

" Probuda -27" Community center – village of Sofronievo , Province of Vratsa was founded on November 20, 1927 .The founders of the community center is a group of enthusiastic teachers and young people, Ivan Petrov, Dobri Marinov, Marin Georgiev, Simeon Gochev Ivanov, Petar Rusinov, Andrey Tomov, Veselina Georgieva, Katya Dobрева, Stefan Florov Petrashkov, Opro St. Popov, Dimitar Dinchev, Georgi Stankov Bozhkov, Iliya Marinov Dobrev and others, supported actively by the local population. The first meeting was held in the building of the old school, where all initiatives connected with the foundation of the community center were held. At the first meeting the teacher Dobri Marinov was elected a chairman of the community center and Iliya Marinov Dobrev, Georgi Stankov Bozhkov and Simeon Gochev were elected members.

The purposes of the foundation of " Probuda -27" Community center were education and mass-cultural work, as well as amateur art activities in the village, purchase of books and distribution among the population, students and youth , organization and performance of plays , readings, matinees, entertainments. The initiators of these cultural and educational events were mainly school teachers.

At that time the work conditions were very primitive and hard. The whole organizational and cultural life was concentrated in the old school. At first the library was in the school building, and later on in a small building, which was located in the yard of the school. For amateur theater activities was used a classroom in the old school. The little hall was furnished with old worn-out desks, where the audience of 40-50 visitors was sitting. The above information shows that the conditions were rather primitive, but this was not an obstacle for the enthusiastic teachers, young and older people to start mass-cultural and educational activities among the population. The direction of the community center worked with the teachers and with the population and welcomed joyfully the first amateurs, organized by the community center. The first performances were organized by the teachers and were attended in large numbers by the young people and by the population. At that time were performed plays by Vazov, Yavorov, Yordan Yovkov, Elin Pelin and by other progressive writers. At the same time the teachers prepared morning performances and musical and literary programs. Notable anniversaries of Vasil Levski, Hristo Botev etc. were celebrated.

An important moment of the live of the community center was the material support by the school board. At its meeting it decided to place at community center's disposal about 800 decares land , which was rented and the funds collected are used for purchasing books. The direction of the community center could improve its educational and cultural mass work and amateur art activity as a whole trough the provided material assistance.

At the first meeting a Statute of " Probuda" community center was worked out and adopted as its full adoption was at the general meeting. The Statute of the community center was approved by the Higher Council of the Community Center. The adoption of the Statute and its approval enabled the direction of the community center to undertake number of cultural and educational activities among students, youth and population. Many difficulties were encountered from the foundation of the community center to the years 1931 and 1932. With the funds collected from the sale of municipal land in 1928 started the construction of the primary school which was

modern and conditions were created for contemporary training of the students. There was a gym in the building, which was later on reconstructed and used as a theater hall. In 1931/1932 were bought 250 chairs. The presence of a big theater hall enabled the direction of the community center to develop political, mass-cultural, educational, theatrical, horal and dance amateur activities.

During this time the teachers Ivan Petrov and Simeon Ivanov worked actively and in their capacity as librarians they made their bests to teach the students to take regularly books from the library and to read them.

The theatrical activity improved and except the teachers many young people such as Stefan Buzov, Minko Kaldaroev, Georgi Sarbolov, Hristo Mahremski and many others were included.

During the World War II and during the resistance movement many communists and non-party members were involved in the life of the settlement and considered the community center a most suitable place for work. They listened to the news from the first radio in the village, read newspapers and were informed about the latest events, about the hard situation of the Bulgarian people, and about the course of the war. During this time with great success were performed to the spectators the most progressive plays for example "Land and bread" etc.

