was held on Tuesday, February 15th at all three locations where the children are treated of cancer in Novi Sad, Belgrade, and Niš by the same principle (Belgrade – Delta City, 13h / Novi Sad – Merkator, 13h / Niš – Merkator, 13h).

"In addition to an adequately entertaining program, in which performed singer Aleksandra Radović and the children choir Horislavci, a fund raise was organized for the psycho-social project through the sale of small gingerbread hearts for at least 100 dinars. NURDOR plans to give the collected funds to the all 5 oncology wards (3 clinics in Belgrade, Niš, and Novi Sad) where children from Serbia are treated for cancer.. in order to help parents and children who are suffering from cancer. Through this event held in all three cities, we managed to raise the total amount of 135,381 dinars," announced Žana Korolija, a member of NURDOR.

"The company MSD has already become active in this project with the donation of 6,000 euros, and so has Fund B92, which will lead a fund raise through a media campaign. Through the media capaing we are inviting all interested donors to take active role in this project .



Warm messages for our friends who are being treated for cancer

says Novka Tomić, president of NURDOR.

Prominent public figures including Boda Ninković, Biljana Cincarević, Inspektor Blaža, Bojana Stefanović, Jasmina Mihajlović, Miloš Maksimović, Milica Zarić, Ivana Bojić, Iva Štrlić, Lena Bogdanović, Aleksandra Perović, Oliver Katić in Niš, and others, as well as many citizens has been left their personal messages of support for the children who are being treated for cancer on large hearts, which we will send to the hospitals.

To every child department we dedicated one big paper hart, on which our citizens wrote the support messages.

This project has been initiated in order to emphasize the need for funds and social support to the families of children suffering from cancer (during treatment and after the completion of therapy), as well as through the employment of psychologists on the all pediatric oncology wards, which at the moment is not the case in Serbia.

### A Big Heart Gives, So a Little Heart Can Live! An Action of Solidarity for Children Suffering from Cancer

On behalf of the National Association of Parents of Children with Cancer (NURDOR) we invite you to become involved in the humanitarian effort which we began February 15th on the International Day of Children with Cancer along with the company MSD, which has already donated funds as high as 6,000 euros, and Fund B92, whose donations have helped realize the project for psycho-social aid for families with affected children. The project involves a multidisciplinary approach to treatment, assembling teams of psychologists, social



physiatrists and speech therapists, in every child oncology ward. This standard of healing in pediatric oncology, which we sadly still do not apply, was established by the European Society of Pediatric Oncology (SIOPE). For the realization of this project in the following years, we must accumulate 2,000,000 dinars in funds, and thanks to the company MSD we are almost one third of the way there.

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#### Important Information

- Every day a child is diagnosed with cancer in Serbia
- Every week one child dies from cancer in Serbia
- Over 400 children are cured annually from cancer in Serbia
- Luckily, the percent cured is high, with 60% successful cured
- The most common malignant illness in children is acute leukemia, where the percent cured is the highest, and therapy lasts 105 weeks

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## Two Imagination-Playgrounds Open for Children Who are Treated for Cancer

**The project “Imagination-Playrooms”, which NURDOR launched late last year, so far has been realized by opening two playrooms in oncology wards.**

The pediatric oncology division of the University Children's Hospital in Tirsova, in Belgrade on December 9<sup>th</sup> opened a children's playroom, the first of its kind in the clinic, where children with cancer are treated. A room of 12 square meters was separated by the clinic for this purpose at the request of the National Association of Parents of Children with Cancer (NURDOR) was converted into a playroom.

The opening of the playroom was made possible thanks to the cooperation of NURDOR and the staff at the University's Children's Hospital, and the realization of this project was made possible thanks to the donation of “Austroline”. The conceptual design was donated by architect

Nikola Banković, and the company DexyCO supplied the toys. Friends of the Cultural community Arzinjano and Drago Vojvodić from Slovenia have also joined the action through the editorial board of the Diaspora RTS.

