

# Ernst & Young Community Day

**It's Friday. A sunny morning in September. The road is wet from recent rain and there's a rainbow in the sky. I'm in my car driving to work. Soon I'm joined by 120 of my colleagues, all of them volunteers. Today we have a lot of work ahead of us; our presence is eagerly awaited in seven non-profit organizations.**



I arrive at the office to find that 120 bags containing food and supplies for volunteers are waiting to be distributed. Before 8:00, the coordinators also arrive and help me carry out all the items needed for the various locations. After all, we have to be well-prepared and in a good mood so we are physically capable of doing everything that is expected of us. The office is nearly empty, but I encounter a couple of colleagues and encourage them to hurry up so that they arrive at their respective non-profit organizations on time. I sling a camera over my shoulder and start making my rounds to all the locations.

I arrive at OZ Gaudeamus, where we are very warmly welcomed by its director and employees and

informed about the operations of Gaudeamus, the clients there, and their daily life. Before long my colleagues are divided into several groups; they will be helping in the garden and preparing Christmas gifts in creative workshops. Part of the group will take an excursion to the Sloboda zvierat shelter to help the clients of Gaudeamus walk the dogs there, and I go along with them.

At the Sloboda zvierat shelter, the animal-lovers have already been out walking the dogs; both the grateful animals and their walkers are getting worn out on their walks through the woods. (I hope that these animal-lovers will have some energy left for the evening with such a warm-up.) Another group is cleaning the dog paths; they do not mind doing the dirty work at all.

As is the case each year, Horský Park is filled with an infectious

good humor. Our biggest group of volunteers is chopping wood for the winter—it's not every day that men get opportunity like this to test their strength against one another. They work on cultivating the park and maintaining the surroundings of the Horáreň center. This is a truly magical place. In addition to its delightful peace and calm, a lot of animals live here – the Horáreň center has its own small zoo for children. Mrs. Filková from the Horský Park Foundation is thrilled with us; it seems they have never experienced such a bunch before.

What's going on at the Slovak Blind and Partially Sighted Union (ÚNSS)? It's almost lunchtime and a group of volunteers is preparing a campaign for the Biela pastelka (White Crayon) campaign. They have a unique opportunity to look behind the scenes at the process of organizing one of the biggest collection efforts in Slovakia: they learn about its purpose, how it is carried out, and how the funds will be used. During the lunch break, the ÚNSS employees have also prepared an educational program for the volunteers. Without using their sight, the volunteers can see for themselves how it feels to get around with a guide dog or a white cane and to match colors of clothing using special skills.

I arrive at the Sibírská Elementary school (ZŠ Sibírská) and I can hear the singing and chatter of children from a distance. Are they preparing a program for us? We

cleaned their beautiful garden and painted the school's façade with fairy-tale motifs and so we received the cheerful children's songs and dancing as a reward. Together we all welcome the beginning of a new school year. Who would not like to be going to school as beautiful as Sibírská, filled with pictures?



Today is beautiful and sunny and so the work has passed quickly. Next, I am back in the office preparing a photo presentation for the evening. All the employees are meeting in the open air to celebrate the arrival of a new business season and say an informal good-bye to the summer. As the twilight settles slowly over the surrounding hills, everyone is happy to see photos of the day's experiences. Stan, the Country Managing Partner, tired from chopping wood at Horský Park, thanks everyone and tells us how proud he is of each participant. Is it really possible to do so much useful work in just a few hours and have so much fun?

Our Community Day is not about expending energy and physical strength. It is about plenty of work, good humor and the help provided to the various non-profit organizations, their employees





and clients. Our work allows them to continue on with their selfless work. Our work produces immediately visible results. It fulfills our desire to help and gives us the chance to do something good for others.

Ernst & Young organizes this Community Day every year in September as the opening of its business season. Last year's Community Day on September 9, 2011, marked the 4th year of the event and our employees volunteered to work for the following non-profit organizations: OZ Gaudeamus, Kaspian, Nadácia Horský park, Sloboda zvierat, Združenie sclerosis multiplex Nádej, Únia nevidiacich a slabozrakých Slovenska, ZŠ and MŠ Sibírska.

The following list contains interesting statistics from Community Day:

- In all, almost 120 volunteers took part in the event and they provided more than 500 hours of work.
- Volunteers chopped more than 10 cubic meters of wood for the winter.
- One school garden was cleared and one large-capacity container was filled.
- Volunteers extended a wall painted with children's motifs by 10 meters and a fence was painted and extended by a further 70 meters.
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- 170 bags were prepared for the Biela Pastelka (White Crayon) collection
- 74 candles made
- 49 pieces of fabric were dyed
- 237 earrings and pendants were made
- 1 garden was tidied up for the organization's clients
- Volunteers painted the entrance to the center for children and youth in Petržalka.
- 7 dog-kennels and the roof of a puppy kennel were painted,



4 dog paths were cleaned, and many dogs from the shelter were walked.



*Zuzana Marhefková*  
organizer of  
Ernst & Young  
Community Day



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