

Press release

Rittal Foundation



Rittal Foundation

Hofcafé für Neustart: Rittal Foundation donates €5,000

A new start in life: Rittal Foundation supports at-risk people

To make a new start in life, Robi Brömel often had to ask for help, find a great deal of strength and never lose faith in himself. The young man had a long struggle to leave behind a daily life of drugs, crime and hopelessness. The “Neustart” (“New Start”) project brought the turnaround. The Rittal Foundation has been supporting the project for years and it has now donated a further €5,000. Robi’s life proves just what being given a chance can do. Now the 22-year-old goes to work every day, has a girlfriend and is optimistic about the future.

Herborn, 24 May 2017 – There is a smell of freshly sawn wood in the farmyard workshop. Robi Brömel works, fully concentrated, on the next wooden pallet, one which will be transporting products for Rittal in the future. He has only recently passed the interim examination of his carpenter’s apprenticeship. That might well be normal life for a lot of young people but it is not something that Robi can take for granted. Three years ago, he was lying in hospital after his third drug overdose. His everyday life was shaped by LSD, cocaine, speed and alcohol: every day the same and yet every day different – as things ran more and more out of control and less predictable. Neustart was his last chance. The re-socialisation project with the programmatic title took him in and not only gave him a chance but also a perspective. With support from the Rittal Foundation, Neustart helps young people who have had a brush with the law find their way back to a useful life. Now the foundation has donated €5,000 to help expand the farmyard complex by adding a café and a common room.

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Patience, a family environment and a whole lot of commitment

For 27 years now, Neustart has been both contact point and housing project for young men who have gone off the rails and want to get back on track. “Not everyone who comes to us stays. We operate an addiction-free policy. There is no alcohol, no nicotine; media only on a step-by-step basis, and no contacts allowed in the first six months. That scares many people off,” says Arne Thielmann, who chairs “Neustart”. But he also knows that around half of those who stay longer have not relapsed but have regained their self-confidence, started families and found their place on the labour market. Of course, it's not easy, Mr Thielmann admits. On average, his “lads”, as Thielmann calls his clients, remain for four years. They can start on a training course, make contacts and find out how to shape their lives the way they want.

In Mr Thielmann's view, long-term, all-round care and a conscious devotion to the Christian view of humanity are the most important ingredients for Neustart's success: “We share our lives with these lads who often don't even know how to deal with the simplest things in life. That all calls for patience, an environment like a family and a whole lot of commitment.”

This holistic approach convinced the Rittal Foundation straightaway: “Neustart and the Rittal Foundation have a common interest in opening up new perspectives and opportunities for people on the fringes of our society,” says Friedemann Hensgen, Chair of the Rittal Foundation, which has been supporting the project for several years and which again helped in funding the re-building work in 2016: “Neustart is not only characterised by a high level of creativity that is manifested in the many working sectors. We were also greatly impressed by the sustainability with which the employees have been

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committing themselves to the good cause for more than 25 years. We trust in their commitment, which is why Neustart's employees can be sure of our support."

Staff of the Friedhelm Loh Group lend a helping hand

There are wooden pallets as far as the eye can see in front of the joiner's workshop in the housing project's farmyard. This is another link between Rittal and the Friedhelm Loh Group: "Here, during their training, the lads produce wooden pallets and packaging, which we deliver to Rittal, among others," Thielmann says. "We have not been an A-list supplier to Rittal for almost 20 years just out of compassion though. It's because we work well."

That's why the Rittal Foundation has been supporting the project, and not just financially. Staff of the Friedhelm Loh Group have also been giving a lot of help. As early as 2013, the family-run company made an appeal for its staff to help out at Neustart. More than 70 quickly volunteered to help and turned up in their spare time to replace an old fence, paint the façades and pave the entrance to the farmyard. A further instalment of help has been provided in the form of a €5,000 donation towards extending the farmyard by adding a café and a meeting room with kitchen. "We are very grateful that we can count on long-term support from the Rittal Foundation and staff of the Friedhelm Loh Group," says Mr Thielmann: "A lot of things would be impossible without this help."

Robi Brömel also senses that his life has changed forever. He is proud of it: "I have noticed that the supervisors are slowly giving me more independence and trusting me not to go downhill again. I am not afraid of doing that either." He now aims to deter other children and teenagers from experimenting with drugs by telling

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them of his experiences. That is why he regularly visits schools in the area, telling his life-story and answering questions. Next year he wants to pass his final trade exams: "I have got my life together. Neustart has given my life a meaning, given me trust and self-confidence. Without that, it would be impossible."

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Caption(s)



Fri172007100.jpg: To make a new start in life, Robi Brömel often had to ask for help, find a great deal of strength and never lose faith in himself. The "Neustart" ("New Start") project brought the turnaround. The Rittal Foundation has been supporting the project for years and it has now donated a further €5,000.

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The not-for-profit Rittal Foundation was established in 2011 by Friedhelm Loh, owner and CEO of Rittal, to mark the company's 50th anniversary: The organisation began with a start capital of five million euros: The income from the foundation's capital fund will be distributed annually and donated to social and cultural charities local to the various Rittal sites, including international locations. The Foundation's efforts are focussed on the Middle Hesse region of Germany, where Rittal is based.

For more information, visit www.rittal-foundation.de.