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helping at different parts of the event, scanning tickets, ushering people to seats and lots of other jobs. Switzerland had a group of 20 rowers and supporters who stayed nearby in Karapiro village. We visited the event on the Friday and had a great day out meeting some of the Swiss team including the coach and manager. It was a fantastic event and a once in a lifetime experience.

Future Events:

Christmas Party for Families will be held on Sunday 5th December 11.30am at the Newstead School on Morrinsville Road. Again the committee will try and provide some Christmas themed activities for the younger members. If anyone wishes to share a craft or activity, please don't hesitate to come along and help out. We will be serving grilled sausages for lunch and families are asked to bring a plate of baking to share for afternoon tea. Santa will be attending and I'm sure he will have some gifts for the children. We will have the usual Christmas raffle so if you are able to donate a prize, please bring this along together with some spending money to purchase tickets.

There's also a great adventure playground and sports field, so any games like cricket, touch-rugby or tennis might be an option. Bring along whatever sport equipment you have.

Swiss Farmers Visit - 27th and 28th January and 4th/5th February - Home Stays needed!

Both groups have now been confirmed and Group 1 has 37 people and Group 2 has 36 people. These groups are quite a bit bigger than anticipated so we therefore ask members to please consider hosting some of these people. We are quite happy to have people living in town as well as on farms.

The group this time will be Dairy Farmers from Switzerland and we are looking for host families. Hosts will be paid \$80 per

person per night and for this you will need to collect guests from a central point, provide dinner on the first night, 2 x breakfasts, one lunch and something for a shared pot-luck dinner on the second night. You will need to drop them off at the central point on the last morning.

We are planning some activities for the afternoon of 28th January and 5th February which will include visits to some places of interest yet to be confirmed. This will be followed by a pot-luck dinner at a central point and families will be asked to bring something along to share. This will be sorted closer to the time.

Please phone or email me if you are able to host one or more people at your place. Please indicate if you prefer singles or couples. Some of the guests are fairly fluent in English, so hosts do not necessarily need to speak Swiss.

If you have any further queries, please contact Anita Zuber (07) 8562414 (evenings or leave a message) 0274 985 170 or email: zuber@xtra.co.nz

50 metre shooting will take place on Saturday, 19th February.

Annual Family Picnic will take place on Sunday, 20th February.

Please mark these dates in your diary. Further details in the February issue of the Helvetia as well as in the Newsletter and calendar to be sent out to members early February. AZ

Billions sent home from foreign workers' wages

A World Bank study ranked Switzerland behind the United States and Saudi Arabia as the third largest country in 2009 for transfer payments; foreign workers in Switzerland - including those who cross the border each day - transferred \$19.6 billion back home.

Of this, \$5 billion was sent home in remittances to families to meet daily needs and other expenditures - double Switzerland's official aid budget - up from \$4.1 billion in 2007.

Not all the money goes to the most needy, however. It can also create dependency, especially among states with high emigration rates.

Yet there is more or less consensus on the positive impact of stable remittance payments in lifting people out of poverty.

from swissinfo

Planned nuclear plants pass initial hurdle

Three sites for new nuclear power stations have been given a stamp of approval by the national regulatory authorities. The Federal Nuclear Safety Inspectorate said nuclear safety and the security of the planned facilities at Beznau, Gösgen and Mühleberg were sufficient to continue the projects.

However, the experts set a number of additional conditions to be considered ahead of the construction of the facilities which are all situated next to existing nuclear power plants.

The government is to decide on the requests by electricity companies by the middle of 2012, before parliament and, possibly, voters will have the final say. *from swissinfo*

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