

International longterm voluntary service with Friedenskreis Halle e.V.
profile place of assignment
within the program: weltwärts, EVS



Bürgerhaus „alternativE“ Humanistischer Regionalverband e.V.

<http://humanisten-halle.de/index.php?id=5>

The community center (german: Bürgerhaus) „AlternativE“ was founded in the year of 2000, as a meeting place for people of different age groups. It is located in the southern part of Halle and supports people who are facing social problems, as from the nearby areas Halle-Süd and Buna-Viertel (a quarter named after the chemical industry "Buna"). But in the meantime the rooms and offers of the community center are used by people from all around Halle and the region.



The community center offers a great variety of activities in many different fields. The children and the young people have the possibility to learn how to play a certain instrument in the musical cabinet. The community center also offers additional activities, such as: implementation of project weeks together with teachers and educators, (eg. creating radio plays), advice and assistance with school performances. Moreover, the community center rents rooms for all kind of family celebrations, graduations or birthdays. In addition, every second Thursday there is an open meeting for families with children, who can discuss on different topics, have fun and plan joint activities.

Furthermore, the community center offers domestic help for all people who can no longer cope with household responsibilities alone.

There is a repair shop for bikes, which gives you the possibility to learn how to change flat tire of a bike, instal new bike lights or set the circuit.

Another interesting offer of the community center is the PRO 50 Group. Every monday at 14:00 o'clock there is an organized meeting for women above 50, with the purpose of discussing about their common interests and helping each other in everyday life activities.

Children and Youth

The community center offers children and young people a chance to spend their free time doing something else, rather than sitting at home in front of the computer or the television. For all those who don't want to stay at home, „AlternativE“ gives a variety of possibilities, such as doing sport, meeting new friends etc.

The young people aged between 13 and 16 are often confronted with situations and problems they haven't thought about in their past. Therefore, as part of the Youth Educational Programme of the communitiy center, the youngsters can openly discuss about the „hot topics“ in their lives in front of their peers, ask questions and inform themselves on whatever topic their interested in and they can overtake responsibilities in the Youth Club and organise events themselves.

Furthermore, the community center offers the children to stay overnight and experience an adventurous night, filled with thematic games, bonfires and night wandering.

The community center „AlternativE“ organizes children birthday parties. The birthday parties include room decorations, small gifts for the birthday child, variety of games, drinks and food. Last but not least, „AlternativE“ offers various sports and recreational activities for the children and the youngsters, such as card games, darts, table football, basketball, table tennis etc.

Field of engagement and activities of the volunteer within place of assignment

The voluntary service at this poa mainly is social work with children and youth!

The international volunteers will complete their voluntary service in the field of children and youth work in the Community Center „alternativE“. They will be introduced to the everyday life in a community center and they will get an insight into the work with children, adolescents and young adults. The volunteers will experience and actively support the promotion of community life of young people and older people and sociocultural work with different generations, which is the essential component of our work. During their service, the volunteers will experience community spirit, equality, tolerance and solidarity. Through their involvement, the volunteers' self-responsibility and independence, as well as their social responsibility and social engagement will be encouraged.



The volunteers should have an interest in working with children, adolescents and young adults. They should be open-minded, have a basic knowledge of German (preferably) and be willing to adapt to the flexible working hours (including working in the evening and for the weekends).

The volunteer works in the Community Center only 3 days per week and 2 other days in a cooperating place of assignment which will be chosen according to the interests of the volunteer.

Activities:

- Working with children and the adults on free time and educational offers through special get-together clubs in the field of youth education
- Helping the social workers and educators in the preparation, implementation and follow-up of events, such as parties for children, activities during holidays for school children from the day care center through special get-together clubs in the field of youth education
- Support in overcoming the everyday issues
- Motivating the members of Bürgerhaus (Community Center) into creating independent useful recreational activities
- Support of social cooperation through contacts with the children and the adolescents
- Conversation with the children and the adolescents – building a relationship based on trust and confidence
- Teamwork with facilities in social environment
- Support with Public Relations activities (such as distribution of flyers, translation into english)
- Creating a pleasant atmosphere for visits in the Community Center

Please be aware:

- **It's only a 3-days-poa!! - Next to this poa, the volunteer will work 2 days a week in another place of assignment to be agreed upon with the volunteer and the poa.**
- You work afternoon hours!
- Only few clients and staff members speak english!