The life of the community center changed completely after the 9<sup>th</sup>

of September 1944. The existing hall was reconstructed and the seats increased to 400. The stage was new decorated by the painter Sabev, thus creating suitable conditions for the amateur theater, the amateur singing and dancing. In the reconstructed hall were performed many plays, for example: "At the foot of Vitosha Mountain," "War," "Gypsy Tabor" and others. During this period the community center established a busy relationship with the neighboring villages and they visited each other. Suitable plays were performed in the villages of Butan, Botevo, Krushovitsa, Lipnitsa, Hayredin etc. During this time a number of plays were performed, for examble: "Good kill you Bogdana" , "My chains are heavy, mother" , „Silver ring" , „Nonka's love" , "When young people grow" , „Each autumn evening" etc. From the 9<sup>th</sup>

of September 1944 uprising to 1977 a huge work was carried out under the direct guidance of the Municipal Committee of BCP. The community center had its own hall where to perform creative work of full value but the library was housed in private houses, which made its work difficult. Regardless of all difficulties the direction of the community center managed to overcome them.

At that time the community center had 11000 volumes and 1200 readers / from the foundation of the community center to 1977 /. The cooperative farm (TKZC, later DSS/, the municipal People's Council and the Regional Committee for Culture provided funds for the purchase of books. Special place of the activity of the community center took the amateur singing and dancing. The brass band took regularly participation in the performances and accompanied the

dance groups. The youth dance groups and the adult dance groups prepared their dances with great desire and made very good performances. Our groups participated in local, regional, district and republican festivals, and they were always very successful. The amateurs visited villages Oryahovo, Mihaylovo, Manastirishte, Altimir, Rogozen, Top Rozhen and they played twice before the Bulgarian TV. The directors of the dance groups at that time were Aleksander Lazarikov, Ventsi Truykov and Ivan Nevlev.

With the active cooperation of the population projection-apparatuses were purchased in 1938. The village had a cinema, which was visited by the population in large numbers. After the opening of the cinema the first soviet films were shown: „Tractor-drivers", „Blagoev's land" etc. Cinema-operators were Kosta Sredkov, Stefan Stankov Rikov, Goretov.

When the new building of the community center was ready in the beginning of 1975 were created excellent conditions for the development of the activities of the community center. From 1944 to 1979 chairmen of the community center were Iliya Marinov Dobrev, Petar Ignatov Parvanov, Karamfil St. Rikov, Mitko Marinov Kamenov and Tsvetko Valkanov.

The 50

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anniversary of the foundation of the community center was celebrated on December 10, 1977. At the same time the State Council awarded the community center the Order of Cyril and Methodius- 2

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class. The library housed in a new building that met all needs of the readers. The community center worked in cooperation with the school, pioneer and komsomol organizations. Under the direction of the Regional Committee of BCP, District Council- town of Vratsa, and under the active guidance of the village committee Of BCP, the mayoralty, Fatherland Front, Komsomol organization and other public organizations the community center worked actively to implement the decisions of the XI Congress of the Communist Party and of the July Plenum of BCP.

The community center opened paid positions for librarian, organizer of the cultural-mass activities, choreographer. The people in these position graduated from the Institute in Blagoevgrad and work with desire for the active participation of the young people in the amateur art activities. Mrs. Mariyana Draganeshcheva is a librarian, and Mrs. Mariyana Hristova Goranova is a choreographer. Chairman of the community center is Hristo Angelov Stoychev.

The facilities of the community center are good. The direction of DSS/later OSSS – village of Sofronievo/ subsidizes the community center every year with 3000 BGN. It covers the costs for lighting and heating of the cinema.

There are 22000 volumes in the library of the community center. In the community center are

stored valuable archival materials, protocol books, plans, reports, information, albums, which show the life of the various amateur groups after 1975.

The 80

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years are golden period of the activity of the community center. The amateur dancing took a definite place among the activities of the community center. There are three amateur groups; dance group for genuine folklore, children's dance group and a brass band. Director of the dance groups was Mariyana Hristova Popova. The dance groups of young people and adults have participated and still participate in local, regional, district and republican festivals.

The dance group of " Probuda -27' community center – village of Sofronievo was established in 1946 and director of the group was Ivan Stoychev Nevlev. He participated in all reviews and festivals in the province, in Butan, Hayredin, Oryahovo, Vratsa. In 1962 two new youth groups were established. In the same year the team participated in the festival of amateur art activities „Ledenika" and won the first place. The younger group participated in the festival too and was awarded the flag: Winner. In 1965 the dance team celebrated for the first time the day of the wine-grower. They went outside the village and played there the ritual " Zarezvane" .

