



JUNE 2014

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

For Projects Abroad Vietnam



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VOLUNTEER STORY

Volunteering in Hope Center

Hope Center is a school / childcare center for children between the ages of two and 15-years-old with developmental disorders such as autism and ADHD. I worked in A3 - the classroom for children between the ages of two and seven-years-old. Every morning I started at 9:30am with individual lessons such as counting from one to 10. Every day at 11am the children were given lunch with rice (of course), a kind of meat and some vegetables. Between 12.30pm and 2pm mats were placed on the floor of the classroom so the children and the teachers could have a nap. They often asked me whether I was asleep, but I preferred to have lunch with my roommate (s) in the center or at the volunteer home. At first I felt asleep, but due to the lack of space and crowds of children, this was not really a relaxing afternoon nap. In the afternoon we did a group lesson.



The biggest obstacle of volunteering in Asia is clearly the language barrier. The director of the school spoke almost no English and the teachers in my class had bad English skills. Fortunately a teacher in another classroom can speak English well, and sometimes she could help me if I had any questions about the children and why they were in this special school. During the time I worked there, I focused on working with three children with autism. I tried to teach (such as counting and the names of animals) and play with them (such as ball games or colours and clays). There were also some fun English activities. The children are very smart and above all, very excited. When I was there for a while, they came right away with me at the table and sit down waiting for what to do next. They also raised their thumbs up and said, 'good' and 'high five' because I always said this is good. They screamed out laughing when I fell back when I tried to sit.

The local caregivers do their best here at Hope Center, but they know less about the development of children with autism than in the Netherlands. There is also a big difference in development levels among the children, which makes it difficult to do group activities. Most of them cannot ever sit in their seats and that makes it difficult to start and explain a game. Fortunately, all the children love bubbles!



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VOLUNTEER STORY

Volunteering in Hope Center

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During my volunteer work, I really wanted to contribute something, but six weeks is far too short to make big differences, or to set up major projects. That is why I've been looking for the little things that could be improved. It struck me that the children here never wash their hands after urinating and they all play with the same toy. Therefore, I was planning to put hygiene lessons in as part of my class as it is also an important part of the Care Management Plan for 2014 that Projects Abroad wants to conduct in its placement. With a staff member from Projects Abroad as an interpreter, I met and talked to the director of my placement. The director also found it as a very good idea. They all wanted to teach the children to brush their teeth properly. These two ideas were combined by starting a general hygiene project: washing hands and brushing teeth. Twice a week we conducted one of the two activities in the afternoon. The children thought it was hilarious to see, but found it less appealing when they were asked to come with their own new toothbrush to brush their teeth. Here we also had beautiful films made to show to parents. Also, every time a child went to the toilet, there were a teacher and me stand at the sink to let them wash their hands. I really hope they will keep this up.



At the beginning of my project it was pretty difficult to get used to because almost no one spoke



English and there were no other volunteers in the class I could work with. The situation gave me the idea to give English lessons to the local caregivers after school. They were all very enthusiastic; in three weeks I taught English two to three times a week to the teachers who had the time and loved to study. It was very strange for a group of women to start with basic English like colours and counting. At the very first lesson they were very enthusiastic and had all bought a notebook to write down everything they learnt. Later, new volunteers at the center

joined and together we gave the lessons. The teachers turned into giggling schoolgirls saying 'sorry' if I caught them cheating. By giving this English class I have a band to the teachers who participated in a little because it was difficult if no one speaks English and actually not dare to speak.

Six weeks was too short to carry out all my ideas, including a trip to the zoo or to an outdoor playground but I'm very happy with what I've been able to do, and especially that I, together with the teachers, have been able to do things.

Madelief Heesterbeek, Care volunteer, Netherlands

VOLUNTEER STORY

Sixième semaine à Bo De

Je reprends le travail cette semaine après des congés vraiment agréables et c'est dur de se remettre au boulot. Pourtant c'est LA semaine où je me sens enfin chez moi. Le sentiment que j'ai éprouvé en atterrissant à Hanoi, me voilà de retour à la maison.

