

José Abrantes Luís

"I have all the freedom"



© Bruno Wansing

José Abrantes Luís is a member of the Integration Council of the City of Bocholt. Bruno Wansing, Integration Officer of the City of Bocholt, spoke to him and introduces the Portuguese citizen here.

José Abrantes Luís was born in Manualde, Portugal in 1973 and has lived in Bocholt since 1975. He is married to Nicole Brendel Luis and has three children, Justine (22), Catherine (19) and Joline (14). He is also already a grandfather, his five-year-old granddaughter is called Josie.

His father Armando Bernardo Luís came to Bocholt in 1971 and worked and lived in Suderwick. In 1975, he brought his children to Suderwick, where he learned not only German, but also Dutch. "I think that when I speak Dutch, they still understand me today," Abrantes Luís is sure.

Everything that happens here concerns me too

Abrantes Luís feels like a true Bocholt resident. "I've lived here since I was a child, and everything that happens here concerns me as a citizen of this city," he emphasises. At home, only Portuguese was spoken, "and then where do you learn German? on the street, in the kindergarten, at school," says Abrantes Luis, adding that you have to want to do so and not become isolated, as happens in some cultural circles.

Integration starts with language

"Once a week after school we had lessons in our native language and in the end we even had to graduate," says Abrantes Luís. "In retrospect, I am still grateful that we were offered this opportunity and that I was able to grow up multilingual. His father worked in a sawmill, only with Portuguese compatriots. "That's when it happened that he spoke German rather badly. My mother - María da Gloria Abrantes - on the other hand, worked a lot with Germans and learned the German language faster and better," says Abrantes Luís.



For me, integration starts with language, everything else, education, work, social skills, commitment, take a back seat, even though these points are very important.

José Abrantes Luís

Third term on the Integration Council

Abrantes Luís has been elected to the Integration Council for the third time in 2020. "My brother Antonio Abrantes Luís was once a member of the then Foreigners' Advisory Council. When he didn't want to do it any more, Emanuele Mascolo asked me if I could imagine doing it," says Abrantes Luís about his first steps towards the Integration Council. "I thought to myself, you could be involved in this and stand up for older people and people with disadvantages," says Abrantes Luís.

Culturally sensitive care, language and youth development

His current topic, which he also deals with in a working group of the Integration Council, is that of culturally sensitive care. "Especially for older people who do not speak German very well or perhaps not at all, it is important that both inpatient and mobile care have people who can communicate with them," Abrantes Luís emphasises. In the context of language promotion, he wants to achieve with the Integration Council that barriers are broken down, misunderstandings are cleared up and, above all, that native-language teaching in schools is promoted again. Among young people, he would like to see more respect again for the elderly, for the emergency services, simply for people who put themselves at the service of the community.

"Many things have already been decided..."

... before we get the information in the Integration Council," says Abrantes Luís, wishing that decisions that are made in the council, and where the Integration Council could definitely help in advance by bringing the views of people with international family histories into the discussion, could be discussed in advance in the Integration Council.

"We are not so well known"

Acceptance of the integration council is already there, both among the population and in the council and administration, "but we are not so well known, and as members of the integration council we certainly still have a lot to do". As far as the council is concerned, some of the members of the integration council sometimes have the feeling that they are not taken seriously. "We are certainly accepted, but nothing more. With some members of the council, you get the feeling that they think we have to have that."

Everyone is a Bocholer and should feel like one.

For himself, he has set some goals that he still wants to tackle and achieve in the current legislative period. "We have to make the letters addressed to the parents more personal when it comes to the origin of language instruction, emphasise more the offers and the benefits of this HSU. It has been proven that children who are taught in their mother tongue learn German faster," says Abrantes Luís. He would like to continue to break down inhibitions on both sides, strengthen "multiculturalism" and increase acceptance on both sides. "We are all citizens of Bocholt and should all feel that way," concludes Abrantes Luís.

Contact
