

Arrupe center's
newspaper-magazine

VOICE WITHOUT BORDERS



Issue 1

January '18

Composing-Editing: Giorgos M.

Editorial

Dear readers, you are holding the first issue of our newspaper. We are happy to start this new venture! It is a collective contribution from all the people and collaborators of «Pedro Arrupe» Youth Center, which is supported by the Jesuit Refugee Service in Greece. Our goal is to get to know each other better. Through these pages, you will have the opportunity to learn about our work and our activities, to read our points of view and listen to the children's own voices talking about their concerns and worries, their dreams and facts from their daily routine that they would like to share with you. This issue is dedicated to a delicate subject that is being addressed quite a bit today: racism and bullying at school. The biggest part of our newspaper covers experiences and views of our children on this matter, including their phobias. In the issues that will follow, other interesting columns will be added, covering a range of other topics such as theater, cooking, music, interviews etc. We hope to fill your free time pleasantly and constructively and that you will welcome our new endeavor.

Giorgos M.

For more information, visit our Facebook page "**Pedro Arrupe**" (<https://www.facebook.com/pedro.arrupe.14>)



Educational Staff of Arrupe center (from left to right: Miss Argyro (director), F. Petros Hong, Miss Salomi, Miss Maria, Mr. Giorgos)

Educational staff of Arrupe center (from left to right: Miss Louiza, Miss Aggeliki)



The beginning

Six years ago, on my evening walk, I was strolling around on Michael Voda Street, in Acharnon, near Agios Panteleimonas, Victoria Square, and Pedion tou Areos park. In every corner I saw kids and adolescents playing late at night. I often stood from a short distance and watched them, and I could hear what they were saying to each other: they usually opened up to their friends and talked about difficulties they faced at school, and also about the fact that their parents did not know the difficulties they were going through, as they were working all day to make ends meet. While listening to these children, I had the feeling that they were very lonely and lost. So I started thinking about what could be done for these children, so that they did not feel alone and lost anymore. Then, an idea stroke me: what these kids needed was a place where they could feel confident that they could truly rely on their elder caregivers, a place where they would feel cared for being around people standing by their side, and a place where they could voice all their concerns without feeling ashamed or criticized. This is how "Pedro Arrupe" Youth Center started its journey, amidst a striking crisis of moral and social values. And, in a moment of madness, we created and offered to children of our neighborhood a place where they would belong. I do not forget all the volunteers and collaborators, the previous ones that have stopped offering their services, and new ones that continue to help us, who made our Youth Center come true. I thank them from the bottom of my heart and pray for them.

