



Project description Hölzerner See



About VJF

The VJF (Association of young volunteers) was founded in March 1990 and is an officially recognised non-profit association with the aim to expand the idea of international voluntary movements. The association organises international youth meetings with short term projects (workcamps, MTV, youth exchanges), long term projects (European Voluntary Service, weltwärts – volunteering in a developing country) and takes part in the Ecological Voluntary Year for German volunteers in environmental institutions. Furthermore, the VJF owns a project and meeting place in the outskirts of Berlin that can be hired for different seminars, international meetings and private events.

About KiEZ Hölzener See

The KiEZ Hölzener See is located in a wooded area of 165.000 m² in the National Park of Dahme – Heidensee, the nearest city is Königs Wusterhausen. It is about 50 km (1 ½ hour) away from Berlin centre, therefore the volunteers should be aware that the KiEZ is relatively isolated. Only a few busses are going from this place to the next village or town. KiEZ Hölzener See is a children's recreation centre in Brandenburg and approximately 200.000 juvenils visit the centre each year. Most of the groups come from Berlin and Brandenburg, but young people from the Netherlands, Russia and Poland also visit the KiEZ. Hölzener See is run in a non – profit way by the organisation "g. Kinder – und Jugenderholung Dubrow - Dahmetal e.V.". Besides accommodation and food, the centre offers an extensive program of educational projects and varied recreational activities for children and young people including culture, sports and environmental themes as well as historical topics, health and tolerance projects.

Motivation and experience in EVS

The coordinating organisation VJF has been accredited as sending and hosting organisation for the European Voluntary Service since 1996. Since then around 90 young volunteers have been sent to projects abroad. VJF also annually hosts between 6-10 EVS volunteers in different projects: youth clubs in Berlin, children recreation centers in Brandenburg and in the organisation itself. The recreation centre is a leisure time center for young people and juvenils who are also interested in intercultural learning. On the one hand international workcamps and exchange programs such as EVS at KiEZ Hölzerner See are an enrichment for both employees and visitors. On the other hand the KiEZ also promotes tolerance, joy of living and the process of working together on the realization of projects.

Since 2003 the KiEZ Hölzerner See had very positive experiences with 13 volunteers from 9 different countries, who were a big support for the team and who themselves had a challenging and rewarding year of learning a lot about the German culture, language and the way of thinking.

Summary of the EVS hosting project:

Duration: The service should start in the beginning of September 2015 and will last 12 months until August 2016.

Number of volunteers: 2 volunteers. Still, there will be other volunteers on other programs of VJF to meet and get in contact with.

Location: Heideseer OT Gräbendorf (close to Berlin)

Accommodation & Food: The volunteers will be living in a house at KiEZ Hölzener See. He/She will have her/his own room. Also full board is given at KiEZ Hölzener See – just during holidays or according to prior agreement the volunteers will receive money to provide their own food.

Pocket money: will be provided on a monthly basis. It is 110 Euro per month.

Local transport: The volunteer will be given a monthly pass for the public transport in Berlin.

Mentors: The volunteers will have 1 mentor at KiEZ Hölzener See (Fanny) and one in the VJF office (Steffi).

About the program (rough schedule, small changes might appear):

During the EVS the volunteers will learn all different facets of children and youth work in a theoretical and practical approach. They will have several opportunities to make contact with other volunteers. During their daily work (30h a week), they will participate in team consultations as well as internal and external meeting and professional trainings. The volunteers will work in a team and be responsible for certain tasks. It is possible to choose a project on which they can focus due to their interests and talents. Moreover, they will support and coordinate the planning and arrangement of new free time activities and projects (development of recreation ideas, educational and info boards, handicraft ideas etc.). Volunteers will also prepare and organise environmental measures with children and youth groups in the framework of offers for school classes. Also help in the children's recreational village is needed (willow huts, planting, cutting down logging roads for the backpack trail etc.). Furthermore, they will help to take care of educational contents. A great offer is the preparation and running of an international workcamp. The volunteers will lead a group of 12 – 15 participants, work together and get to know each other.

Volunteer profile and recruitment process:

As a volunteer at Hölzener See it is an advantage to have a good knowledge of German in order to be able to communicate with co-workers and visitors. Working at Hölzener See requires teamwork spirit as well as the ability to work independently.

Be prepared to work with children a lot, so good communication skills are necessary. Volunteers should be open and willing to introduce their cultural background to the visitors of the youth club, as well as their own experiences in the field of youth work. Some computer skills are helpful for supporting PR actions and preparations of fairs and events.

Hölzener See welcomes motivated, reliable and tolerant volunteers with good communication skills and a sense of humor. Gender, nationality, religion and political and sexual orientation are not considered in the selection process, the volunteers are chosen regarding their abilities, experiences, interests and motivation.