

## **"I'm very grateful" - An interview with Tomke Lenzen - A student at the Schweizerische Alpinen Mittelschule in Davos (SAMD)**

Allergies, asthma, atopic dermatitis: For eleven years now, Tomke Lenzen has been a regular guest at the Hochgebirgsklinik (HGK) in Davos. Up here, at around 1,600 metres above sea level, he immediately feels better. In August 2017, Tomke Lenzen moved permanently from the Siebengebirge near Bonn to Graubünden and became a student at the Schweizerische Alpinen Mittelschule in Davos (SAMD), the first school to be awarded the Swiss Allergy Seal of Quality.

### **How did you find out about SAMD?**

As I simply feel better in Davos, it was clear to me that I would like to move here at some point. During my last in-patient stay at the HKG in the summer of 2017, a nurse told my mother about the SAMDhealth programme. She was immediately excited and then everything happened very quickly.

### **What do you think of this solution?**

I am very grateful that it happened this way. Before that I did not know what to do after junior high school. The disease has been with me for many years, and I have often missed weeks or even months of school.

### **SAMD has been awarded the Swiss Allergy Label. Was that a selection criterion?**

My mother looked into it and did some research. Of course, the proximity to the Hochgebirgsklinik Davos, was another deciding factor. After all, I already know the medical and nursing team. In an emergency I would be in good hands. At the moment, I go to the clinic about once a month for a one-hour check-up. The Hochgebirgsklinik Davos is a clinic specialises in the treatment of respiratory, skin and food allergies in children, adolescents, and adults.

### **You have now been in Davos for three months already. How did you find this first time?**

At my old school, I was often bullied. Here in Davos, I was accepted well right from the start and quickly integrated. Everyone looks after me. For example, one teacher chose nut allergies as a subject to discuss with us, to teach my classmates that even small traces of nuts could be dangerous for me. Of course, I miss my family and my friends very much. But we keep in touch. And in the meantime, Davos has become my second home.

### **You are allergic to a number of foods. How does the boarding school kitchen cater for this?**

The cook, Mr Schmid, always prepares a special menu for me, which is then also available to everyone. Since I cannot take part the home economics course because of my allergies, I am allowed to create new menus with the chef. I really enjoy it. My mother still raves about my delicious Muesli mix.

### **The interiors also meet the requirements of the certification body Service Allergie Suisse. What is special about your room?**

I enjoy the privilege of having a single room with no carpets and a pollen screen on the window. For extra comfort, I have a fur rug next to my bed, so that I do not have to get up on a cold floor in the morning.

**Why would you recommend SAMD to other allergy sufferers?**

There is probably no other school that is so ideal for allergy sufferers thanks to its altitude and where the management and teachers have a comparable level of expertise. Here, they look after for you and know what to do in an emergency.