F. Petros Hong, founder of Arrupe youth center

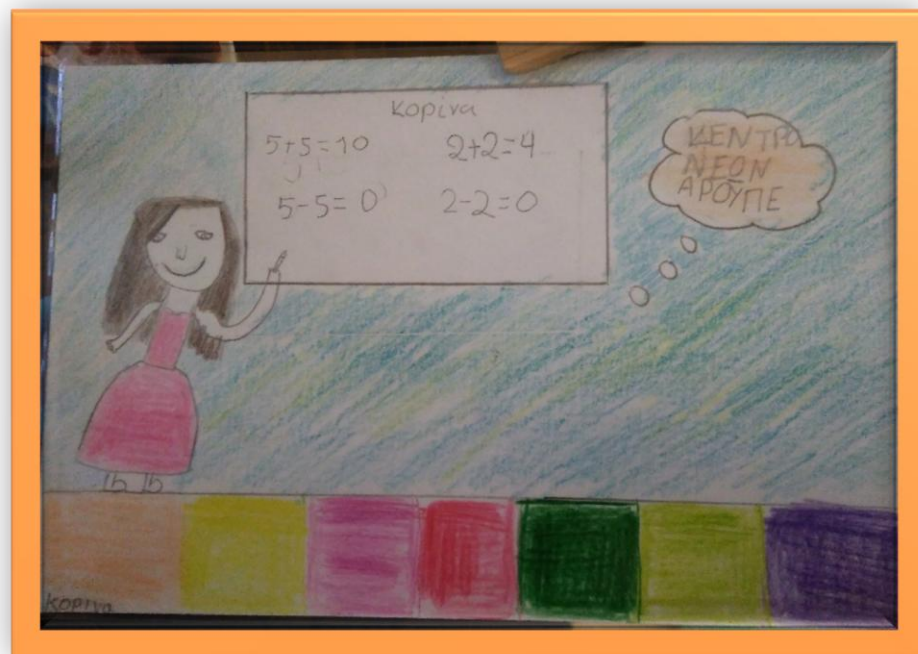


Arrupe center through children's eyes

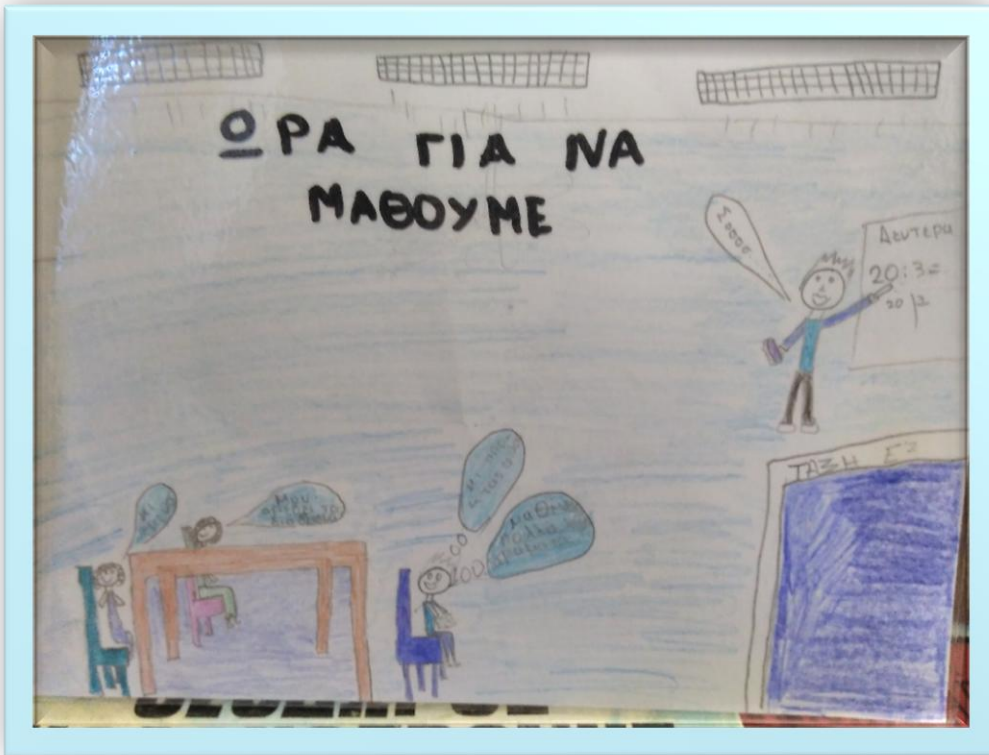
Before going into the main topic of this issue, it would be interesting to see what "Pedro Arrupe" Youth Center means to our children. When we asked them summarize in a word what they think about the place where they spend a big part of their days, they preferred to use the power of images and draw for us what words can't describe. Below are some drawings of primary school children.



class and activities



math time



time to learn...



"Pedro Arrupe" building

Racism is right beside with us

In recent years, more and more children of all ages fall victims to racism. I personally have not experienced anything similar, thank God! But I know a child that has often fell victim to racism. Other children mock him because of his different color and religion, and laugh at the way he speaks Greek. It's very unpleasant. I can only imagine the severity of the problem this child has to face both at school and in his own home. My opinion? He is very scared and dreads the idea that other children will hurt him.

Isabella, high school student



High school student drawing

Diversity and stigmatization

Every day, we hear racist comments and witness racism incidents that multiply alarmingly. That's why we have all experienced similar events. I wouldn't say that my experience is extremely sad, although to me, it was hurtful.

It all started in the elementary school, when a child kicked me because I had made my hair a big ponytail. This ponytail was probably an unimportant reason for other children to call me "onion". I have no idea why they thought this way. All of my classmates called me so, and all I could feel was shame and sorrow. I was sad and angry at my classmates. This nickname "hunts" me. Even today, just hearing this word makes me feel uncomfortable.