The National Association of Parents of Children with Cancer (NURDOR) on February 8<sup>th</sup> opened its second imagination-playroom at the Department of Oncology II, Institute of Mother and Child, “Dr. Vukan Čupić”, in New Belgrade where he is currently treating twenty (20) children suffering from cancer. Part of the hall, size of 8 square meters, which the clinic separated for this purpose at the request of NURDOR, was converted into a playroom, thanks to the same donor while the action was joined by friends from Ruđer Bošković Elementary School who donated two computers, a plasma TV and a number of games and movies. We

soon expect a third playroom in the children's oncology department in Niš.



How much the playroom means to the kids being treated for cancer in the oncology department of the UDC in Tirsova is best illustrated by the story that after two months of refusing to get out of the hospital beds, little Luka got up for the first time to go to the playroom to play with his friends.

## Training Volunteers

On the occasion of the “Time for a cup of conversation,” NURDOR conducted a one-day training of volunteers.

Forty-three (43) volunteers applied for the training, mostly from the student group “Smile as a gift” with which our association has worked with very well for over a year.

The opening speech on behalf of NURDOR was given by Žana Korolija, herself a volunteer and member of the associations.

During four hours of training, future volunteers were trained by: Prof. Dr. Dragan Janić, Mr. sci Tamara Klikovac psychologist and graduate psychologist Vukašin Čobeljić whom on this occasion we thank warmly. After the lecture, the volunteers completed the NEO PIR- personality test and motivation letter by which our counselors Ružica Madžarević and Jelena Vidić made professional assessments of the type of volunteer work that matches each candidate. Twenty-one candidates have received a recommendation to work with children.

***“Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country”***

***Robert Kennedy***

## Adaptation of Bathrooms in the Oncology Department of the Children's Hospital in Niš

During the last year, NURDOR began cooperation with the company Telekom Serbia, which resulted in the furnishing of children's department of oncology in Niš.

Thanks to the generous donation of 1,000,000 dinars from Telekom, it was made possible to renovate the bathrooms for children and mothers, to equip a kitchen, and to provide necessary medical equipment for the department: infusion

pumps, pulse oximeter, and central connections for oxygen.

Through this joint action of equipping the departments in Niš, we have made a great friend and collaborator of Telekom, ready to assist in improving the conditions of treatment of children suffering from malignant diseases—which is the mission of our Associations.



Thanks to a donation from Telekom, a bathroom was adapted for children who are being treated for cancer in the oncology department of the Children's Hospital in Niš.

## Time for a Cup of Conversation

*Psychosocial support project for parents and their children suffering from cancer*

The National Association of Parents of Children with Cancer sponsored by the Ministry of Health and by Health Insurance launched the January 25<sup>th</sup> project "Time for a cup of conversation."

The aim of the project "Time for a cup of conversation" is that in the next six months, to provide psychosocial support to parents of suffering children, giving them the opportunity through various workshops to get answers to questions that interest them most.

"Time for a cup of conversation" is a project in which the National Association of Parents of Children with Cancer wants to show the need

for psychological support to children and their parents by hiring a psychologist at all pediatric oncology departments in the National Strategy "Serbia against cancer."

Financial support for this project was provided by the Balkan Fund for Local Initiatives BCIF and Johnson & Johnson Company, while students from the group "Smile as a gift" will bond with the kids through a series of creative workshops. Currently our kids enjoy the animated film making workshop run by Danijela Stanković from the associations "Sors."

The project was made possible thanks to the good cooperation between NURDOR and mayors, doctors and medical staff from the Oncology Department of the University Children's Clinic and Institute for Oncology and Radiology of Serbia.



While parents talk with experts, children are being entertained by our trained volunteers in the creative workshops

## Equipping a Parents' House in Novi Sad

The Institute for Health Protection of Children and Youth of Vojvodina in December last year received the rights from the Common Affairs of the Provincial Authorities to use a house as a dormitory for children treated for cancer and their parents. The house can accommodate four families from Novi Sad, and the children are treated at IZZDOV. NURDOR helped equip the house with a donation of 658,030.20 dinars for the supply of bed linen, towels, kitchen dishes, and other



minor things that will give the home in Novi Sad the appearance of a warm home.

