‘Our story’ Questions for Parent Tribe online magazine.

Vlachakis family



Introduction

Family names and ages
Evangelos 49 , Veronika 46 and Melina 11

Where you live.

Monemvasia municipality, Lakonia, in the Peloponnese, Greece

Please explain your lifestyle and philosophy

My family is located in the southern part of Greece, in Laconia region of the Peloponnese and we just love this place! Natural beauty, unspoiled beaches and fabulous food. (by the way we follow a plant based diet). Since homeschooling/unschooling is considered illegal in Greece, we decided to follow a more nomadic life by taking a year off from schooling to travel around Europe. Now we are back in our base and to tell you the truth we miss like minded families who can appreciate all that this superb location has to offer and that's why we make every attempt possible to connect. We even organised the first Worldschoolers summit in January 2016 and we had a great time with our visitors.For the moment I am gaining valuable insights into homeschooling/unschooling from our visitors, since we started organising events here at out Porto Grana worldschoolers hub. It is a fascinating experience to talk with so many different but like minded parents and meeting the children. Personally I follow a secular free thinking attitude towards learning through living our life.

Do you work-from-home or are you a stay at home parent? Please tell us about it.

I do a combination of working from home and staying at home, caring for our common everyday life. I am actually working in film/tv business as a director of photography, films, series, music videos, docs etc but I am also teaching my craft in workshops for kids (animation, photography) and for adults (I was guest lecturer in the media department of Worcester University, U.K. , 2 years ago)

How do you make things work?

I am eager to learn any time and I am adapting to whichever conditions come along. So, for the past 5 years, we managed to keep ourselves going by getting part time employment and financing our travels by harvesting our olive grove and marketing the products and crowdfunding. Veronika also is a fine arts teacher and sells her artwork while she is a

certified raw vegan chef and organises regular ‘uncooking” workshops in our hub

What inspired your lifestyle?

Many books that I have read during my youth, from the likes of Thoreau, Salinger and Hesse and actually travelling as a photojournalist, meeting different people and exploring cultures

What are your child/ children’s education options?

Since we are permanent residents of Greece , it is a bit hard to homeschool full time because of regulation restrictions, so quite limited options of attending public school and part time unschooling. Our daughter Melina (now 11.5) spent 3 years in a Montessori kindergarten here in Greece (Athens) and absolutely loved it! unfortunately we could not afford elementary Montessori school , so we had to follow public education, while we managed to “worldschool” together for a year. Certainly alternative approaches such as Montessori, Waldorf , enrich our self directed learning experience. In Greece there are a few only of these private schools operating, but there is a lot of interest from new parents and younger pedagogues to embrace such educational models. For the first time this year there is even a Freinet implementation in a small number of public schools.

She had the best experiences of her life so far last year when we lived in Worcester, hosted by a friendly family with a girl, so she had the rare chance to practise her English language skills to an incredible degree of accuracy (btw she is bilingual with Greek and Russian). So since she is not very comfortable with the intensive and teacher centric pedagogical system of Greek schools, (issues inside the classroom , like chalk-talk teaching that still goes on, rote learning, testing testing testing, dry teaching methodology, limited experimentation with pair/group work, no veering off the curriculum, the system that is so endemically incomplete that it forces parents to send their kids to parallel private instruction), we strive to find ways to offer her alternatives. She actually liked the environment of an English primary school, so I think she would be happy to participate in any kind of formal "schooling" , as long as she feels at comfort with that, provided she gets the chance to mingle with other kids.

If you work from home what is the best bit of advice you could give other parents who want to work from home?
One of the key points in my opinion for maximising profits is to be focused on your work and to be selective. Also, I prefer to let some time off , enjoying play with children

What is your favourite family activity?
We like to learn from the actual families that embrace unschooling and homeschooling in their life and we are always eager to share good practices.Because the whole world is our classroom and we know how to be part of it wherever we stay!

What has been your biggest family adventure so far?
Travelling around European countries and visiting democratic schools , as part of our documentary film production. Working title: “Melina in Wonderschooland”

What are you most grateful for (as a family or individually)?
It may sound a bit ironic, but I would say that I am grateful that the current economic crisis in this country has led me to unjobbing (temporarily at least) , so I may pursue my special interests and grow as an individual

Three words to describe how you feel about your lifestyle?
Pleased, enthusiastic, justified

Links:

Interview for Free to Be Family Blog:

https://freetobefamily.com/2016/04/26/educational-freedom-fighter/

Intervju med Evangelos Vlachakis, Grekland

Some sample links involving unschooling/homeschooling in Greece:
https://deschoolingreece.blogspot.gr/
https://www.facebook.com/deschoolingreece/

https://www.facebook.com/Unschooling-Greece-1554105414805331/
https://www.facebook.com/Free-homescho%CE%BFlingunschooling-in-Greece-now-789327957762769/