



## FIVE YEARS OF SUCCESSFUL TWIN COOPERATION

A.G.E.O.P. RICERCA ONLUS ( Parents Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology/ Research ) was founded in 1982 by a group of parents with sick children. With the help of the director of the Pediatric Clinic in Bologna, Dr. Guido Paolucci, they searched for ways to help children and their families cope with the long and painful experience from the treatment of malignant diseases. With the same ideas, twenty one years later, in 2003 in Belgrade, NURDOR (the National Association of Parents of chil-



The contract is signed!

dren with cancer) was founded by parents whose children either passed away or were sick, doctors, psychologists, friends and other benefactors.

Already at the first meeting between these two associations, in the ICCCPPO convention, they built the

foundation for future cooperation.

Since 2008, NURDOR and A.G.E.O.P. began their Twin program. The Twin program has yielded positive results for the past 5 years, and both organizations are proud to be apart of it.

The goals of the Twin program are to raise awareness of sick children, to guarantee the rights of every sick child in Italy and Serbia, to provide the best possible medical treatment, and to always have at least one guardian with every child during treatment.

### About children suffering from cancer in Serbia

- Every day a child is diagnosed with cancer in Serbia.
- Every third day a child dies of cancer in Serbia.
- Cancer is the first cause of death among all diseases in childhood and adolescent age.
- 70% of them have a chance to heal!
- Children are treated at the following three centers: Novi Sad, Nis, and three clinics in Belgrade.

***Every twin program has a continuous flow of wealth that arises from the meetings and influences of diverse cultures and experiences***

Only after the establishment of the Twin program, and with the help of A.G.E.O.P., NURDOR began to improve the quality of treatment and lives of many sick children in Serbia.

After meeting Francesca Testoni from A.G.E.O.P., in her

first visit to Serbia and all five hematology and oncology wards, NURDOR received clear and constructive instructions and advice for their short and long term objectives, such as opening houses for parents and handling the rights of young patients and their families.



At the University Children's Hospital, Belgrade, Francesca Testoni sits with Prof. Dr Dragana Janic

## More than 30 years of experience

After observing the situation in Serbia, which was similar to the situation A.G.E.O.P faced twenty years ago, the first step was to make the same unique treatments available to all the clinics in Serbia.

Special attention and care has been put into medical equipment as well as equipping the hematology and oncology wards in Nis, Serbia, where the medical conditions were sub par.

Constant efforts by both organizations have resulted in continuous investments in equipment as well as

the modernization of the five hema-



Prof. Dr. Gordana Kostic  
Children's Internal Medicine Clinics Nis  
Medical equipment provided by NURDOR

tology and oncology departments in Serbia, opening parental houses in

all treatment centers in Belgrade, Novi Sad, and Nis.

Also many psychosocial, rehabilitation, and socialization programs were implemented.

Thanks to the joint efforts of both organizations, a psychologist has been hired at the University Children's Hospital in Belgrade, and NURDOR has recently enriched their staff with a social worker who helps families and their children to achieve their rights.

## Cooperation of the medical staff

After two successful years, the Twin Program expanded and added experts to their staff.

A doctor, biologist, and psychologist from Serbia were sent to Bologna for additional training, and a nurse from Bologna was sent to Nis to work with the medical staff in the hematology and oncology ward.

Because of the connections between the two associations, five Serbian children were able to get medical treatment at the Sant' Orsola Malpighi clinic in Bologna, since they were unable to get the appropriate therapeutic protocol in Serbia.



Jelena Bokun (Institute for Oncology and Radiology of Serbia) and Dr. Arcangelo Prete, Bologna

## Psychosocial support



Workshops with children in hospital



Medical workshop—Dr. Jelena Lazic

One of the first big successes we achieved through joint efforts and perseverance is that the parents can fulfill their rights to be with their child during treatment in all five hematology-oncology departments in Serbia and to have the constant psychosocial support of the trained volunteers which

makes hospital days a little easier for the kids. At the end of 2010, NURDOR began a psychosocial project called "Time for a cup of conversation." The project contains a series of workshops for parents (medical, psychological, nutritional ....) and also have a bunch of creative and fun workshops for children in the hematology and oncology wards.

Boosted by this great accomplishment, A.G.E.O.P. is preparing a similar project for the department of pediatric oncology at the Sant' Orsola-Malpighi clinic in Bologna.

## Publications

With the help of a well known children's writer, we created small literary workshops for the project "Time for a cup of conversation." With a famous Belgrade polio writer, children from departments in Belgrade retell well known Serbian fables. With the help of A.G.E.O.P. we translated and published a bilingual book in Italian and Serbian to create a connection



Book promotion *Emperor's ear*  
Italian Cultural Institute, Belgrade

between the children, cultures and missions of both associations. Besides that work, the two associations also cooperate together in issuing a series of publications for parents, children, professional audiences, and the general public. At the 57th International Book Fair, NURDOR promoted the first book of psycho-oncology in Serbia and in the entire

region, "Every moment is important,"



of the Italian author, psycho-oncologists, Dorella Scarpioni, which NURDOR prepared and issued for domestic public. Currently, we are preparing

three new publications which include, publications dedicated to kids, adolescents, and a new book in the field of psycho-oncology.

## Changing the law

Thanks to the exchanges of experience, NURDOR has successfully began to change the way people view children's cancer in Serbia.

By continuing to educate medical staff, volunteers, and parents, NURDOR is changing the approach taken to

treat child cancer patients. NURDOR



Medical Staff Education

also aims to sensitize the public and persuade competent authorities to provide children with the right to rehabilitation, education, and support for the children's parents during the entire treatment period (this includes changing the allowed time for sick-leave of the parents).

This year, children from NURDOR and A.G.E.O.P. will stay together in the summer international rehabilitation camp-Dynamo Camp in Tuscany.

## Plans for future

Joint plans for the future include the implementation of the "Pediatric radiotherapy" to "Department of Internal Medicine for Children" in Nis, as well as training for 2 doctors - radiologists to acquire knowledge in pediatric radiotherapy. Also, we are planning the reconstruction of Pediatric Hematology Hospital in Nis and expand the capacity of day hospitals. During the five years of cooperation,

the joint action means constantly mobilizing the health, cultural and public institutions as well as the general public in both countries by informing them about the problems of children with cancer and the mission, vision and activities of the two sister organizations.

Thanks to the generous help and support of AGEOP, NURDOR is today example of well organized, transpar-

ent association that achieves remarkable results and promotes volunteerism. On the other hand, enthusiasm and innovation that NURDOR has during all the years of rapid development, for A.G.E.O.P. is the source of an inexhaustible energy and optimism awakening desire in both associations to continue and increase the cooperation in future.



## Nurdor thanks to AGEOP:



- Two sub-offices (Novi Sad and Nis)
- Three playrooms on HO departments
- Four Parents houses
- Five rehabilitation camps
- Active in all five medical centers
- More than 20 publications
- More than 100 activities to sensitize the public opinion
- More than 300 educative workshops for parents
- More than 300 educated volunteers
- More than 500 families are involved in association activities
- More than 5000 friends
- More than 500 000 Euros invested in improving the quality of medical treatment

