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## **300 children from Belarus have convalesced in Nassauer Land during the previous 22 years**



Because of Belarus's geographical closeness to Chernobyl in the Ukraine and the prevailing weather conditions at the time of the reactor disaster, it was particularly the villages and towns, such as Masyr, for example, that were initially worst affected by the atomic cloud. Even though you can't smell it or taste it, the earth on which the population must continue to grow grain and vegetables to feed itself, will be contaminated for centuries. What is more, through the generations there is evidence of an increased number of genetic disorders connected to the reactor disaster. So help is still needed today and will be in the future.

22 years ago, what began as a private initiative to transport aid from the village of Winden in the Westerwald gave birth to the association Kinder von Tschernobyl (Children of Chernobyl). Its very existence is a victory for staying power over forgetting and repressing memories. At the outset, the children from Belarus were cared for on a private basis by families in the Nassauer Land, either singly or in pairs. In time the concept changed, so that for some years now children have been housed as a group in the holiday village in Hübingen. Here children can recuperate from the operations they have withstood, stocking up on fresh air in the great outdoors and building up their immune systems with vitamin-rich food. There is empirical evidence from a number of studies that these measures result in increased life expectancy. Furthermore, these children take home positive experiences of their host country that transcend national boundaries. Lastly, it is one small contribution to a better understanding between nations to counter the unspeakable, violent conflicts that are happening once again not so far away.

To sum up after 22 years, we have not only helped more than 300 children, but have shared many happy hours together. The carefree laughter of these children is more than enough reward for all the sponsors and volunteers – for more information go to [www.kinder-von-tschernobyl.org](http://www.kinder-von-tschernobyl.org)