Il y a plein de nouveaux volontaires et je me fais un plaisir de les embarquer avec moi dans les dédales des rues. Cette semaine beaucoup de volontaires avec qui j'étais devenue très proches ont fini leur période de travail et partent voyager ou rentrent chez eux. C'est extrêmement dur de se dire au revoir car on a vécu ensemble pendant un mois des expériences de folie, qu'on partage de beaux souvenirs et qu'on s'éclate tellement ensemble qu'on n'a pas envie que ça soit fini. Je pense qu'on fera de notre mieux pour rester en contact plus tard, bien que ce soit déjà le cas. Donc dès mon retour en France je suis attendue au Canada, à Oslo et à Amsterdam !



Le retour au travail se fait progressivement (Nous ne sommes plus que deux volontaires avec la superviseur) mais je me rends compte que je commence à m'attacher à ces petits bouts de chou. Je connais enfin les prénoms de tous les enfants (ce n'est pas facile entre duc Anh, le Anh, Lan Ang, San Ang, trang Hang, quo Ang...). Ça m'a fait chaud au cœur quand en revenant lundi matin après ma semaine de vacances ils se sont tous jetés sur moi en criant « Quo Lean » soit madame Léa, j'étais surprise qu'ils se souviennent de mon nom.

Je fais partie des « vieux volontaires » maintenant, de ceux qui connaissent bien le lieu et les gamins.



J'ai l'impression que mon séjour touche déjà à sa fin car il me reste seulement un mois de travail et j'ai bien l'intention de savourer cette expérience incroyable jusqu'au bout. Je pense que l'an prochain il faudra que je me débrouille pour venir revoir ces enfants, voir où ils en sont car ils m'ont tellement donné et apporté depuis que je suis là.

Je voulais tous vous remercier encore une fois de me permettre d'être ici car c'est vraiment extraordinaire, c'est tellement incroyable.

Léa Hinnekint, Care volunteer, France

DIRTY WEEKEND REVIEW IN PHOTOS



The old room before being renovated



Volunteers painting the doors...


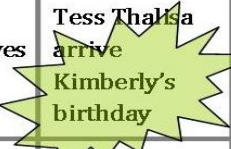

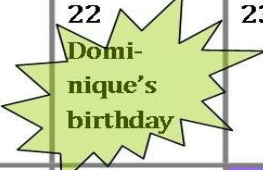


...and painting the walls

The result of the hard work: a newer and cleaner room! The children love it!



WHAT'S ON: JULY CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Alexandre, Geneviève and James arrive	2 Phillippa, Nicole and Maria arrive	3 Teaching Discussion	4 Heather arrives	5
6 Aymeric, Aurore and Zoé arrive  Sigrid's birth- day	7 Hue-Tam, Josi, Faye, Suzanna, Annabel, Sophie and Jonathan arrive	8	9	10 Social Dinner	11 Manon and Elodie arrive	12 Domingue and Thomas arrive
13 India and Laura arrives	14 Tess, Thakisa arrive  Kimberly's birthday	15 Christi and Jordan arrive	16 Medical Workshop	17	18  Heather's birthday	19
20	21	22  Domi- nique's birthday	23	24	25	26 Monthly Outreach Event
27 Kate arrives	28	29	30 Cooking lesson: Fried springroll	31		

July 3 - Teaching Discussion for teaching volunteers. Volunteers meet at Projects Abroad office after work!

July 10 - Social Dinner: A great chance for volunteers to be introduced to a delicious food specialty of the country while getting to know other fellow volunteers from different volunteer houses and host families!

July 16 - Medical Workshop. More information to come!

July 26 - Monthly Outreach/ Dirty Weekend. This is the most expected event of the month when the volunteer team has the chance to contribute their enthusiasm and volunteer spirit to the local community. Stay tuned for more coming information!

July 30 - Cooking lesson: Vietnamese fried springroll. All volunteers are meeting at volunteer house 1 and enjoy a good time learning and cooking together!