



annual report 2011/2012

I am pleased to be able to present to you today the first annual report of our association and its Foundation.

First, I will present the most important points of our work in a summary:

**27. November 2011:** Foundation of the Association lifecircle and Eternal Spirit

**27. November 2011:** The current board is elected, for the association lifecircle:

- Erika Preisig      President
- Moritz Gall      Vice-President
- Mark Luthi      Accounting / Treasurer
- Ruedi Habegger    actuary

for the Foundation Eternal Spirit:

- Erika Preisig      President
- Moritz Gall      Vice-President
- Mark Luthi      Accounting / Treasurer

**27. November 2011:** Election accepted as auditor of association and Foundation:

- Nicolas Brodard, Brodard Treuhand AG Ettingen

**23. April 2012:** constitution of the Foundation Eternal Spirit signed

**21. June 2012:** supervisory of the Foundation accepted by the authorities of the Federal Government of Switzerland

**01. Aug. 2012:** signing of the renting contract for the assistance apartment in Basel

**27. Sept. 2012:** First assisted dying in the accompaniment apartment in Basel



As with any business establishment, we had to overcome many problems during the foundation of the association and the Foundation.

Two experiences were particularly impressive to me, so I would like to report them briefly here:

1. It was my desire to find good acceptance and agreement with the authorities of Basel right from the beginning. Therefore, I organized a meeting with the main responsible persons of the health system and of the prosecutors. After Eternal Spirit had rented a room on "neutral ground" the way the authorities had demanded, the officials told me on the eve of the agreed meeting day, that they did refuse any information exchange. They thought this was not necessary, as we had launched our website a few days before. Thus, it was not possible for us to speak with representatives of the authorities and find out what documents they need at a assisted dying. Nevertheless, after the first assisted dying the contact with the authorities proved to be very friendly and compassionate.
2. When we wanted to put the supervision of the foundation within the authorities of Basel, they refused because they felt not able to take over the supervision of the Foundation, for various reasons. Fortunately then the Federal Government itself took over the supervision of the Foundation. Since Eternal Spirit is also open for foreigners and thus it is an international Foundation, it is correct that not the canton of Basel, but the Federal Government is responsible for the supervision of the Foundation, which is a advantage for us.

Before any local apartment for the assisted voluntary death (AVD) was found, the work within in the association began. After the press had become aware of our work through the website and some articles, amongst other a short reportage on TV Tele-Basel, that made us known to the public, so we received many inquiries about our activities.

We were able to accept and advise members, we could postpone wishes to die or make them unnecessary. We could give safety to members by talking to them and show them that they can take the "emergency exit AVD" if their suffering became unbearable. As a result, people can often accept their illness even further and possibly die a natural death. By having the possibility of a AVD, we sometimes could give the members the few days or weeks, sometimes months of acceptable life quality, to give their relatives the time they needed to accept the wish of their loved ones and to have some more good time together, even knowing that the good bye for ever is coming closer. They knew, they would not have to go into hospital again, have no more operation, but die peacefully in case of deterioration.



For example last October I could take a seriously ill 95 year-old man home from the hospital because he wanted to die at home. The hospital did not want to let the man go home, as they said he was not transportable with his bad health. As I had promised this to him, we took him home anyway, against all resistance of the hospital. But the best thing about this is that he is still alive. He recovered at home, against all expectations. He is looked after by a 24-hour care and can laugh again and walk through his garden! This is one of the aims of lifecircle. To enjoy life for as long as possible, regardless of age, if the quality of life is acceptable.

In Spittelhof, a home for the mentally handicapped, a resident expressed the desire to do something about her obesity on a home trainer. The financial resources of both the young woman, as well as of the nursing home were not high enough for the purchase of a home trainer. Here lifecircle could help. On the finances of the Association, a home trainer was provided for use by all residents. The joy and gratitude of the residents was impressive.

Beginning of the new year more and more members applied for an accompanied suicide and it showed that even Swiss members often do not want to die in their home. One member was living in a nursing home. The compassionate head officer of the home offered, that the lady could go into a AVD within the home, as this was her home. The lady said to my astonishment: "no, that nursing home is like an island of the dead for me. Here I am not at home and here I do not want to die. I'll prefer to go to Basel, to the apartment of Eternal Spirit, there is a neutral place, where I can feel more comfortable".

Since all hospitals and most nursing homes forbid AVD in their homes, and since all foreigners need a room for the AVD in Switzerland, it was our big concern, to be able to rent a suitable room in Basel. Preferably a small apartment which is cozy and whose owner accepts the work of Eternal Spirit. Mr. Habegger offered right from the beginning to be the actuary of the association. When he saw how difficult it was to find a room for AVD, he agreed to rent to Eternal Spirit a part of his photo studio in Basel, which before was rented to a breathing gymnastics studio.

Immediately the renovation works were started, and the already existing toilet was made wheelchair-accessible. The simple room turned into a pleasant, large studio with kitchen, meeting table, sofa and nursing bed. The entrance is at ground level, and it is easily accessible for disabled persons.

As the property is located in a residential area, and not in the industrial area, it is beneficial that in front of the apartment there is a small garage, which is connected with the apartment by a door. Thus, the car of the funeral service may be driven backwards into the garage, and the coffin can be loaded, without sight of neighbors. We made an agreement with the funeral services Kopp, that he will collect the deceased with a neutral minibus, not recognizable as a



funeral car. This because the neighborhood would not like to have a funeral car be there may be several times a month.

As owner of the house, Mr. Habegger offered the Foundation a long-term rent, and since he is the owner of the property itself and collaborates as a companion to Eternal Spirit, it can be expected that we will be able to do the AVD there for a long time.

During the first four months after completion of the accompanying apartment only once a month a AVD took place. This is because we had only few members and a majority was still working on increasing their life quality with the help of lifecircle. Earlier this year, the requests of people who suffered from a well-advanced disease, and of members from abroad, increased. Often there was not much to do in the meanings of lifecircle, as the suffering could hardly be made more bearable. The number of members and also the number of realized AVD was raising

Since the beginning of the year 2013, the Board of Eternal Spirit has approved eleven AVD, which were then realized either in the home of a member, or in the accompaniment room.

I must mention about the AVD, that I am still surprised how calm, confident and relaxed the incurably ill members go onto their last way into eternity. It is much more difficult for their relatives and friends to let them go, then for the members themselves. They are sad, it is hard for them to let their beloved relatives and friends go, forever. It feels good that I myself have felt this desperation, when I accompanied my father into a AVD. So I can understand the feelings of the accompanying relatives and friends much better. It takes a lot of courage and generosity to accept and approve the wish to die, of someone you love. Our warm apartment, equipped with lots of wood and colors, contributes much to the good climate at the moment of parting. I want to thank Ruedi Habegger and Markus Lüthi very much for the days which they have spent in the apartment to do a lot of the renovation work themselves.

I also want to thank all the members who show their confidence in lifecircle by having become members. I hope that I can help a lot by giving advice, and that we can still save a few days, weeks, months, even years at a good quality of life for many members, before we all once go the way, the last one, that anyone should be able to choose himself.

Frau Dr. med. Erika Preisig, Präsidentin der Organisation lifecircle / Eternal Spirit