

## Surpassing all expectations: Lithuanian school “New Generation” opens in Milwaukee.



On Sept. 25, 2010 the first Lithuanian school in Wisconsin opened its doors in Milwaukee. A large crowd of Lithuanians interested in Lithuanian language, culture and history met at the school. For this year, the school has registered 12 children and 9 adults, all wanting to study Lithuanian language, literature, music, song, and dance.

The school's opening ceremony started with the Lithuanian anthem. After that, one of the founding organizers, Jolanta Juozaityte, joyfully greeted all on the occasion of the school's inaugural, and noted that the school's future, growth and welfare depend on everyone – teachers, students and parents. For Jolanta, it is delightful to see that the school is open and a lot of effort and work has already been put in. But much work is still ahead, which will be accomplished by working actively together. Most important – children and adults should have the proper opportunity to learn Lithuanian language.

On this first day, while the children drew and played games prepared by Dalia Sirvinskiene and Simona Sirvinskaite, their parents, teachers and other participants discussed the school's objectives, the educational program and methods. Everyone was surprised that there is a rather large size group of Lithuanians in Milwaukee, actively seeking to preserve Lithuanian heritage. Parents said that their long-growing idea to have a Lithuanian school was finally realized thanks to the initiative and activities of the members of the Lithuanian community. After the ceremony Kristina Puotkalyte-Gurgel took the participants on a tour of the building.

The school especially gives thanks to St. Luke's Lutheran church and school, which generously gave permission to use their facilities. Teacher Kristina Puotkalyte-Gurgel exerted great efforts to bring this idea to life.

Nijole Semenaite Etwiler – director of Zaibas Lithuanian Dancers of Madison and active member of Madison Vilnius Sister Cities, Inc.- came from Baraboo to greet everyone on this occasion. The school thanks MVSC which greatly contributed to the school's establishment. In her turn, Indre Gaskaite-Palmiter, MVSC secretary, came to the inaugural and is joining in the organizational activities.



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erican Jo Burns is helping the Lithuanian school, taking on the responsibility for its bookkeeping. Jo B. is happy to be able to join in and be part of the school, and that Jolanta's a few years' old idea is finally implemented.

Jolanta J. also thanks Violeta Rutkauskiene, director of Gediminas Lithuanian School (Mundelein, IL), for her help and support. Violeta R. and Jolanta J. have exchanged views that the Lithuanian community of Northern Illinois and Madison Vilnius Sister Cities would establish cooperative ties.

The school is proud of their teachers, full of energy and rich in ideas:

Kristina Puotkalyte-Gurgel – PhD in Spanish language and literature, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Kristina and her husband and child have lived in America since 1993. At the school, she will be one of the teachers of reading and language.

Dalia Sirvinskiene - graduated from Klaipeda Pedagogic University in 1996, majoring in pre-school and elementary education. That same year she began working at the pre-school " Ziogelis" . Dalia worked with 3-7 year olds. In the host country, she started working with little children in September 2005, and has now worked for 5 years with infants from 6 months to 1 year old. In our Saturday school, she will teach Lithuanian language, reading and writing. Dalia's plans are to create a performance and dance group.

Dalia's daughter, Simona Sirvinskaite, will mind and teach children from six months to 3 years. She is now a Junior at Port Washington High School and has already been working with children for five years. Simona came from Lithuania five years ago, and returns there every summer so as to never forget her Lithuanian language or culture.



Sonata Cepkauskiene graduated from the Klaipeda University Faculty of Pedagogy, in 1999, majoring in e-school and elementary education. Sonata worked for 10 ½ years in a pre-school in Lithuania, and on arriving in the U.S. worked for 5 ½ years in American pre-schools. Sonata will teach Lithuanian language and writing.

Fausta Urboniene and her daughter Vytene Urbonaite will teach children singing and dancing. Fausta has worked for many years as director of children's choirs, has staged three musicals based on famous fairy tales like Cinderella and Snow Queen. Her repertoire includes many beautiful liturgical children's and youth hymns. Besides that Fausta will teach songs and games to groups of all ages. On her part, Vytene plans to teach children folk, Latin, and ballroom dancing, as well as history and geography .

It is not too late to register and attend the school. The school also needs additional teachers.

For detailed information please contact Nauja Karta (New Generation) Lithuanian School director:

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