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Youth exchange scheme 1991

This summer, numerous Swiss youngsters from abroad took advantage of the facilities provided for enabling them to visit the "old country". In our scheme for youth exchanges, they were taken to a preparatory "information camp", where they were given some brief tips about how to cope with our country's habits and customs. They were then collected by their "host" families, with whom they spent the next five weeks.

We had an opportunity to get to know one host family personally. The Marti family live in a comfortable and cheerful wooden house in Biel, which is surrounded by a pleasant garden. They had this summer invited Susanne, from Denmark, while their son spent the same period with Susanne's parents in Copenhagen.

We were astonished to find that she spoke an almost perfect German of the variety spoken in Basle. She told us that every year she visits her grandmother, who lives in Basle.

In her view, the best aspect of her stay here is that it has enabled her to get to know people in their daily life, not superficially as a tourist.

Mrs. Marti sees in the meeting with Swiss youngsters from other countries a unique opportunity for getting a very fruitful exchange of views. She likes Susanne's "open-ness" and adaptability. Her family had spared no effort in showing the "Danish daughter" around in the neighbouring districts. Thus visits to St. Peter's Island near Berne and to an Alpine cabin were included in the programme.

The positive experiences, such as those of the Marti family, encourage the organisers to continue with the project next year, and to broaden its scope as regards the countries taking part. In 1991, youngsters from these countries can take part: Argentina, Denmark, Germany, England, France, Italy, Canada, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain and South Africa.

The exchange programme will last from July 6 to August 13 in 1991. Teenagers between the

ages of 14 and 20 may take part (except in overseas countries, for which the minimum age of 16 applies).

An encounter with the old home country

The project "Come to Switzerland in 1991" sponsored by the Federation of Swiss Women's Institutes within the frame-work of the "Encounter 91" campaign has proved very successful. The applications from expatriate Swiss, male and female, arrived in Solothurn in their thousands. Guests from more than 70 countries will in 1991 be able to enjoy a stay of from three to eight days with a Swiss family.

Most of the applications came from France, closely followed by those from the USA, Germany and Canada. But applications from Argentina and countries of Eastern Europe also arrived on an above-average scale.

The Women's Federations issue an invitation

Brigitte Fuchs-Reber is the person at the headquarters of the "Encounter 91" campaign who is responsible for arranging the holiday visits on behalf of both guests and hosts. How have housewives in Switzerland itself reacted to the idea of offering board and lodging for three to eight days, free of charge? Brigitte Fuchs says: "The response has been very encouraging – when the Women's Federations announce their support for a campaign project, people feel it's a good thing." She herself is President of a Cantonal Women's Association, so she knows full well that bright ideas like this are not only "hatched" but have to be followed up by practical measures. After a media conference at the beginning of September, it

In the price of 400 Swiss francs, the costs for the "information camp", individual arrangements for "Schnupper" possibilities in connection with occupations and training, a final day for evaluation of results, as well as provision of advice and care are included.

For further information, please apply to: Auslandschweizer-Sekretariat, Abt. Jugenddienst, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne. Deadline for applications to register: March 1991.

The 700 year-celebrations

In connection with the 700 year-festivities, Central Switzerland will be the scene of the August 1 ceremony in Schwyz, a big popular festival in Brunnen, and of the "Mythenspiel". This dramatic spectacle by Herbert Meier is based on ancient legends, on historical events of the past, and on contemporary happenings.

This spectacle will be performed 23 times, between July 20 and September 7. The covered auditorium has a seating capacity for some 4500 persons.

To order tickets for this theatrical event, please apply direct to the following address: *Information Desk for the 700 year-celebrations in and around Schwyz, Postfach 700, CH-6430 (telephone 043/23 19 91, telefax 043/21 28 21).*

This Information Desk for the 700 year-celebrations can also help you in connection with your search for accommodation in hotels, private homes, and mass camps and dormitories in Schwyz and its vicinity. It will also arrange reservations for the banquet to take place on August 1 in Schwyz on the occasion of the festivities.

An invitation of the Rotary Club

In connection with the "CH 91" festivities, the Rotary Club of Nidau-Biel plans to invite a dozen young Swiss (male and female), aged from 15 to 17, for a 14 day-visit to Switzerland.

The dates will be from June 2 to 16 or from June 9 to 23, 1991.

Consideration will be given to two participants from each foreign country taking part. Application forms, together with more detailed information about the project should be requested from: Rotary Club Nidau-Biel, Attention: Mr. Fritz Herren, Hohlenweg 23, CH-2564 Bellmund.

Deadline for submission of applications: January 31, 1991