



ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

HANDICAMP 2003 Norway

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HANDICAMP NORWAY 2003

For a number of years the Norwegian Rotarians have arranged an international camp for youth with physical disabilities. The guests are ranging from 18 to 28 years of age. The usual campsite is a Red Cross facility at Haraldvangen just north of Oslo. This year we will, however, try a new concept and are about to arrange Handicamp 2003 at Svanvik Folkehøgskole outside Kirkenes. Svanvik lies in the arctic part of Norway, in the border area between three nations in the Barents region; Finland, Norway and Russia.

The camp is ment to be a meeting between youth from all over the world. The idea is to participate in building understanding and tolerance between people from different cultures and physical abilities, by getting to know each other and building friendships across borders. The camp motto is "*Break barriers*". We mean to help youth with physical disabilities to overcome personal barriers that are inhibiting them from exploiting their full potential. We also hope that getting to know people from different countries and cultures will increase international understanding, and thus break mental barriers preventing world peace and co-operation. We find this idea to be in the true spirit of Rotary - *to work for international understanding and peace*.

In the European Year of People with Disabilities we will also focus on integration and equal opportunities. It is important that society regards disabled as normal persons with the same demand for integrity and respect, and the same right to access as anybody else. For this reason, the focus on this camp is a learning experience.

Another key theme for the camp is international co-operation, with special attention for the special co-operation between countries in the Barents region. The camp aims to build will and ability to see and act across borders and cultural barriers.

The camp is open for physically disabled (handicapped) youth and their helping partners from all over the world, but we would like to focus on the Barents region. We also find the county of Sør-Varanger to be a good place for such a venture, having a society with several cultural elements. The county contains East- and North-lappish elements, together with Norwegian, and strong influence from the neighbouring countries, and from the Russian and Finnish parts of the population. This mix contributes to an interesting melting pot of cultures.

Kirkenes, february 15th 2002

Gunnar Reinholdtsen
Administrator Handicamp Norway 2003

Find additional information on: www.rotary.no/handicamp2003 and in enclosed brochures