Volunteers profile – specific for this place of assignment

- interest in working with children and youth
- empathy in regard to children and youth
- some experiences in working with children and youth
- openness to children and youth with difficulties
- interest and/or skills for sports, music, cultural or creative work and interest to bring in this knowledge into the work

- volunteer should be authentic, alone standing, responsible, punctual, open, honest, flexible and pro-active towards children
- volunteer needs a quite high frustration tolerance and should have low expectations in respect to the implementation of own plans
- good German is very helpful
- certificate of good conduct without any entries

Volunteers profile – General

- 18 to 28 years (weltwärts, exceptions can be made, when reasonable)
- (high) school graduation or comparable personal suitability
- basic knowledge of English and willingness to learn German starting in home country
- motivation: voluntary service as an opportunity to learn in different fields and to get involved with (civil) society (voluntary service as learning and peace service)
- openness to the special structure of a voluntary service with Friedenskreis Halle, that is: willingness to participate in the accompanying educational program, to develop and implement one or more small project(s) and to get occupied and engaged with topics and activities of (local) civil society,
- interest in European and global relationships and peace politics as well as education on these topics
- preferable already dedication in civil society in the home country, willingness to get involved in civil society in the home country after returning

Reports of former volunteers

Denis, 2016-17

How did you imagine your voluntary service and how was it going?

When first I applied for this voluntary service in Bürgerhaus and Hasi. In the beginning, there were so many questions in my head, such as “why am I going there?”, “why am I doing this?”, “how will this affect my life?” and “will all of my friends, when I come back, still be there?” (...)

In general my voluntary service was really interesting for me, I had a chance to work with so many great people. But also travel a lot within Germany and see a bit of it. Of course there were times when I was struggling.

Does the hosting project suit your imaginings?

Somehow yes, when I first applied at Bürgerhaus and in Hasi I couldn't really imagine myself being there, who are the people that I will be working with, how the place is going to look like and how my work was going to be. But then, after having spent my first days in Halle, my stay had become much more imaginable.

What did you like/dislike?

During my voluntary service, there were so many nice things, that happened. What I liked the most, was the atmosphere in both of my places of assignment. It was completely different from one another. But I also liked the people (colleagues). I had very much fun with working with children, too. (...) What I disliked about this voluntary service is, that sometimes, in Bürgerhaus, I was getting a feeling, that I was a real worker. Sometimes I had to clean the kitchen and it felt as if they were paying me for that. I think that a volunteer should stay a volunteer. (...)

How was your contact with the team?

I'm very glad, that I had a very friendly and very talkative time with both places of assignment, especially in Hasi, where I had a chance to talk to so many people about their interests but also mine. As for Bürgerhaus and Hasi I happened to feel so much as a part of their group.

In the beginning in Burgerhaus, I had a very difficult time with communicating with my colleagues there, because only few people were happening to speak English. But after some time, I learned a little bit of German, which made it way easier to cope.

Which new things did you learn?

When it comes to new things, I happened to learn so many new things during this voluntary year, such as new working methods with children, new children games, how to make Knüppelkuchen, how to make Zuckerwatte for children, learn how to be good at Bogenschießen, increase my knowledge of activism, how to organize events, playing musical instruments, but I also learned a lot about myself and managing my own time.

How good can you express yourself in German now?

In Burgerhaus, I was all of the time talking in German to my colleagues, and the German lessons helped a lot. So I am very proud of my German skills; I happen to understand, what people are telling me, but also answer some basic conversations. I can survive during the day with my German.

Did you develop yourself personally?

Yes, definitely. During this year I developed myself in many different positive ways. I learned new things about myself, and also how to come in different situations which helped me to see things differently.

Did your voluntary service make contribution to your professional orientation?

I wish, while I was doing my voluntary service, I had been working more on my professional orientation (filmmaking).

(...)

Melisa, 2015-16



I worked in two places. One place is Peißnitzhaus e. V. (2days) and another is Bürgerhaus Halle (3days). I will write about second place, because I really love this place and it's always good like you are with people that you know all your life. I'm always happy when I am there. My work day sometimes started from 09:00-15:30 and sometimes from 14:00-20.00. Depends on when and what is going on there that day. And we always planned a month earlier. The person who is always with me is my mentor (Rene) if he is not there (Sven – he is worker) is there. I'm never alone. They always give me guidelines on how and what I need to do that day. And I am very happy to have them there. Sometimes we are just sitting, drinking a coffee and plan how we will prepare something for that day or for some event. Then we are preparing all that what is necessary to

welcome children that come that day. Sometimes there are birthdays, sometimes children from kindergartens, schools come and we are doing some creative things with them and it is interesting. My role here is to help children, to help them to develop creative things, to talk with them and we are always having a good time together. There are a lot of smiles and funny things. After that part when we do things with children comes a time when they must eat. After eating is always playing with them. Sometimes we have nothing to do. At that time we speak what we can do better or how to make something better. It is always relaxed situation with lots of laughter. What is important on my workplace? I think the most important thing is to be on time there. Or if you can't come to work to call them that they know. For everything else, you can always negotiate with them. They will always help you if they can. At the beginning it was really hard with German language. But sometimes they were sitting with me 30 minutes and explaining me some things. I am very grateful to them all.

In general this voluntary service brought me a lot. First of all I started to think a lot differently, much

more serious. I also saw some things in myself which I must change and work on it. I would say that this year has been a „struggle“ with myself and my abilities. Also it brings you a lot of valuable experience. Slowly I'm getting impatient, because I want to try everything that learned here with children in Bosnia. Just to see how it will be. What I can say with certainty is that this year has changed me a lot in a positive way.