

Art Therapy with Little Erik

Erik is a smart five-year-old boy who has experienced a lot of fear, shouting and violence at home. He defended his mother from a violent, alcoholic stepfather. He did not, however, have to protect his little sister - the stepfather wouldn't dare to touch his own daughter.

Erik in the ACORUS Safe House

Physical and psychological violence at home grew to such an extent, that Erik's mother took him and his little sister and fled to the ACORUS shelter, which has a secret address. Here, Erik was not only provided with a safe home, he also took part in art therapy workshops.

My first impression of Erik was very positive - a lovely, curious boy full of life. He always tried to do everything the right way so that he is accepted by the others. Erik talked a lot about his mum, never forgetting to mention that "she will be happy for him to do so well". His first steps after the workshop always led to his mother - to show her his creations.

Art Therapy Helps

Art therapy is one of the methods that we use at the ACORUS center. Creative expression serves as a therapeutic tool. Art therapy helps to process traumatic events and to restore self-healing mechanisms of people who have experienced domestic violence.

At first, Erik began art therapy sessions with singing, saying rhymes, coloring, browsing children's books and playing outside with other children. Later, Erik went to the art workshop for two hours at a time, and except for the snack time, he concentrated fully on creating, which is unusual for a child of his age.



What Next?

Erik symbolically ended the year 2017, art therapies and his stay in the ACORUS Safe House. In January 2018, he moved with his mum and sister to a different shelter catering for mothers in need. In ACORUS, we were left with a few pictures, photos and memories full of his smile.

Although I am writing this a month after Erik left, I can honestly say that I miss him and will never forget him. Erik is one of those children, who despite their young age and hardship in the beginning of their life, bears a great wisdom, courage and joy of life. I would say, this boy will not get lost in life.

Kateřina Herciková, ACORUS Art Therapist, February 2018