



ZAPORIZKA OBLAST LIVING LIBRARIES

23 October 2010

"Living Library" Training Seminar and Library Event
Zaporizhzhya Institute of Economics and Information Technologies (ZIEIT)
Zaproizhzhya, Zaporizka Oblast
Larry Raffety PCV, Group 35, TEFL larry@raffety.net

Comment About Peace Corps Volunteers and Participants in the Living Library

Peace Corps Volunteers attending this training were enthused about conducting many different kinds of Living Libraries throughout Ukraine. Among the volunteers were primary and secondary school teachers, librarians, and others working in youth and community development organizations. They asked about holding libraries for younger children to influence how they viewed different people; about holding them to help young people understand stories told by survivors of past wars; about using them to introduce adults to people living with HIV/AIDS, or to meet neighbors of different ethnic minorities, or to explore and understand parts of their own special heritage.

The Peace Corps Volunteers also participated as books in the Living Library, and were able to see first-hand how these events influence students' attitudes towards others.

Two thirds of the participants at this living library had not been to such an event before, and many of them were from outside ZIEIT. Word about Living Libraries continues to spread throughout Zaproizhzhya, and to attract more and more people interested in meeting others different from themselves.

Comment About Two Years' Living in Zaporizhzhya

What an experience this has been! Coming from a tiny town in the Rocky Mountains of Montana to this important industrial city of Ukraine is a tremendous change of circumstances. This is one reason why Americans like me join the Peace Corps - to break away from what they know and experience something very different.

I've become accustomed to everyday life here, comfortable as a teacher in this high-caliber institute, and very close friends with many colleagues, students and neighbors. I've explored much of Zaporizhzhya and now know my own favorite places.

Hopefully, through my teaching and the Living Libraries, I've helped students realize that differences between people are something to be valued, as well as to understand that all of us have very much in common.