

Volunteering for Accueil et Vie

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Belgique, Rhodes St Genèse / Genvat

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The origin of Accueil & Vie :

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The initiative to create A&V comes from parents worrying about the lack of structures for the host of mentally disabled people. Accueil et Vie is an organisation with 3 homes and a day center with the aim of hosting people with a light to moderate intellectual deficiency.

A&C's shelters, situated in Brussels' outskirts, offer a family life to people under the supervision of professionals and volunteers. The majority of interns coming to A&C work in « protected workshops », the rest of them goes to day centers. A&C's mission is to create, manage and host places to live and activities to ensure social inclusion of quality to people with intellectual disabilities.

The variety of social contacts seems to us like a great asset for the residents in our homes. That is why we want to enrich the lives of homes and strengthen community spirit by welcoming a volunteer, for a period of **3 to 12 months**, that must have the desire to live everyday with people with disabilities in a family, friendly and supportive atmosphere.

A&V is a private association receiving no subsidies from the State. We depend solely on the rent paid by the people welcomed by the organization as well as on donations from individuals, which explains why the management team is limited and why we are working very hard with volunteers.

The people we welcome have a slight to moderate intellectual disability and show no violent behavior that may affect the volunteer

The objectives of having volunteers :

We see volunteering as an opportunity to welcome a dynamic and self-willed volunteer, from another area, to pursue our objective of welcoming disadvantaged people in our society. Living with people with a disability is a humanly rich and intense life experience. Accompanying them daily brings us simplicity and authenticity and by living with them on a daily basis, we learn to accept everyone as a unique person, rich of its differences.

For the volunteer, this community life project is a unique opportunity to broaden its mind.

Giving the volunteer the chance to mix with people with disabilities in a shelter gives an opportunity of social work and civic engagement. We have been hosting international volunteers for nearly five years.

Volunteer's profile :

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We welcome volunteers from all around the world, with no geographical, economic or social distinction, but with a real motivation for this project. A&V wishes to welcome people having reached their legal majority, and having the maturity needed to face daily life with disabled people.

Prior knowledge of French is essential because some residents need clear indications, in order to avoid misunderstandings that could frighten or upset them.

We offer French lessons to volunteers as soon as they come in/arrive. It is the only way to make contact fast with mentally disabled people. Accueil et Vie will pay for the lessons but the travel expenses to the class is on you. The classes begin in September and in January, it is often impossible to attend the classes outside those dates.

The A&V homes need volunteers that are dynamic, motivated, keen to learn and to take initiatives, able to question themselves, and to accept remarks from the staff. They also need to be aware that they will live several months with different people who have a way of life, sometimes, totally opposed to our daily life. Be ready, if necessary, to inform yourself on mental disability, autism, psychosis and other syndromes. We think that volunteers have to take an important place in the homes and we wish to put in place all the conditions to create a positive exchange.

As residents need a stable and serene accompaniment and as the professional team is reduced, it seems difficult to accommodate volunteers who themselves have a psychological or physical fragility. Homes are unfortunately not suitable for people with reduced mobility (stairs ...).

Duration of the stay :

The stay must last from three months to maximum one year.

For non-EU volunteers visas are given for a maximum period of 3 months.

The maximum of one year exists in order to give other volunteers the opportunity to participate. A longer stay can however be discussed with the team.

The volunteer's timetable inside the association :

Teams in the three houses collaborate regularly and integrate volunteers' participation in their daily functioning in order to offer the residents a rich and wide social environment.

The volunteer is entirely part of the team, and participates to every meeting with the only restriction of meetings under professional secrecy.

The volunteer will participate to the community life:

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- during the evenings (4pm to 9.30pm),
- sometimes in the morning, for the wake-ups (6am to 8am),
- and some weekends (from Friday 3.30pm to Sunday 10pm), with a maximum of 35h/week.

For the day center, the timetables are as following: Monday to Friday from 9am to 4pm with a maximum of 35h/week.

The exact timetable will be set with the volunteer in order to attend his needs and requests. It will also take into account the French lessons (for max. 5h/week). Each month, the exact daily planning will be delivered by the person in charge to the volunteers.

In July, the homes are closed for three weeks. If the volunteer wants to, he can take part in the holidays organised by the association.

The volunteer will have to respect the common rules: respect cleanness and tidiness of common places, respect resident's sleep (no noise after 9pm), respect non-smoking places (inside the house), and accept not to drink alcohol inside the house in front of the residents (he will be given the house rules). He will always be accompanied by a responsible person during his volunteering hours.

General role of the volunteer :

The volunteer will be welcome to take an active role inside the homes, always accompanied by a membre of the staff, to help the residents in their daily life. Since working with mentally disabled people is a very specific activity, we expect the volunteer to ask questions if he does not understand some of our ways.

We wish to give the maximum space to the volunteer and encourage him to take initiatives for the development of specific activities (e.g. language lessons, sport, artistic activities ...). The role of the volunteer is also to share his culture and knowledge.

He will therefore have the opportunity to get experience in group management, conflict resolution, activities preparation, as well as different working skills necessary to manage a group of adults with mental disability.

The role of the volunteer in the homes :

- Attend all house and A&V team meetings
- Prepare menus list for the week

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- Participate to weekly shopping
- Prepare the menu of the day
- Help in the garden and buildings
- Welcome the residents when they come back from their daily activities
- Accompany the residents to common activities during evenings and weekends
- Accompany the residents to medical or paramedical appointments
- Help when residents wake up and have breakfast
- Help people manage their time
- Remind residents about hygiene (change clothes, personal care)

Role of the volunteer in the day center :

- Help the person in charge program the activities
- Help residents with shopping and cooking
- Help the person in charge with group activities and with the running of these activities
- Meet the parents to put in place the individual project, and the annual assessment
- Attend team meetings of the day center, and A&V meetings.
- Attend extra activities (visits, holidays ...)

