

Service RENFORTS

(Waiting for the new accreditation number under the Erasmus + Program)

Theme 1: Disability

Theme 2: European awareness

Project period

EVS activity will start on 01/02/2016 for duration of 12 months

The hosting Organization



The service RENFORTS is a part of the non-profit association ANDAGE, created in order to improve the quality of life of people with mental disabilities and their families.

“Renforts” aims to encourage the social inclusion of disabled young adults in the local social life by giving them the opportunity to do a useful work for our different partners, according to their skills and knowledge.

Renforts was born in 2007 and at the beginning, when the center opened, just three young adults with disabilities decided to try

the chance. In 2009, they became 13 to believe in the project and to flourish thanks to various activities. Nowadays the service counts more or less **30 young users** who are in between 18 and 35 years old.

We currently have around **50 partners** (schools, restaurants, youth centers, the cultural center, the city kennel, the horse riding school) that we’re helping on a voluntary basis. The partners respect and interact with the youngsters in order to integrate them in the local social life. The tasks done by our service users are concrete and adapted to the partners as well as to the youngsters.

Our staff is made up of nine workers working full time or part-time. We are also supported by many local volunteers and we host very often students from the local schools who come at our place for their school traineeship.

Since last year the Service Renforts also includes two other services:

- a residential service where some of our beneficiaries live together developing their autonomy and independency;
- the “Alterboutique and son Comptoir”: a shop where people can go to exchange for free different things or just to have a bio drink. The little bar of the “Alterboutique” is completely managed by the Service Renforts users with the help of their educators. The aim is to foster their inclusion through citizen activities supported by Andage.

L’asbl Compagnons Bâisseurs est une association de chantiers de jeunes reconnue et subventionnée, en tant qu’Organisation de jeunesse, par le Ministère de la Jeunesse de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, membre de la Confédération des Organisations de Jeunesse (COJ) et de l’Alliance européenne des associations de service volontaire (ALLIANCE).

EVS experience

It will be the fourth time that the Service Renforts will host an EVS volunteer.

We think that welcoming an EVS volunteer within our staff allows our public of young adults with mental disabilities to open themselves to other cultures and to develop a new relationship with somebody foreigner. Hosting an EVS volunteer also offers the staff the opportunity to introduce their world to somebody foreigner to the department and to promote and value their work. Also, we think an EVS volunteer working at service Renforts will have the opportunity to meet a lot of people and know the different associations of the town of Marche-en-Famenne, knowing that we are working with around 50 partners.

Location of the project

The office of **service Renforts** is located close to the centre of Marche-en-Famenne. This is where the EVS volunteer will meet every morning the youngsters and the staff before leaving for the different places where the work is planned. In the building there are several working rooms, a kitchen, a living room, a computer space, a locker room and the eating room where the volunteer will eat together with the staff when not being at the partners' place.

The volunteer will live close from where s/he works, in Marche-en-Famenne, a small town situated in the south French speaking part of Belgium. With about 17 000 Inhabitants, the municipality of Marche counts with numerous villages: Hollogne, Waha, Verdenne, Champlon-Famenne, Grimbiémont, Lignières, Roy, On. The volunteer will be in daily contact with other EVS volunteers being hosted in other projects in the municipality.

Even if Marche-en-Famenne offers all the modern facilities, **it is IMPORTANT to know that the town is situated in a semi-rural area and the nightlife here is less vivid than in bigger towns**. Nevertheless, Liège, Namur or Brussels are not far from Marche which has good train connection.

The project

We expect the volunteer to take an active part into the staff work. S/he will support and accompany the young adults with disabilities during their daily activities. S/he will facilitate their investments in the tasks realization.

For example:

- During the envelopes labelling at the youth center, the volunteer will be with the group, check the work done, suggest some improvement if needed, keep the good atmosphere during the work;
- During the meal cooking at "Clair et net", the volunteer will support the youngsters in the different tasks required: check the youngster have all the material needed before starting the work, try to find a task for all of them...

With the support of other workers, the volunteer will play a big role in the maintenance of a good relationship with the different partners, the youngsters and the staff of service Renforts.

S/he will:

- Create a social link with the youngsters;
- Share his/her knowledge with the youngsters in order to help them to accomplish their tasks (computer skills, cooking skills...);
- Give the youngsters the opportunity to open themselves at the world around them;
- Raise awareness about volunteering among youngsters and partners;
- Be a resource of new ideas, new points of view about the way of working...;
- Be a support, somebody who listens to the youngsters.



Activities the volunteer could participate in or create:

- To think up and develop a project with the youngsters (try cooking recipes, cultivate chicories in caves...);
- To actively participate in the educational staff meetings;
- To suggest some changes in order to improve Renforts, willing to evolve constantly;
- To take initiative;

The volunteer's activities can be adapted according to his/her skills and wills.

During the first weeks, s/he will meet the different partners and will be introduced to the several tasks dealt by the youngsters. Then, according with the agenda of the staff and his/her preferences and skills, s/he will have the opportunity to choose the activities s/he's more interested in.

