

The lake, woods and tales: children from the “Asilo Mariuccia” Shelter revive the tourist route

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“Canonica e dintorni“ (“Rectory and surroundings”) is a new project that will make the most of the historical, artistic, environmental and natural heritage, which aims to create a ring within the territory of Brezzo di Bedero.

Starting from Belvedere Pasqué, the beautiful observation point that overlooks Lake Maggiore, it goes up the road through the chestnut woods and meadows. Here, the first thing you come across are the remains of the fortifications of the World War I Cadorna Line, and then, once you have reached the top of the mountain ridge, you can see the ancient Collegiate Church of St. Vittore which dates back to 1100. Going down the steps of the Ursulines, you come to the agricultural garden of “Casa Paolo” where a vegetable teaching garden and orchard grow. Finally, you cross the ancient centre of the village and you find yourself at the starting point where you can make a stop at the facilities of the Parish Oratory.

This initiative is being promoted by a group of ten institutions, including the Fondazione Asilo Mariuccia, which is the protagonist of this project with its “Work education workshop” which, over the years, has enabled 400 young adolescents, guests at the Porto Valtravaglia Community or local residents, who are invited by the local social services, to learn and successfully enter the world of work. The young people of the Asilo Mariuccia will carry out the maintenance of the areas and routes. They will also develop and promote tourist activities, particularly in primary and secondary schools, in close collaboration with the “Volontè Città” High School in Luino, with the course “Turismo”, and with branches of the FAI (Italian Environment Fund) in Luino and Valli del Verbano, the Legambiente branches in Laveno and Varese, the social cooperative “Costa Sorriso”, the non-profit association ANFFAS in Luino, and the associations Casa Paolo, Hortus and Apicoltori di Varese.

“This project is an important challenge for us,” said Camillo De Milato, the chairman of the Asilo Mariuccia Foundation. “With the ‘Work Education Workshop’, the young people who are guests in our community have the opportunity to learn and enter the world of work successfully, thanks also to the synergy with the local authorities.”

“The Collegiate Church of Brezzo di Bedero is one of the most important historical, religious and artistic organisations in our territory,” said Maria Grazia Campagnani, the Mayor of Brezzo di Bedero. “The land on which Brezzo di Bedero stands is full of charm, thanks to its proximity to the lake and its exceptional views; it is also surrounded by the green of its woods and gardens, which are ideal for tourism. This route, which has been planned with the Asilo Mariuccia, is meant to be educational because it is mainly intended for schools, which can increase knowledge of the local territory and its historical roots, but it is also intended to provide employment, because it involves those staying at the Asilo Mariuccia in maintaining the paths concerned, with whom we have been working profitably for years. I hope the project is appreciated and is as successful as we think it can be.”

Today the Asilo Mariuccia Foundation runs 4 communities and 20 autonomy units, and welcomes over 100 people every year. The foundation was established in 1902, by Ersilia Bronzini Majno, following the wishes of her daughter Mariuccia, who died of diphtheria at the age of 13. Today it is a well-established organisation in Milan that takes in and helps single mothers with their children and

unaccompanied foreign minors in the community in Porto Valtravaglia, near Varese. The goal of the Asilo Mariuccia is to give a home and help to single women with children and young people who have no family, to help them reintegrate into society and give them new opportunities for redemption.

In addition to the Asilo Mariuccia Foundation, the project “Canonica e dintorni” (“Rectory and surroundings”) involves the Council of Brezzo di Bedero, the Parish of Brezzo di Bedero, the Laveno and Varese branches of Legambiente, the “Città di Luino” High School, the Luino and Valli del Verbano branches of FAI, ANFFAS Luino, the Casa Paolo, Hortus and Apicoltori Varese Associations and Infovadis, with the support of UBI Banca Varese and the Mountain Community of Valli del Verbano, under the patronage of the Luino Laveno Rotary Club.

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