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Welcome to the fourth issue of the Macedonia Schools Project (MSP) Newsletter. This month, a new round of grant requests will be submitted to MSP. Please look forward to the June issue of our Newsletter, which will feature a summary of the grants funded in 2024. With our grateful thanks and appreciation, we are happy to report that the Gotse Delchev Foundation of the Macedonian Patriotic Organization has funded our grant request for \$6,000.

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**A NOTE FROM BILJANA GUCHEREAU, MSP TREASURER AND BOARD MEMBER**

I was born and raised in Ohrid, Macedonia. While living in Ohrid, my daily life was either spent at school, walking around the lake, with my grandparents / uncles /aunts / cousins in Crnogorci (a suburb of Ohrid), or in my grandparents' villages– Vapila and

Crvena Voda. I came to the US as an exchange student for a year in high school on a scholarship given by Soros. With the support of my amazing host family (Don and Cindy Burns), I continued my college education in Oregon at Lewis & Clark College where I met my future husband Jason (an honorary Macedonian). The marriage was the tipping factor for my immigration to the US and settling in Portland, Oregon, as I was not sure what my life after my education visa was going to be. This also became a catalyst for my parents to apply for the green card lottery. They, along with my younger sister, Klimentina, were fortunate to be selected, and they immigrated to the US in 2007 to settle near us. Jason, my two daughters, and I still reside in Portland, while my parents have moved to Arizona to be with my sister and her family. She is also now part of the MSP Board.



Athena Guchereau with Ljube (Dedo) and Slobodinka (Baba) Risteski



Athena (front left), Elena (front right)  
Jason and Biljana (back)

I joined the Macedonia Schools Project because I wanted to give back to my Macedonian community, both those that supported me here and especially to the community in which I grew up. Education and the opportunity education provides are what motivate me on a daily basis. I am a firm believer that only through educating children, regardless of their race or nationality, the world will be a better place. Children are our future, so raising and educating future well-informed people is the only way forward.

**Meet Jasmina Kukuneshoska, A Macedonian Teacher in Struga**  
**By Jasmina Kukuneshoska**

My name is Jasmina Kukuneshoska, an English teacher at Brakja Miladinovci Primary School in Struga. During my teaching experience I have been involved in many projects, workshops and exchanges with students. I have always been fascinated by the idea of improving the educational conditions for the students and for us as teachers as well. In 2021 this idea connected me to the Macedonia Schools Project, when our director Mrs. Albana Zhuta called me to her office and asked me to write a project for an eventual donation for the school from this organization. I warm-heartedly welcomed the idea and we decided on the priority of the importance of physical education equipment for the youngest students in our school, as well as having a modern smart board for digitalization in the educational process. We were really pleased and happy to receive positive feedback and got the first donation from the MSP in our school. Once we received the needed equipment for the PE classes such as new mattresses, as well as the new smart board, we put them in usage for the youngest learners in the lower grades. The teachers, the students and the parents were all happy with the improved conditions in our school.





Later in 2022, we applied for another project, this time focusing on digitalization in our school. We all know the importance and we all feel the need of a better way of teaching in this modern digital era. The kids are eager to learn more and to learn through the cool, new, and modern way, not as the past generations were taught. So we decided to order some LCD projectors and laptops for several classrooms. At this period our school was in a process of renovation of the classrooms supported by the Ministry of Education, so we waited for this process to finish first before applying the donated equipment from the second successful collaboration with the MSP. When the classrooms were ready and the equipment mounted, we were pleased to have a visit from the MSP team, including the president Blazo Mitasev accompanied by the members of the Board, Mrs. Vasja Jordanova and Mr. Tom Lineham-ex president of the MSP. We had a fruitful discussion about future project ideas, the education in our country in general, and we had a short tour around the school to present the new classrooms and the usage of the much-needed equipment.







Tom Lineham, Marija Ashtalkoska, Jasmina Kukneshoska, Vasja Jordanova, Lirie Ajro, Albana Shuta, Blazo Mitasev



The students from the three nationalities (Macedonian, Albanian, and Turkish) in our school have experienced improved educational conditions in their classrooms, thanks to the benefits from the Macedonia Schools Project. The students have improved their learning skills; teachers are more motivated to use new technologies in their classes; and parents are happy to hear that their children have better conditions for learning.

It is a great honor, pride, and success to be part of such an amazing organization that strives for a better education of our students and for the improvement of the educational process in general.

On behalf of the Brakja Miladinovci school I want to express my deepest gratitude to the MSP for this noble work and help that it offers.

## **VOLUNTEER TEACHING WITH THE MACEDONIA SCHOOLS PROJECT**

**By Stefan Stefanoski, PhD.**

**Associate Professor of Physics and Engineering**

**Benedictine University, Chicago**

I had the pleasure of teaching young men and women in Ohrid about the importance and science behind renewable energy technologies, including solar-photovoltaics (solar panels), wind, geothermal, and biofuels. The use of fossil fuels has detrimental effects on our environment. Coal and oil are the two largest sources of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), which creates problems such as climate change. At this stage of earth's life, we can label it as global warming, because CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere creates the so-called greenhouse effect. Seeking alternatives to burning fossil fuels is a necessity and a responsibility for all of us. It has been said that "we didn't inherit planet Earth from our predecessors, but we borrowed it from our posterity." It is, therefore, necessary for every individual who makes decisions about the future of our city or country to be informed on these pressing issues and make rational decisions for their own benefit and also for the benefit of individuals to come.







There is a lack of formal education on renewable technologies in Macedonia. None of the public or private universities offers degrees or certification in such disciplines. This is a major reason why I was so pleasantly surprised when I saw a cohort of about a dozen high school students in Ohrid who attended my class and who were willing to learn about the science and application of these technologies.

During the week-long seminar, I covered the basic scientific and engineering behind these technologies, and I spoke at length about their applications, as well as their impact on the environment. At the end of the seminar, each student gave a presentation on a technology of their choice. Students' presentations were nothing shy of stellar, as corroborated by some of their high school teachers who attended the presentations and shared their overwhelmingly positive comments.



It was impressive how much students learned about renewable energy during this course, especially because they had almost no background in this subject in their formal education. I take pride in the fact that I was able to recruit a few more renewable energy allies who will spread the word and advocate for a clean and environmentally friendly energy future. Some of the students have even pursued graduate education in the sciences, which is another testimony that a young individual, with a little inspiration, can achieve success.

My Macedonia Schools Project friends from Bratsvo Edinstovo School, including Emilija Paunovska, were excellent hosts and organizers, making sure everything was going smoothly, without glitches. I look forward to more of such events supported by the Macedonia Schools Project, as a way to inspire students and to ignite a passion in young people to pursue an important educational pathway, which can have an impact such as in my experience to bring a renewable energy buzz to Macedonia.

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Please become a member of the Macedonia Schools Project by making a donation to help the youth of North Macedonia. Your tax-deductible contribution will enhance the growth and impact of our program. Check out our website, send us an email, or join us on social media for more information.

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