

LET'S HEAR THE THOUGHTS OF SOME OF THE "BROTHERS" ONE YEAR AFTER THE INITIATIVE:

"It has been a positive and unique experience because it allowed me to learn new things".

"The journey on the ship has helped me to know better the other boys and girls and to build up a group where everyone did everything they had to do and helped each other".

"It helped me a lot to hear that other people of my age have the same problems with their brothers and sisters".

"This experience has taught me that you've got to be patient with your disabled brothers and sisters".

"We talked about our brothers and sisters and about how we behave with them... it was amazing and touching!"

"We all have something in common"

"If we all work together we can create new things!"

"My brother is a bright, cheerful boy - he always has an amazing smile on his face..."

"I have an older sister who has a rare genetic syndrome. This state of things does not help me much, because it takes a lot of patience and willpower, but my level of understanding is slowly growing"

"We have talked about how we relate to our brothers and sisters. I was deeply moved by thinking how lucky I am in having someone like him in my life!"

"Sometimes I feel so frustrated I'd like to break something but then I understand that it's not his fault and then I go to my room and let my rage fade away!"

SOME THOUGHTS OF THE PARENTS ABOUT THEIR CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES:

"Before, my son was often annoyed and felt detached from his brother, now he's more loving and patient... and in general he feels less ashamed of him".

"We noticed that after L. returned from the cruise she became more helpful and closer to her sister, and more affectionate. On the whole it has been a really positive experience".

"For M. this experience has been really important... a few weeks later, having talked it through, I feel she has changed somehow. She shows a greater confidence in interpersonal relationships, both with us, the parents, and with strangers. Her self-esteem has grown, and that is one of the goals we wanted to achieve. Now her attitude towards G. is different... before she would never question anything about her sister, now she is starting doing it and realising that if she gets angry at her or does not agree with her on something we, her parents, will love her just the same".

"M. was really changed by the experience of the cruise, I feel that he now is more self-confident and is eager to interact and relate with classmates... and he listens to my advice about study, and his school marks improve".

"When D. returned from the cruise, I noticed he started reacting to his brother's provocations with a more understanding attitude. Meeting and interacting with other young people with similar difficulties has probably led him to rethink his previous actions. He now has more tools to handle the critical moments, tools that surely he has developed by relating to his peers. He now often asks us to take care of V. when we are away and I think this has helped him in developing the awareness of his maturity".