No matter which activities the volunteer will prefer her/his EVS will always foresee very **varied tasks!**



Proposed activities to EVS volunteers

Example of what could be a typical week:

Monday:

Between 08:30 and 09:00 → meeting at Service Renfort office
 09:15 → cooking at the "Alouette" (partner), a hosting house for children
 12:00-13:00 → lunch time at the "Alouette"
 13:00 → Back to Service Renforts office
 13:20-15:40 → wrapping cutlery at the local hospital
 16:00 → end of the day

Tuesday:

Between 08:30 and 09:00 → meeting at the office
 09:15-12:00 → walking municipal kennel's dogs and clean the rooms
 12:00-13:00 → Lunchtime at the office
 13:20-15:40 → several tasks at the youth local center (labeling, painting, cleaning, tidying up...)
 16:00 → end of the day



Wednesday:

Between 08:30 and 09:00 → meeting at the office
 09:15-12:00 → Cooking workshop
 12:00-13:00 → Lunchtime at the office
 14:30-16:00 → Staff educational meeting (every Wednesday)

Thursday:

Between 08:30 and 09:00 → meeting at the office
 09:15-12:00 → cleaning the stables of the local riding horses school
 12:00-13:00 → Lunchtime at the office
 13:20-15:45 → Cooking at the cultural center restaurant

Friday:

Between 08:30 and 09:00 → meeting at the office
 09:15-12:00 → Tidying up lunch tables and helping in the kitchen of the school
 12:00-13:00 → Lunchtime at the school
 12:00-13:00 → Lunchtime at the office
 13:20-15:45 → Gardening at the eco-village "La Gatte d'Or"

This timetable will be changed in order to integrate the French lessons and the volunteer's wills.

The volunteer will also have the opportunity to participate in other activities out of the Service Renforts but linked with the same target group such as board games evenings, movie nights organized by the Association des Compagnons Bâtisseurs or in the various activities organized by the youth center, both situated very close from his/her accommodation and Service Renforts office.

Collective activities with other EVS volunteers

The EVS activity within Service Renforts is part of an EVS group project that aims to increase European awareness among youth in the town of Marche-en-Famenne and to improve a closer collaboration between the local social services. For this reason, some activities will be run with other EVS volunteers (hosted by three other local organizations).

The volunteers are encouraged to work together especially during specific youth events organized once a year in Marche-en-Famenne: Rock festival, Carnival, youth services open day... The volunteers will help to prepare and follow-up these events. In some occasions, they can hold an information stand presenting EVS program and youth exchange opportunities. We would also like to organize a "European night" in the local youth house to give volunteers the possibility to present their country and traditions.

Profile of the volunteer

Our project is open to anybody motivated by volunteering and who wishes to be involved in our organisation, regardless to their nationality, religion, believing, diploma, professional experience. Because our public doesn't speak any other language than French, the volunteer is asked to be already able to communicate a bit in our language at the beginning of the service.

We expect the volunteer to be open to the difference and ready to build an atmosphere of confidence and security with the youngsters; be ready to involve him/herself in the several tasks we do with them; be able to work together with the staff; be interested in the topic of disabled people inclusion; agree with our philosophy of equality and openness to the difference; willing to listen, communicate and care about the young adults with disabilities.

The volunteer will have to provide a certificate of good conduct (CGC) related with the work with disabled people.

Number of EVS volunteers hosted

One on this project but s/he will have regular contacts with the other EVS volunteers hosted in Marche-en-Famenne (4 in total).

How to apply

We wait for a **specific motivation letter for this project as well as a CV at the latest on the 3rd of September 2015.** Once the application is received, the volunteer will have to fill in a questionnaire and send it back by the 10th of September. **The application of those who didn't send their questionnaire on the 10th won't be taken into consideration.**

Preference will be given to volunteers who write in French (although it does not have to be perfect!).

We encourage the volunteers to learn a bit of French before the beginning of the projects.

Risks prevention, protection and safety

Safety at work: the EVS volunteer will always works under the responsibility of youth workers of Renforts. S/he will have the autonomy s/he'll need to develop his/her own initiatives and personal projects, but s/he won't be responsible of an activity on its own. S/he will always get the advice and support of a youth worker.

The activities s/he will take part in will always be prepared with the whole staff. Preparation meetings will allow the staff to inform the EVS volunteer about the rules to respect, about all in risks prevention and safety.

Safety at home: The volunteer will be hosted in an accommodation with all the modern comforts and respecting the safety rules. When arrived, the volunteer will receive a list of phone numbers to call in case of emergency. S/he will also receive the phone numbers of his/her mentor and task-related supervisor.

Risks and crisis prevention: Risks prevention is firstly linked to a good preparation. We will provide the volunteer with complete and true information before s/he decides to join our project. The sending organization will be in charge to follow the volunteer during the pre-departure process, to inform him/her about the EVS program, about the rights and responsibilities of the different actors involved, about the administrative obligations the volunteer has to respect before to leave his/her country, etc... The volunteer will also have to attend a pre-departure seminar if organized by the National Agency.

When arrived in Belgium, the volunteer will participate in the on-arrival and mid-term seminar organized by the French speaking National Agency. At the very beginning of the project, we'll especially take care to welcome the volunteer, to show him/her interesting places of our town and Belgium and to present him/her to other young people. We'll also check that everything is in order with the insurance.

The EVS volunteer will participate in our weekly meeting in order to be integrated in the team and to have the chance to talk about the difficulties s/he lives. An evaluation of the EVS experience will be made on regular basis with his/her mentor. If there is a problem, a meeting with the project coordinator will be hold in order to solve it.

In case of crisis/emergency, we'll require the intervention of the specialize services required, according to the situation.

Our coordinating organization and our national agency in charge of the EVS program are resources that can help in case of any serious casual problems.

Contacts

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