

DAN Europe Charity Funds

The Claudius Obermaier Charity Fund from DAN Europe

We are writing the year 2003. On the afternoon of August 20th Claudius Simon Obermaier from Olching, Germany, and his dive buddy and friend go on a tec-dive at the wall off Allmannshausen in Lake Starnberg. The dive will lead the young men to a depth of 82 meters (269 ft.) where they will explore a wreck. The lake has a depth of 112 meters (367 ft.) at this site. The dive is inconspicuous. The only deviation is that they ascend a little sooner than planned. At 70 meters (230ft.) Claudius suddenly experiences serious respiratory distress which he cannot manage to get under control. His buddy tries to help him. But within short time Claudius' breathing gas is finished. He becomes unconscious at a depth of 60 meters (197 ft.). His buddy goes to his own limits in trying to save Claudius. Unfortunately, at some point, after heart-wrenching struggles he has to let go and leave him behind. Claudius sinks to the bottom of the wall at 70 meters and drowns.

It is on this very day in August when Claudius, an experienced, safety-aware tec-diver loses his life at the age of 27 to the bottom of this legendary lake. His friend and dive buddy will later need to be treated as a diving emergency at a hyperbaric chamber.

At the sight of the extensive rescue operations taking place later on, Claudius' parents ask family members and friends to donate for this kind of work instead of spending money on flowers at the funeral.

Out of this idea the Claudius Obermaier Fund (COF) is born. The fund helps divers and their surviving dependents in need of financial help due to a diving related tragedy. The COF is a solidarity fund of divers for divers around the world.

Claudius was not a DAN Europe member. His parents approached DAN Europe after his death. The German hyperbaric and supervising diving doctor at the time, Dr. Ulrich van Laak, is the contact to the family. Officially, the fund commences in 2004.

In the decade afterwards, from **2004-2014** the [Claudius Obermaier Fund](#) distributes **187.921,58 EUR** to different parts of the world and intervenes in **27 cases** in the following areas:

- Special medical care
- Medical evacuation following serious accidents
- Prosthesis
- Special means of transport for tetraplegic
- School grants for orphans of deceased divers

When the **Tsunami of December 2004** hits the Indian Ocean, the Fund takes action through an international task force by sending out manpower, resources and aid at the scale of 65.566,07 EUR. The money is used for the identification of dead bodies from divers and others. DAN Europe decides during this time to give its members two options on the website:

Donating to the victims of the Tsunami and donating to the Claudius Obermaier Fund. This way,

another 15.000 EUR are being raised to the COF.

The Phuket Boat Drama

April 16th, 2013. A violent storm takes sudden grip of the dive boat “Little Princess” and is sinking it off Koh Tachai in the Phang Nga province of Thailand. Brave dive instructors and crew members help everyone else off the boat before they save their own lives. They will later be rewarded for their courage by financial aid coming from the COF to compensate for their lost dive equipment.

The COF receives donations not only from DAN Europe members but also from other sources. In the beginning of this year, on January 23rd, 2015, the Fund receives a 4.000 EUR donation at the 2015 TAUCHEN Awards, which is traditionally organised during the BOOT in Duesseldorf, Germany, a major fair for all kinds of watersport activities.

If you'd like to read more about those who benefited from the fund, you may go to our website www.daneurope.org.

In order to help divers in distress and in need of medical help, the Fund also supports hyperbaric centers and diving medical structures in remote areas of the world. DAN Europe is honored to drive the fund and take on such great responsibility with the constant knowledge that any diver in any place of the world on any day may be in need of its help. Support will not be given in practical means only but also in a human way.

Marta – a local initiative for a child with cancer

Not a dive-related but a charity fund from DAN Europe is the local initiative for a young girl, Marta, with a rare and difficult type of cancer which causes the family very expensive treatment.

DAN Europe decided to donate the money from product sales off its online shop to Marta.

Members can buy decorative bracelets with dive-related artwork and a children's toy – the smurfs in a variety of dive-typical outfits and appearances.

So far, the fund was able to collect 1.113 EUR for Marta's treatment. On May 20th, 2015, Doc Marroni, President of DAN Europe, was pleased to be able to pass this donation on to Marta's mother.

For anyone willing to help Marta, please go to our DAN online shop (<http://www.daneurope.org/shop>) and buy a bracelet or a smurf or donate directly to the fund. Thank you.

A Research Fund soon to come

Today, by experiencing the positive dynamics of these funds – COF, tsunami 2004, and Marta – DAN Europe decides to offer more than one fund in the future. The idea is to set up a Research Fund and one short-term fund with an annually changing topic or target to give the variety of still unresolved questions in diving medicine and physiology a chance to be resolved finally.