

Terezin, Waldorf School initiative

Svobodná základní škola, o.p.s

In Terezin, site of the former Jewish Ghetto, a committed team of teachers and supporters have founded *Svobodná základní škola, o.p.s.*, an independent elementary school based on Waldorf education. Presently the school – its legal status is a charitable trust – consists of three classes with 41 children. Since 2015 it has been housed in the Terezin primary school. Starting in August 2017, classes will be held at the premises of the primary school in Třebušín, a small town 40 minutes away from Terezin by bus.

The initiators of the school have a dream: to buy a building in Terezin and turn it into a Waldorf School with an integrated cultural and educational centre which will be open to the public. For some time now, they have been seeking for premises suitable for their purpose. Their choice fell on the building at Fučíkova 217.

Unfortunately, the *Waldorf School* initiative has not yet found the necessary support and funding needed to realize their ambitious enterprise. They have, however, commissioned an architect to give their vision a shape.

A central idea of the initiators of *Svobodná základní škola* is to help Terezin and its inhabitants to heal the wounds that have been felt everywhere in this town since 1945, when the Jewish Ghetto was liberated and the former residents returned back home. The school wants to offer a comprehensive and value-based education that will promote tolerance, solidarity and an understanding of the importance of history, memory and identity. It wants to highlight the importance of art, culture and creativity. The initiators seek international partnerships and wish to contribute to the revival of a town which is still affected by its traumatic history.

Room 28 and *Svobodná základní škola* have become partners. We want to support their dream, as it corresponds to our dream: to give the exhibition *The Girls of Room 28* a permanent home. Once the preconditions have been fulfilled, the exhibition will be newly produced, with elements from the German and the Brazilian version, and redesigned to suit the space requirements and meet the standards and aspirations of Room 28 Projects and the Waldorf School.

On 17 November 2017 our project was presented to the public at Akademická 409 in Terezin. Rooms in this building were generously made available to the *Svobodná základní škola* by the town of Terezin in support of this project. A Czech version of the exhibition *The Girls of Room 28 / Děvčata z pokoje 28* was opened as a sign of our common dream; and as a seed which will, as we all hope, come to growth.

The event in Terezin was supported by the *German-Czech Future Fonds*. The donation of the exhibition *Děvčata z pokoje 28* to our partners was made possible thanks to the *Cultura Stiftung* in Herdecke / Germany.



Fučíkova 217

Sketch for a Waldorf School in Terezin designed by the artist and architect Oldrich Hozman, Prague. The building is located close to the former Girls' Home L 410, behind the building on the left side of the Garrison Church.