Two years later the dancing team took part in the concert for the drillers, which took place on Teacher columns. The same year they greeted the drillers from village of Devene. On December , 8

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1969 the dance troupe took part in the concert of Vratsa Province, which took place in the national Opera. The performance was very good and it was filmed for the television shortly afterwards.

In 1970 the dance troupe danced in the town of Oryahovo. The troupe exchanged repertoires with Rumanians from Krayova. In the same year they took part in a TV- program and their performance was very good. The names of the people are: Galaona, Zhuvatele, Tribazashte, Metra, Shumadiya, Signa.

The dance team put an end to its activity due to absence of a director.

In the beginning of 1979 Mariyana Hristova Popova became a director and led the team until her death in May 2007 .

With the restoration of the dance troupe were restored the old dances, uniforms, traditions and rituals.

The team participated in all reviews of the amateur art activities and its performances were very good

On June 8 , 1980 a Rumanian dance troupe from Yanka, Romania was on a tour and gave a

concert. On 22

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of August the same year our dance teams visited Romania at their invitation. The relations between the two teams continue to this day.

The same year a women's choir, a political group and a group of art of declamation were established.

A review of the amateur art activities was held in the community center in the year 1981 where the rituals "Wedding", „Lazaruvane", „Laduvane" were performed. In the same year on 24

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May the review of the amateur art activities was held in the municipality where the amateur took part again and there gave even individual performances: Iliya Dzhorlev – wooden flute, Dimitar Varbin – bagpipe, Elenka Kostadinova. The dance group performed an old wedding custom and authentic people - Zhuvyatele, Signa, Shumadiya, Tri pazashte. On June 13

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of the same year in Vratsa, with the same program the dance group was chosen for a participation in folk art fair in Koprivshitsa. On 6

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of August the group left for Koprivshitsa. Our dance group won two silver medals for its participation on 7th of August. Since then our dance group returned from Koprivshitsa every time with medals.

On 15

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May 1983 on the VI th Republican festival of the amateur art in the town of Vratsa our dance group won a gold medal.

In the beginning of January 1990 a brass band with children from " Otets Paisiy"Elementary school was created which made rehearsals twice a week with music teacher from Vratsa Metodi Aleksandrov.

the dance group participated in the International Festival of Rumanian Kalush in 1995, held in the town of Slatina – Republic of Romania, where they performed well. In the same year it took part in the folk art festival Koprivshitsa - 96.

The children's dance group entered a competition ' Veslets-96" in 1996 .The first three places were won by the children from the dance group to the community center and from the school in the village of Sofronievo. The individual participants won first place. We express our gratitude to Malinka Nikolaeva, Eli Iliyanova, Ivayla Valerieva, Milena Emilova, Anitka and Tsetsko Lyudmilovi.

The dance group participated in the festival in the Romanian Kalush in Republic of Romania, town of Karakal from 13 to 20 June 1997. The festival started with a parade and performance for the Romanian national television. The amateurs from the community center made four

concerts and their performance was very good.

Despite of the financial difficulties in 2000 the amateurs of the community center performed excellent on the 8

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National folk art festival in Koprivshitsa -2000.

The community center in the village of Sofronievo has old traditions. Each year on first of May the direction of the community center celebrates Baba Marta in the united children care center " Pchelitsa". The amateur Vesela Bozhkova tells tales, legends and gives martenitsi to the small children.

The day of Lazar or the Palm Sunday is celebrated each year with the children from " Otets Paisiy" school.

Easter is a big holiday in our village. On this day the children make exhibition of eggs and Easter cake in the lobby of the community center. On the last day of Easter on the square people dance a Easter ring dance. By old tradition the inhabitants of the village meet together and give out Easter cake, eggs and wine in memory of the deceased relatives. The custom turns into all-village celebration on the square.

On 24

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May is celebrated the Slavonic Literature and Culture Day together with the students from the elementary school. A literary and musical program is performed.

28

th

May is a big day for the village of Sofronievo, too. On this day the Botev' detachment marches trough the village. Botev's pilgrims are greeted with bread and salt by students in national costumes .The brass band plays on the bus stop, children give flowers to the Botev's rebels. The evening continues with solemn concert- firework dedicated to the anniversary of the death of the poet and revolutionary Hristo Botev with participation of the amateurs from the community center and school. In the program take part amateurs participating in the National march Kozloduy - Okolchitsa.

