

Testimonial: Homes for the Elderly

I was given a placement to spend a year at the “Heinrich-Zschokke-Haus” in Düsseldorf. “Heinrich-Zschokke-Haus” was founded in 1981 to provide cultural and communal institutions for anthroposophy-oriented curative education and social therapy. In his autobiography *Eine Selbstschau*, Heinrich Zschokke says that a person’s spirit can never become ill, rather only his or her “physical apparatus”, or body. The immortal core of our being – the ego – can under the proper conditions be a great artist even when it is forced by fate to play on a poorly tuned instrument.

I worked in the area of social services at the “Heinrich-Zschokke-Haus”. We are occupied with the daily activities of elderly people. These include our morning circle meeting, the afternoon circle, social care giving and communication. Each morning at 9.00 our work begins with a team meeting of all workers, at which each colleague gives a report or informs us of the events of the day before. Afterwards we begin to prepare for the morning circle. This begins at 10.45, with all house residents participating. Every week we have a different theme for the morning circle, for instance, we are discussing water this week, next week we will talk about food and human nutrition, etc. The morning circle lasts about 75 minutes, usually until 12.00. Then at 12.00 lunch begins. At 15.00 it is coffee time, and all the residents sit and enjoy a cup of coffee and some cake together. At 16.00 we all gather for our afternoon circle, at which we present various activities. Here we do different things, such as memory training on Monday, literary circle on Tuesday, exercise and sport on Wednesday (ball games and seated dance), painting on Thursday and on Friday we sing folk songs together. We always celebrate the traditional feasts, such as the Feast of St. John the Baptist, Ascension Day, Easter, Christmas, Carnival, Walpurgis, etc., and there are various other events and performances throughout the year.

– Volunteer from Indonesia