Sadly, racism permeates our daily lives and I think it will be alive for a very long time yet.

A high school student



Primary school student drawing "don't let the others using violence..."

I WILL BE MYSELF, NOT THEM...

Today, for the first time, I decided to share my experience with racism. My name is Rima, I am 14 years old and I come from Syria, I am a Muslim and I wear a scarf. I was born in Greece. At first, I went to an Arabic school, but in the sixth grade I switched and enrolled to a Greek school.

From the first day in my Greek school, everyone looked at me with a strange look, as if they had an enemy before them. Every day they asked me why I was wearing a scarf and they tried to make me take it off my head. I felt like I was coming from another planet. This lasted for 9 months. Then, I went to high school and I thought everything would change,



Primary school student drawing "don't let the others beat you"

but I was so wrong: everyone was mocking and insulting me because of my appearance, my religion and the way I dressed. All my schoolmates laugh at me! Too many times, I've been contemplating dropping off school and doing nothing, but then I think about my future. It is very difficult to communicate with this kind of people. There are times when I feel like I'm alone, and no one wants to befriend me. This attitude hurts me. Why do they mock me? Why they don't want me? Because I am a foreigner, I come from another country, I have a different religion, I wear a scarf? Does all that make them laugh at me? But that hurts me! Every day, I sit in my room and cry when I think of the reasons that make them hate me so much.

Finally, I would like to say that no one wants to be insulted or mocked for any reason. Everyone has emotions. I'm proud of who I am and I will not change for anyone.

I will be myself, not them...

An experience of Rima,
A high school student

An anonymous confession....

Personally, I have experienced racism about my origin and color, but also about my attire and appearance. The first day I went to my new school, all the children looked down on me indiscreetly and with disregard, as if they had never seen a person with my facial features. I would pass by them, and some of them would beckon to their friends, saying I stunk. Others would move away from me and others would whisper: "look, the black one". When this happened, I got stressed out and felt sick to my stomach. Intense sorrow and loneliness filled my heart. I immediately thought that this year would be truly difficult....

A high school student



Primary school student: "Don't be afraid, speak up! Everyone has this right"

Xenophobia in Europe

Over the past twenty years, most European countries have received a multitude of immigrants. This phenomenon is often accompanied by xenophobia and racism, which seem to have increased in Europe because of peoples' selfish and individual tendencies.

As xenophobia incidents rise in other European countries, so they do in Greek society. It is a fact that Greece has welcomed lots of immigrants in recent years, but it is not a multicultural country, as there still is a relative homogeneity.

Of course, there is an explanation for the rise of xenophobia and intolerance in Greece. One of the main causes of these phenomena is the lack of a relative education in a large part of the population. Another cause is a generally mediocre intellectual level of people. Several forms of racism are due to economic interests. Also, competitive tendencies in people's relationships often lead to jealousy and hatred. Other significant causes of racism are complexes of superiority and inferiority. Finally, the lack of respect among people, leads to similar unpleasant results.

Despite the intensity of xenophobic incidents in our days, there are some ways to deal with this negative situation. Older people must instill in youth the principles of humanism. Humanitarian education contributes to the promotion of cooperation among people regardless of color, gender, origin and occupation. A fairer, non-discriminatory social policy that would provide equal opportunities for all, would be beneficial. Finally, it is always very useful for people who experience intense racism to have access to the necessary material and moral assistance, so that they can meet their needs and feel useful and functional members of society.

Consequently, nowadays efforts for a more just and civilized world must be continuous. Everyone has to work for the achievement of this goal. In this way, we hope that peace and cooperation between peoples can be consolidated.

