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STEPHANIE RUDOLPH

On February 15, 2006 Stephanie, at the time 13 years old, was freed from her sexual abuser in Dresden/Germany. How could she learn to live with these traumatic events?

One possibility, recommended by therapists, is the contact with dolphins in their natural surroundings. Together with her parents, she now spends two weeks in Curacao. Mirco Robus and Michael Handelman, both writers with **SUPERillu**, interviewed Stephanie.

Talking about what happened should help the girl to find closure. Stephanie tells them that last year, when meeting with the dolphins for the first time, she had been a little bit scared, but quickly got used to them. Stephanie also tells them what she does with the dolphins: Swimming, kissing, playing with a ball and giving signals so they jump over a stick that she is holding. Thus Stephanie is working actively and effectively with the dolphins. As a result, the dolphin raises his fin and claps it on the water. Thus Stephanie is learning to be in charge again. Furthermore, the training with the dolphin is very body-oriented. It is important for Stephanie to regain a positive feeling about her body, because a lot of rape victims deny their body and may even start harming it.

Stephanie also spends a lot of time talking to her therapist Stefanie von Fallois from dolphin aid. The family is especially thankful to organizations like dolphin aid.

Stephanie's plan for the future is to maybe become a dolphin trainer. During her therapy she learns so much about these animals and how they can help people.

DOLPHIN CENTER CURACAO - DOCTOR FLIPPER HEALS SICK CHILDREN

In March 2006, shortly after she was freed, Stephanie received therapy at a dolphin center in Florida. Now she attends her second therapy at Curacao dolphin research center. This center on the Caribbean island Curacao was founded in 2004. Especially children suffering from autism attend therapy at this facility. These children, suffering from severe contact deficits swim and play with dolphins under the supervision of therapists. In particular this should give them self-confidence. Approximately 1.000 children have already been treated in Curacao, many of these from Germany. Three out of nine therapists also come from Germany. The chief-therapist, Marco Kuerschner (34), is also German. He comes from Schmalkalden (Thuringen) and originally took care of coma patients in a clinic in Bad Liebenstein. He has been living on the Caribbean island for two years. (Information about the therapy center on the island Curacao can be found under www.cdtc.an).

Stephanie's personal therapist Stefanie von Fallois (42) is also German, a family therapist from Berlin, who lived in Florida since 1999, and worked with Stephanie during her stay in Florida last year. The expert says: "Stephanie is suffering from a severe trauma. She lost confidence in everything in this world. She retreated into herself. With the dolphins, she learns to once again have courage. While swimming with the dolphin she experiences a sense of security. That strengthens her self-confidence." One of the special things about dolphin therapy is that the children are not being treated in a sterile environment, but under the blue sky. In the water, in the sun, in a tropical paradise.

A wonderful atmosphere, which does not allow the feeling of sickness nor even treatment in a hospital. Even this helps the healing process. A two-week therapy costs around 5.000.00 Euro. Stephanie's therapy was financed by the German support organization dolphin aid www.dolphin-aid.de. This organization helps especially special-needs children to receive this kind of therapy. Dolphin aid founder Kirsten Kuhnert started the organization in 1995. Back then, her own son Timmy spent 18 months in a coma after a tragic accident in a pool. After dolphin therapy, he awoke.

Since then, dolphin aid enabled this therapy to approximately 1.600 children. Of course Stephanie is also receiving treatment at home in Dresden from the psychologist Dr. Angelika Schrodte. For those who want to support family Rudolph with the costs for therapy, family Rudolph has opened an account for donations account holder: Stephanie Rudolph, account number: 5518611534 routing: 50010517, ING-DIBA Bank