

benvenuto

THE MONTHLY JOURNAL FOR ENGLISH SPEAKING WOMEN OF MILAN | DECEMBER 2020



Buon Natale!

MILAN COL COEUR IN MAN

Silvia Cossa

“*Milan col coeur in man*”, is an ancient saying which means “Milan openhearted”. It calls back the generosity of the Milanese people. My roots are in Milan, I love Milan and I am very proud of the essence of Milanese people whose distinctive features are productivity, sobriety and generosity. Out of this approach, it’s observable how newcomers appreciate this aspect, which is quite far from the more recent image of Milan as the Capital of glamour and “aperitivi”.



Silvia Cossa, Community Services Director

Milanese people are always ready to help. Last “census” accounted for 6.670 active associations in Milan and approximately 15% of the total population is active as volunteers - these numbers are constantly growing. Milanese people have an amazing ability to identify needs and try to offer help and solutions. The two Charities that Benvenuto Club supports – Le Vele and Portofranco - are outstanding examples and we have to be proud to help them.

As we know, COVID-19 has a dramatic impact on the organizations’ ability to raise funds, where the main source of funds is through charity events, which are now shutoff. As you all know, we have launched the “Stronger Together” Campaign. We will miss the magic atmosphere of our Christmas Bazaar which, thanks to Sahar’s big efforts, was also an occasion to strengthen friendships and the awareness of working together towards an important goal.

As Community Service Director I would like to ask for your help: any contribution in any amount is critically important and both Portofranco and Le Vele are carrying out work of high social value in our city.

Lastly, based on my experience as a volunteer in

other organizations, I strongly recommend to approach our Charities and offer your help. I can assure that your life will be enriched with new relationships, different perspectives and the satisfaction of being part of a project.

If you want to know more about Le Vele and Portof-



Benvenuto members helping at Le Vele events. On left in both pictures, Benvenuto liaison for Le Vele, Mina Brosio

ranco please contact me or our liaisons who are respectively Mina Brosio and Sabine Ehlert.

Both Le Vele and Portofranco are quite well known to our Club members, but I think it is important to introduce them to our Newcomers.

Le Vele has been operating for 30 years in Pioltello (near Segrate). Its mission is to support families living in that area who are suffering from disadvantage issues, such as social problems or the presence of a member with a disability. In its fascinating “cascina” (a sort of farmhouse), Le Vele hosts kids from primary to secondary schools, organizing after school activities and also providing professional and caring competence focusing on educational and psychological support. Le Vele operators work in coordination with local social services and with families which are always involved in the process. Le Vele also hosts young people with disabilities offering to them the opportunity to express their potential through socialization and integration, possibly gaining autonomy. For this purpose, they have developed activities such as a bike repair shop, bakery and pastry labora-



Le Vele’s cascina (farmhouse)



Benvenuto member Laurence Bridges with a young student at Portofranco

tory where they can teach a profession. Presently, Le Vele supports approximately 85 kids from disadvantaged families and 15 young people with disabilities.

Mina Brosio and her husband are actively involved in the association. I like to report Mina's enthusiastic words: "This project is for me the most important and beautiful and I've been working for 12 years".

Le Vele association has always been present in Benvenuto's Bazaars with their handicrafts and bakery products, while some Benvenuto members have helped in their bazaars, as shown in the pictures. Le Vele welcomes the help of new volunteers, in particular for teaching activities and for cooking.

The **Portofranco** venture began in 2000 in Milan, with the scope of limiting the social problem of school dropout through the free support of weaker students. Being engaged in helping students in their studies and the daily contacts with them, very soon Portofranco took on the shape of a true and a proper community. It became a social and community support for many students. Today Portofranco, with its 118 teachers and 385 university students, supports more than 1.700 students.

This is what students say: "For me Portofranco has become a place where I can be with my friends, peo-

Benvenuto's Daniela Cardinali helping with school work at Portofino



ple I met in the classrooms, not only young people of my age, but also adults ...", "[Portofranco] has become my second home, the place that is changing me... in many cases it helps me to overcome obstacles and difficulties."

And these are the words of one of the Benvenuto members who is a volunteer: "...it's not only about teaching but also about giving these kids the feeling that they matter... And when at the end of the lesson some of them say *Grazie Prof...* I really feel 'promoted' and rewarded".



Benvenuto liaison for Portofranco, Sabine Ehlert

During the Covid-19 emergency, as all the Italian schools, Portofranco has made a great effort to improve its technical instruments and grant its service with face-to-face or online educational activities. In this situation that is characterized by an economic emergency due to Covid-19, the risk of underestimating the educational emergency is very common: a serious problem for young people.

YOUR ESSELUNGA VOUCHERS COUNT TOO!

At the end of October we asked our members and friends to collect Esselunga school vouchers to help our charity Portofranco in this difficult Covid time.

Our goal was 800 vouchers equal to a Galaxy tablet to enable Portofranco to go on teaching online and to keep the contact between volunteers and students at home.

Benvenuto members are always great in organizing and networking for our charities. So our result until the end of November is 1281 vouchers!!! Thank you sooo much that also this year we could count on your fantastic support!!!!

But it's not finished yet! You are still in time to send me a photo of your vouchers (the barcode) until the 15th of December (ehlertsabine1@tiscali.it or by WhatsApp 3385315819).

Thanks, Sabine