***"There is one way for a man to be happy, and that is to live for others. If someone with God's will is healthy, the least he can do is give part of his health to he who is not so lucky!"***

## Anja Vasiljević— Our Best Woman

*Anja Vasiljević from Belgrade in her 16<sup>th</sup> year experienced a benign tumor on the left ovary, but in her 18<sup>th</sup> year was overtaken by malignant cancer of the lymph nodes.*

People often ask me whether I was afraid of death. I guess people think that the sick man struggles with dark foreboding. But I did not. I really did not. Death did not seem to me as a possible outcome to my struggle. I knew that a reward was awaiting me – says Anja Vasiljević (21), the girl in whom doctors found cancer in the lymph nodes when she was 18.

The sudden and unpleasant throbbing of the heart led her to a general practitioner, and later to a cardiologist. But a heart defect, which the doctor first assumed, was not her diagnosis. Ultrasound showed a malignant tumor.

- Thank God the doctors discovered the disease in time because it is insidious; it often does not come with any symptoms. In my case, the tachycardia occurred because the tumor pressed against a heart artery – she says.- From that moment on, everything happened so quickly. They urgently sent me into surgery followed by chemotherapy, while all the symptoms of this disease followed. She was a senior at 15<sup>th</sup> Belgrade High School when she learned of the disease. It is understood that she did not sit behind a desk for long, but she still managed to finish school on time. Not only that, but she also enrolled in college on time. In addition to her duties at the university, Anja is very active in the National Association of Parents of Children with Cancer (NURDOR).- When I was in my last treatment, two young volunteers came to the hospital and through them I got in touch with the secretary of the Association. I wanted to use my experiences to help those who are going through the same thing. Now I lead a project that aims to entertain children in hospitals. It fulfills me.





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*These children are small, poor, but brave, and you be big and ready to help them. Do not forget that their life depends on the maturity of our adults.*



NURDOR, the National Association of Parents of Children with Cancer, [www.nurdor.org.rs](http://www.nurdor.org.rs), is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organization founded by parents of cured or deceased children, the medical staff of oncology departments, and volunteers who recognized the need for systematic and effective support for parents of children with cancer. The National Association began its work in 2004, and it brings together parents and friends of children from all over Serbia. The main objective of the organization is to support families of children with cancer by providing high quality treatment, rehabilitation and socialization of children, infected or healed. NURDOR is a member of the International Confederation of Childhood Cancer Parent Organizations (ICCCPO), [www.icccpo.org](http://www.icccpo.org) and works closely with the International Society of Oncology Pediatrics (SIOP), [www.siop.nl](http://www.siop.nl).

NURDOR's bank account, where you can send your donations at Unicredit Bank, is 170003001071500082.

## The Changed Rules for the Rehabilitation of Children Treated for Cancer

At the initiative of NURDOR, the rules have changed for the rehabilitation of children treated for malignant diseases in Serbia.



**This summer NURDOR, for the first time in Serbia, organized at Ivanjica a rehabilitation camp for children with cancer thanks to donations from Delta Maxi and other donors. So far 48 children accompanied by parents have passed through camp 'Love and Hope'.**

### Enabling the right to rehabilitation for children with cancer.

After many years of NURDOR's commitment and advocacy for a solution to the problem of rehabilitating children with malignant illnesses, HIF officially released information on the changed rules on February 14<sup>th</sup>.

Children with malignant diseases in Serbia are treated at five medical centers. Thanks to good equipment, the availability of modern therapies, as well as outstanding medical expertise, there has been significant progress in the transplantation and treatment of children with cancer in recent years, so that today many children can look forward to a successful recovery.

However, the goal of child oncology is not only a cured patient, but an insured long and good life.

One form of assistance to children with cancer is psychosocial support, which helps them to easily cope with the disease.

Also, children after transplantation, chemotherapy and radiation, are left with an extremely weak immune system which leads to a slower recovery and leaves them vulnerable to more frequent illnesses and infections.

Until 1992, children were entitled to rehabilitation in specialized institutions in order for a quick recovery. Unfortunately, they were alienated from this right since then.

Considering that children's health care is a priority of the work of the Republican Institute, HIF has decided that from 2011, all children after their treatment of cancer will be again entitled to 21 days of rehabilitation in specialized institutions at the expense of HIF.

Children will be able to utilize this right at the Institute for Specialized Rehabilitation in Ivanjica, as well as in other institutions dealing with the rehabilitation of children.