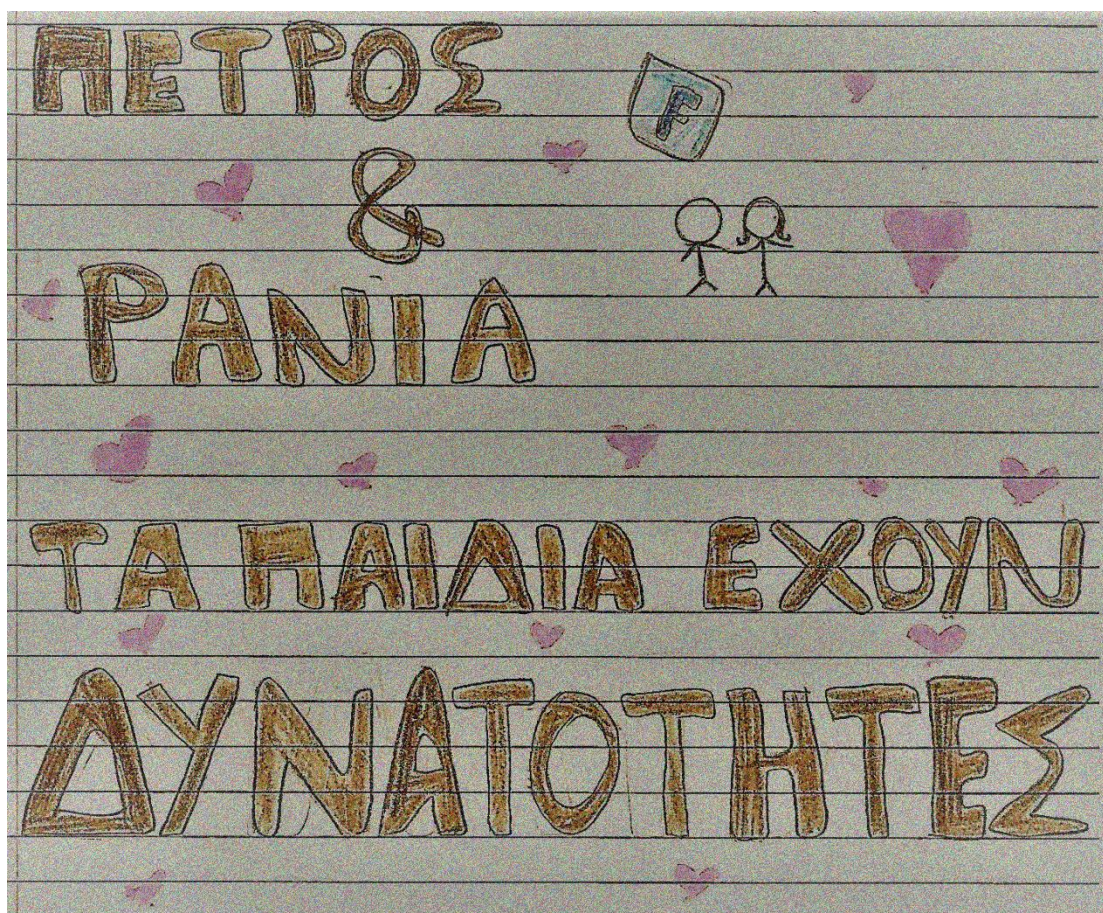
Yiona, High school student

Peter & Rania - book

It is one of my favorite books. This book talks about two children, Peter and Rania. They are online friends, they met on Facebook. A lot of strange events are happening at Peter's school, creating a mysterious atmosphere. Petros and Rania try to solve this mystery, and do so with great success, although they don't see each other.

This book shows the potential that us, children, have, and that if we work together, we can change many situations for the better in our world.

Rima, high school student



Children have capabilities

Primary school student's drawings



...and they lived happily ever after!



10-31-17

Mohamed

Ronaldo... goooooo!!!!

Limerick

Ήταν ένα αγόρι από την Αυστρία
και μάθαινε τα μαθήματα παταγαλία
και έμαθε και τα πέντε
και πήγε στο παφα πέντε
Το ομορφο αγόρι από την Αυστρία

Ήταν ένας κύριος από την Ιταλία
που έπρωχε τις τούτσες μια μία
τις έπρωχε και τις μετρούσε
και πάντα μεθούσε

Ο χαζος κύριος από την Ιταλία



Primary school student's poem-drawing

- ❖ In November, a children's theatrical play titled: "Fotoula that lights up and gives away her gifts", took place in our premises. "Pedro Arrupe"'s children were asked to write down their impressions of this play. But since one image is worth a thousand words, they decided to draw something that impressed them, instead.