The volunteer can organise new workshops and activities that suit his tastes and skills

Food:

Food will be provided to the volunteer during his volunteer hours. The rest of the time, he will have to cook for himself.

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The volunteer has the possibility to go to the shop with the person in charge or to make an order for one week. This order must be ready on Thursday at 3pm in order to facilitate the organisation.

We ask the volunteer not to use the existing stocks because they are needed for the residents' weekly meals. A shelf in the fridge will be provided for each volunteer, who is responsible for the conservation of his food. Eventual allergies or special diets must be communicated to the person in charge. There is a kitchen available for the volunteers in every house. It must be cleaned up and tidied up after each use ; we are subject to hygiene regulations.

Accommodation :

The volunteer is asked to clean his room or apartment during his stay and when he leaves. Cleaning equipment and products are available.

A key will be given to the volunteer, and must be returned when he leaves. If he loses it, we might have to change the locks.



Transport :

When the volunteer is working, transport costs are paid for by A&V. Outside working hours, every transport expenses (even for French lessons) have to be paid for by the volunteer.

There is a bicycle with helmet and security jacket in every house. It is mandatory to wear them when using the bicycle. The volunteer is asked to respect traffic rules and the equipment made available for him.

Internet – Phone:

A phone and an internet access will be provided to the volunteer by A&V. We expect him to make a responsible use of these tools. We do not endorse access to illegal downloads sites as well as erotic and pornographic websites.

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Aware that some volunteers come from far, they are authorized to make phone calls to their family. However, for economic reasons, we encourage the use of Internet tools such as "Skype."

Our hosting offer :

Name of the structure	Type of structure + working hours	Available places	Details
<p>« Maison Notre Dame »</p> <p>Avenue des Trembles, 11</p> <p>1640 Rhode St Genèse</p> <p>Person in charge of the volunteers : Bernard Winkin</p>	<p>Accommodation of 13 people presenting a slight to moderate intellectual disability, male and female adults/ men and women</p> <p>From Monday to Friday during the evening from 4 pm to 10pm and/or from 6am to 9am (according to the needs) – one week-end per month from Friday 3pm to 10pm</p> <p>Saturday from 10am to 10pm Sunday from 10am to 10pm</p> <p>Closed one week-end per month</p>	<p>One volunteer</p> <p>Small flat with one bedroom with a sink + small living-room with microwave available</p> <p>Sanitary facilities / shower – bath / kitchen are communal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expenses met for 150€/month - Food - Access to washing machine - Internet - French lessons according to the date of arrival and the duration of stay
<p>Maison Regina Mundi</p> <p>Chemin des étangs, 17</p> <p>1640 Rhode St Genèse</p> <p>Person in charge of volunteers : Catherine Dario</p>	<p>Accommodation of 13 people presenting a slight to moderate intellectual disability, male and female adults/ men and women</p> <p>From Monday to Friday during the evening from 4 pm to 10pm and/or from 6am to 9am (according to the needs) – one week-end per month from Friday 3pm to 10pm</p> <p>Saturday from 10am to 10pm Sunday from 10am to 10pm</p>	<p>One volunteer</p> <p>Two spots in a rotating system (Volunteering job in the structures)</p> <p>Three individual bedrooms with a sink</p> <p>Sanitary facilities / shower – bath / kitchen are communal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expenses met for 150€/month - Food - Access to washing machine - Internet - French lessons according to the date of arrival and the duration of stay

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	10pm Closed one week-end per month		
<p>Maison Notre-Dame-des-Anges</p> <p>Rue Jean-Baptiste Stouffs, 20 1332 Genval</p> <p>Person in charge of volunteers : Laetitia Paulissen</p>	<p>Accommodation of 13 people presenting a slight to moderate intellectual disability, male and female adults/ men and women</p> <p>From Monday to Friday during the evening from 4 pm to 10pm and/or from 6am to 9am (according to the needs) – one week-end per month from Friday 3pm to 10pm</p> <p>Saturday from 10am to 10pm Sunday from 10am to 10pm</p> <p>Closed one week-end per month</p>	<p>One volunteer</p> <p>A small flat with two bedrooms + bathroom + equipped kitchen + dining room + living room</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expenses met for 150€/month - Food - Access to washing machine - Internet - French lessons according to the date of arrival and the duration of stay
<p>Day center</p> <p>Rue Jean-Baptiste Stouffs, 20 1332 Genval</p> <p>Person in charge of volunteers : Stéphanie Lalmand</p>	<p>Day activities for 13 people presenting a slight to moderate intellectual disability, men and women</p> <p>Working hours from Monday to Friday from 9am to 4pm</p> <p>Closed on week-ends.</p>	<p>One volunteer</p> <p>A small flat with two bedrooms + bathroom + equipped kitchen + dining room + living room</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expenses met for 150€/month - Food - Access to washing machine - Internet - French lessons according to the date of arrival and the duration of stay

Contacts **Pascal Rommelaere** – direction@accueiletvie.be

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Distance jusque	Km	Details
Location		
Supermarket		
Restaurants		
Post office		
Downtown		
Railway Station		
Bus station		
Doctor (name, address and phone number)		
Hospital (name, address and phone number)		
Bars		
Others		

Do you want to volunteer in Belgium ? Feel free to contact the SVI :

info@servicevolontaire.org ou go check our website :

www.servicevolontaire.org !

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