

Press release

Educational partnership extended: Wesel elementary school children will continue to benefit from the sponsorship project even after its tenth year

- "Educational Coaching" extended for another three years
- 62 children have already benefited from individual support
- Generational change for mentors started

Wesel, February 28, 2023 – The "Education Coaching" project is starting its anniversary year with new momentum. With the start of the initiative's tenth year, the partners have decided on an extension. Ulrike Westkamp, mayor of the city of Wesel, Martin Babilas, CEO of ALTANA AG, Astrid Wahl-Weber, head of Wesel's (GGS) Innenstadt community elementary school, and Astrid Vogell, deputy director of the Klausenhof Academy, signed an agreement on Tuesday to continue the "Educational Coaching" project through 2025. As a result, Wesel elementary school students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds will benefit from individual support from volunteer mentors for at least three more years.

ALTANA finances a socio-educational expert from the Klausenhof Academy, who recruits and supports mentors at GGS Innenstadt elementary school and coordinates their voluntary work. "We are active worldwide, but we have special ties to our hometown of Wesel. Together we want to support disadvantaged children and thus make a contribution to equal opportunity," says Martin Babilas, CEO of ALTANA AG. "We would like to express our sincere thanks for the commitment of everyone involved, especially the volunteer mentors, and wish the project continued success going forward."

The focus of the project is on promoting the personal development of elementary school children from second grade onward. The decisive success factor is undivided attention for the child. Project manager Hildegard Derksen from the Klausenhof Academy has found that children and volunteers alike enjoy the project: "We have observed that in the course of the mentoring, the children gain more and more self-confidence and self-esteem and like the exchange. And the children's smiles are extra motivation for the mentors."

Successful educational partnership

The project is currently undergoing a generational change. Five new mentors recently joined the initiative. At the same time, five long-time volunteers have left. Some of the current 13 female mentors and 2 male mentors are now taking care of two children. Since the project began, 62 kinds have benefited from the intensive support provided by their mentors. According to Astrid Wahl-Weber, head of GGS Innenstadt, the demand has continued to grow in recent years: "The project has become an important part of everyday school life. Thanks to the good cooperation, we've been able to help many elementary school children so far. However, we've also observed that due to the restrictions resulting from the coronavirus pandemic

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and the current increased cost of living, the need continues to grow.” The commitment of the volunteer mentors is crucial for providing even more children with equal opportunity.

Mayor Ulrike Westkamp, who initiated the successful model, said: “The project is a definite role model in the city of Wesel. I am very happy about the voluntary commitment of the people, some of whom have been involved in the project for many years, to create perspectives for elementary school children. Anyone who enjoys supporting young people is very welcome.” The mentors not only receive training, qualification measures, and further training, but also meet regularly to talk to one another about their experiences.

Project coordinator Hildegard Derksen is happy to answer any questions people interested in becoming mentors have by phone: (0176) 15847340 or by e-mail: derksen@akademie-klausenhof.de.

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