

15th IS in Florida

After 12 years we were happy to attend an International Seminar again - I do not need to mention that it was a wonderful location for a conference, right?

We were also very delighted that the new boss from our auspice agency, Theresa Holzapfel, decided to join us and learn more about the Clubhouse model.

That`s why we went to New York first in order to visit *Fountain House* and three other Clubhouses in town.



Of course Fountain House New York is unique - it is the oldest and the largest Clubhouse in the world. It is overwhelming to see what is happening there.



But we also loved to be in *Venture House* or in *East New York Clubhouse* for example. These two houses are much smaller but also very well functioning and they have a great atmosphere!

So after three days in NY we arrived in St. Petersburg, Florida.



Tradewinds Island Resort was a great place for our seminar and we just wished to have some more time for the beach - but there was too much to do.



Each day we had two plenary sessions to certain topics like "Building Strong Partnerships", "Side By Side: The great Clubhouse Dynamic" or "The Clubhouse Employment Partnership" just to name a few.

There were also two workshops everyday with a wide variety of topics.



750 people from 24 countries attended this seminar.

It was very exciting to meet people from two Clubhouses in Africa: Nairobi, Kenya and Kampala, Uganda.

We got a lot of new ideas - about *“Partnerships with Rotary Clubs”*, *“The power of Decision Making”*, *“Using New Technologies in the Clubhouse”* and so on. Apart from that we joined interesting discussions about *“Staff Only meetings?”* or how to go on with the *“European Centre for Clubhouse Development”*.

Apart from all that work and serious discussions we also had great parties and wonderful opportunities to get to know each other. One of the highlights was a drumming workshop at the social evening: about 200 people were involved in Drumming and dancing!



A very touching event was saying good bye to Ralph Bilby who spent a whole life for improving Clubhouses around the world. As a present he got a book with letters from around the world.



Also for Hanne from Aalborg, Denmark it was the last International Seminar. She is one of the oldest Clubhouse directors in Europe with a long experience and we will miss her, too!

Well, all in all it was a great experience to be part of that international event!

We came home with a lot of ideas and projects and we will see what we can turn into reality.

Vera

