



Albanian Alps Institute  
8600 NW Oak Creek Dr  
Corvallis, OR 97330

Phone: 541-760-2159  
Email: [albanianalpsinst@gmail.com](mailto:albanianalpsinst@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.albanianalps.org](http://www.albanianalps.org)

President: Steve Cook, PhD

Secretary: Terri Cook

Board of Directors:

- Karen Berg
- Sharon Carlson
- Mary Alice Seville
- Nancy Leeper
- Alcyon Lord
- Kristina Milaj

Albania Manager:  
Marash Rakaj

## Repairs Accomplished in 2015



In Vrithe we have added a volleyball court and basketball hoop to go with the existing swings and teeter totters. Above right, Kindergartners in Xhaj schools enjoy AAI funded supplies. We provide these supplies to four village kindergartens.



### Functioning Toilets

Board Member, Kristina Milaj, raised over \$700 through a crowd funding drive to repair the toilets in Xhaj which have not functioned for over ten years. The project included a water supply, thanks to Cesk the shopkeeper across the road and a new sewer system. There is even soap and toilet paper. The toilets in Boga were also refurbished and now have running water also.

### **Working Gate**

There is a problem with animals in the school yards, so fences and gates are important. In 2014 construction of a new road through Boga destroyed the gate, so in 2015, AAI President, Steve Cook repaired the gate once again. It should stand a long time now. We are seeking funds to fence the school yard in Xhaj, to enclose the AAI donated playground equipment, and keep the animals out.



*Our Mission:  
Supporting improved quality of educational opportunities for the children and youth of the isolated Malesia e Madhe region of Northern Albania.*



### Meet Anila Pekmezi, Boga-Xhaj School Director!

Pictured here, with her husband, Alex and daughters, Alessia and Annabel, Anila has been a positive addition to the school administration in Shkrel. She is originally from Tirana, has a degree in Albanian Literature from Tirana University and currently resides with her family in Boga. Anila's enthusiasm is infectious. She wants to give the children of Shkrel the same opportunities as students in the cities. One of her favorite quotes is from Socrates: "The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not fighting the old, but on building the new." Anila was actively involved in getting the toilets in Boga and Xhaj functioning. She used her influence with the Ministry of Education to replace desks and a blackboard in Boga. She is also working to get more foreign volunteers into the schools.

### Career Fair

AAI President, Steve Cook, organized a Career Fair this summer with the help of Dedaj School Director Paloke Vrucaj and Boga teacher, Ardian Ulaj. The fair was held in the meeting room in Dedaj and among the speakers were a doctor from the Dedaj clinic, a former Minister of Parliament, a journalist, a priest, a Shkrel teacher and AAI's own in-country Manager and University Professor, Marash Rakaj. Students who attended called it a great success and we hope to continue doing this in the future.



*I am ecstatic over our work in 2015. At the end of the 2014-15 school year we had a small surplus of money, and gave each School Director \$250 to improve their schools. Dedaj and Zagore bought new shelves to house AAI donated books. Vrithe installed a new volleyball court and basketball hoop to improve physical educational opportunities, and Boga and Xhaj bought new stoves to heat classrooms. We now have functioning toilets in Xhaj and toilets and a new gate in Boga. Two really enthusiastic young women volunteered as teachers. Our career fair was a great success. We have thirty six high school and nine university students currently receiving scholarships. On the home front the Rotaract Club at Oregon State University chose AAI as their annual fund raising project, donating over \$600 to our programs.*

*Our successes are only possible because of our generous donors, and I thank all who have supported our efforts with their dollars.*

*Steve Cook, AAI President*

Volunteers, Dana Lester and Adina Harri taking time out from their teaching to hike the beautiful Albanian Alps. Contact us to learn more about volunteering.

[www.albanianalps.org](http://www.albanianalps.org)

Check out our Facebook page, too!