The feast of the village, the fair or Virgin Mary's day is held every year at the end of August – the last Saturday and Sunday of the month. The festival is celebrated each year with a program and concert.

Christmas and New Year holidays are very well organized at the school and the kindergarten. New Year decorations are put in the center of the village. The students from " Otets paisiy" Elementary School participate as carol-singers. The amateurs from the community center and from the school organize Christmas and New Year holidays.

After the so-called "Golden period" follow years of difficult survival, but despite the difficulties the direction of the community center manages to preserve and to maintain many of the traditions and the folklore.

A number of thefts were made in the building which worsened its condition. In addition no repairs were made for years. From time to time little repairs were carried out, such as replacing window-glasses, putting gratings, but this is not enough. In the summer of 2007 on „Beautiful Bulgaria" project of municipality of Mizia a fundamental external overhaul of the community center and of the roof was performed. But it also needs a major internal overhaul.

The community center disposes of a municipal building, which has a total area 980 sq.m, floor area– 1600 sq.m. It houses the following halls – a large hall – 500 seats, small hall – 100 seats; library, reading room and storage, a conference room, dressing rooms, a sanitary unit and foyers.

The condition of the necessary equipment remains insufficient. The furnishing of the community center is old and dates back to its foundation.

There is a library to the community center, that doesn't function. According to the data from the last report the library fund is about 12100 volumes.

The community center continues to maintain friendly relationships with amateurs from village of Yanka, Republic of Romania. There aren't any breaks in the relations till today. During the difficult years of the community center these relations were never interrupted.

Each year the community center participates with its own program in the folklore festival „Danube Songs" in municipality of Yanka. The Romanians come also with their own program in municipality of Miziya and in village of Sofronievo.

Despite of the difficult years the amateurs do not miss any opportunity for performance.

They have never omitted to participate in the national folk art festival in Koprivshitsa.

In the summer of 2008 the amateur group participated in the folk costume festival „Zheravna-2008", held on 22, 23 and 24 of August in the village of Zheravna, in the Dobromeritsa locality. The festival was organized for the first time and promises to become the most important cultural event for the preservation of the Bulgarian cultural identity of the calendar of the municipality of Kotel and of the country as a whole.

The most significant architectural reserve „Zheravna" preserved in Bulgarian greeted with songs and dances from the different regions: 100-те kaba bagpipes, zourla from Petrich region,

fire-dancing and mummers from the whole country , as well as original handcrafts and traditional dishes, that were tested by everyone.

The amateur team of our community center presented the typical for the region "Vlach wedding", which became the most picturesque and authentic recreation of old custom and took first place for best overall performance of the group.

Our representative for the original handcrafts were Natasha and Valcho Manchovi, who demonstrated weaving on loom and also exhibited materials, produced by them

The prize for the first place was presented personally by the chairman of the jury and chief art director of Balgare Ensemble Hristo Dimitrov on the festival concert on occasion of the Day of the village on 29.08.2008.

A number of new cultural events were created. Every Christmas, for example, the population enjoys the visit of Santa Claus, Snow White and dwarfs who visit their homes and give gifts. This event takes place with the support of the sole trader „Sarbenitsa". In the evening carol singers and the male vocal group and students visit homes and wish health and fertility.

In March our new grandmother Marta – Natasha Manchova visits not only the children in the kindergarten, but the students from Otets Paisiy Elementary school, institutions and companies. On 1

st

of March she doesn't miss anybody from the village – neither the inhabitants nor the guests of the village and ties martenitsa on their hands.

In the last two years the following amateur groups won recognition:

1. Dance group for ancient customs and genuine folklore:

-Children

-Youth

-Adults

2. Women's groups for folk songs, old town songs, chorus songs

3. Men's group for songs

4. Women's disco ballet

5. Satiric group

6.Student's brass band.

The information was summarized by Ofeliya Krumova Spasova – Secretary of "Probuda 27 Community center- village of Sofronievo.