

Exodus World Service Short-Term Volunteer Team

Traiskirchen, Austria



The Oasis Ministry Center



- The Exodus short-term volunteer team served refugees at the “**Oasis**” ministry center in Traiskirchen, Austria. The trip provided a unique perspective on refugee ministry as we interacted with refugees and volunteers located at a different point along the “refugee highway.” We partnered with International Teams, a nondenominational ministry that is helping churches embrace refugees around the world.

Traiskirchen



- Since 1956, the city of Traiskirchen has been the main entry point for refugees coming into Austria. A refugee processing center located in Traiskirchen houses between 1000 and 2000 refugees at a time. Austria does not have a formal refugee resettlement program, but may grant asylum to people fleeing persecution. Refugees remain at the Traiskirchen center while waiting for their asylum application to be processed. In 2004, refugees from the Russian Federation, Serbia/Montenegro, Nigeria, Georgia, Moldavia, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Algeria and Iraq were housed there. The stress level is quite high as the current approval rate is only 24%.

International Teams: Oasis

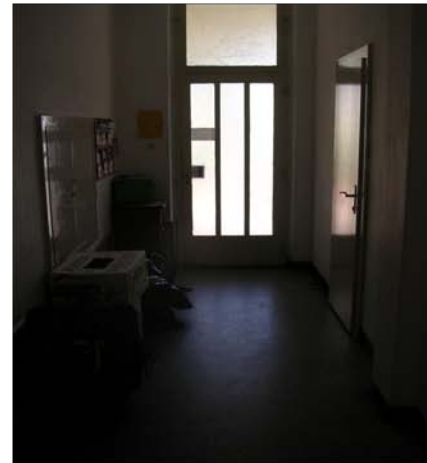


- In 1987 International Teams opened the “Oasis” ministry centre to serve refugees during the difficult weeks and months of uncertainty while they wait for a decision on their application. Located in a former grocery store just outside the refugee processing center, the center has served refugees from over 50 different countries. The Oasis helps refugees in a variety of ways by providing a coffee bar, a computer café, a clothing distribution centre, offering German language classes, hosting small and large group Bible studies, providing Bibles in the languages of the refugees, and offering practical assistance to complete forms, provide transportation to medical appointments, meet emergency needs, etc.

Oasis: main room



Oasis hospitality



Oasis upstairs



Oasis Weekly Program

- **Monday:** Clothing Room
- **Tuesday:** Team Worship, Team Sharing, Team Meeting
- **Wednesday:** Evening Program
- **Thursday:** Altenmarkt Kids Club, Evening Coffee Bar

Clothing Room



- In the Oasis, we have a clothing room which we open once a week. The goal of clothing room is to provide clothing to refugees who are in need and to be generous to all. We do our best to help fill individual needs, whether they be for clothing or relate to other needs or problems. Most of the clothing is donated by Austrians. The schedule for clothing room rotates (one week for only men, then only women and then only children). We also hand out Oasis schedules, tracts and offer a variety on new items such as underwear, house and shower shoes and towels.

Clothing Room (cont.)



- The clothing room is a good place to meet refugees and to subsequently develop relationships, which can lead to further opportunities to minister (e.g. teaching English, showing Jesus films, etc.). To help facilitate this we serve coffee and tea to those waiting for their opportunity to enter the clothing room. We also promote other activities (e.g. special programs, coffee bar, women's meetings, etc.) through invitations passed out during clothing room.

Altenmarkt Kid's Club



- This Kid's Club has been meeting weekly for about ten years in a small refugee camp about 30 minutes from the Oasis. A few of our teammates run this program and travel there weekly. The children are between three and 14 years old. The Club is held in German right now.

Kid's Club and visitation



Wednesday Night



- Wednesday nights are a time at the Oasis where refugees can come to hear a gospel talk about Jesus' love for them and participate in a short time of worship through music. We always try if possible to have translators present so that the refugees can hear the message in their mother tongue. We offer them Bibles in their own languages to look up the Bible passage being spoken about. Wednesday night is also an opportunity for the gospel to be presented in other forms, e.g., music, mime, drama, painting and other creative or culturally sensitive ways of sharing the Christian message. A time of talking and sharing with one another over cups of tea and refreshments follows the message.

Coffee Bar



- The purpose of Coffee Bar is to provide a low-key and welcoming atmosphere for refugees. The doors are opened to an informal time of games, laughter, coffee and tea and relationship building. During this program, refugees have an opportunity to view the Jesus Film in their own language in one of our four video rooms. We have seen God use this film in many wonderful ways in the lives of hundreds of refugees.

Hospitality Ministry

- The hospitality ministry has many facets. These include anything from invitations to meals, invitations for refugees to come and cook their favorite ethnic foods, recreational activities such as movies and games, and even providing temporary housing in emergency situations.
- Our goal in hospitality is to be an example of Christ's love by sharing what we have with the refugees. Our homes can be safe haven where refugees know that they can come for help and support. We attempt to provide an atmosphere where we can get to know refugees better and develop friendships and trust. This leads to opportunities to share Christ with non-Christians and to encourage those who already know Him.







Guest House



Austria



Vienna

