

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



Lebens(t)raum e.V.

<http://www.lebenstraum-verein.de/>

Lebens(t)raum e.V. (Dream/Room of life r.a. = registered association) is a facility in the field of disability care and politics located in the centre of Halle.

Lebens(t)raum e.V. developed out of an initiative of parents of children with disabilities. Since 2007 it advocates for physically, mentally or multiple disabled children, youth and young adults. The aim is to make a bit of normality and the chance for a self-determined life possible for these people. At the same time it longs on the society level for tolerance of human diversity and understanding for people who do not fit the picture of an average citizen.



The associations wants to offer children, youth and young adults a second home, in which they can live together with same-aged as normal as possible. This way the parents are able to let them go knowing they did the best for them. For the children and youth is opened the perspective to take part in life and a self-determined future. Parents get the space for exchanging their experiences, supporting each other in problemsolving and strengthening each other.

The association runs different facilities and offers such as:

- consulting: information on juristical questions and advices for financial help
- family support service: shortterm and longterm care, care at home or in the space of the association, assistance in free time activities, provision of integration or studies assistents,
- help at home, further training for parents, experts, assistents etc.
- leisure times offers
- Early childhood support: support from birth to the entrance to school for children with attested retardations in development or disabilities
- social-pedagogical family support: The social-pedagogical family support is a form of youth welfare for families. Through intense counselling and monitoring of the families solutions for daily-life problems and conflict resolution can be tested and practiced. Usually this is carried out in a longterm time frame (1-2 years).
- two integrative Horte (after school care club) in the districts "Neustadt" and "Südstadt":
- supervision after school of children with and without disabilities in one group
- residential group(s): In order to give people with disabilities the possibility of a self-determined life, the association runs living communities. About eight people are living together in one apartment, assisted by social, medical and pedagogical staff.

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

The voluntary service at this poa mainly is social and caring work with young adults with disabilities!

The volunteer will support one residential group.

Currently, there are two shared flats for people with mental and/or bodily handicaps. The residents live there on their own, assisted by the team of Lebenstraum. In the morning they go to work, so they are at home afternoons and weekends only – this being the typical hours of work of the volunteer.

Both flats are located in the city center. In flat one there are living six, in flat two eight people. Each residential group is sperad over 2 floors, each floor with own kitchen and living room.

The volunteer supports the staff in their ongoing activities. S/he may initiate own activities. Besides that, s/he will take part in team meetings and events and may participate in two professional trainings per quartal together with the employed and honorary staff.

Activities in the residential group:

- company and support of individual residents
- help with care (washing, brushing teeth, showering, going to the toilet, cleaning diapers – only on agreement)
- help at daily routine (making shopping list, assist shopping, cooking, going to the doctor, help cleaning the flat etc.)
- support of running free time activities of residents (walking, swimming, bowling, games etc.)
- initiate own activities
- support at trips
- if wanted: assisting in therapies

Please be aware:

- It's mainly about care and housekeeping activities!
- Some residents might be quite challenging!
- You work afternoon hours (3pm to 9pm) or weekends!
- Residents usually do not speak english, within the team only few people speak english!
- You will have a quite fixed duty-roster!

Volunteers profile – Specific for this place of assignment

- openness towards and interest (in interaction with) people with disabilities
- empathic, warm-hearted and friendly
- preferable creativity, phantasy and like to play
- good German is very helpful
- quite high self-esteem is very helpful

Volunteers profile – General

- 18 to 28 years
- (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 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

Motivation of poa

Lebens(t)raum e.V. used to work with local volunteers since beginning. Building on its experiences with local volunteers the association expects from international volunteers for itself:

- The volunteers bring in motivation and energy. They meet the clients on another level
- then the pedagogical staff.
- The contact between people with and without disabilities fosters the inclusion, aim of Lebens(t)raum e.V., and sensitizes the volunteers to people with disabilities.
- The volunteers bring an intercultural dimension into the activities of Lebens(t)raum. This is especially interesting for the target group since people with disabilities have little access to international experiences until now. The association aims to enable this intercultural exchange with European volunteers inside their own association.
- As additional support the volunteer brings in time and motivation to interact more intensively than the pedagogical staff has the capacity to.
- Young people from other countries bring in new spirit and new ideas in the association.

Reports of former volunteers

Erma, flat 1, 2017-18

My name is Erma Andrić. I come from Bosnia and Herzegovina and I am a volunteer in Lebenstraum e.V. I'd like to introduce my everyday routine at my place of assignment (POA), as well as what I have gone through so far and what helped or hindered me in volunteering there.

As a psychology student I applied for this POA to get some field experience about the things I read in books. With no experience in working with people with disabilities before I was pretty excited about it all. It turned out that it was nothing like I expected it to be. I thought I would be doing some workshops or funny everyday activities with them but it ended up in taking care of their basic needs and helping them go through a day with the tasks they are not able to do themselves. In the WG 1 where I volunteer, there are 7 persons with disabilities from which 3 are constantly in a wheelchair and one more periodically. And so it went for the first two to three months. My day was consistent of setting the table for drinking coffee, going grocery shopping, preparing dinner and cleaning afterwards and then assisting the clients by showering and preparing for bed. So the working time is from around 3-9 pm. There is also one client who tends to be aggressive in certain situations and I had a very difficult time in dealing with him.

I felt frustrated and almost lost my motivation for volunteering. But then I decided to speak up and everything changed. I had more meetings with the coordinator in Friedenskreis e.V. and told everything that happened. My sending organisation also supported me and cooperated with Friedenskreis to solve everything for the best. We also had seminars where we were talking about our private life and POA all volunteers together, sharing experience and support. I also had a meeting with the coordinator and my mentor at POA together and afterwards almost every employee knew how I felt and started being even more supportive towards me than before. I also have to mention that every employee here is so open, warm and flexible and I made private connections with a few of them.

Also, besides my everyday work routine we have at least once or twice in a month organised trips around the city and city events. I laugh a lot with all of them and we have so much fun. I realised that everything takes time and effort, sometimes more than expected. In the end it always pays off in some way. You just have to take care of your needs, speak up and be flexible. One more thing is that you mustn't close up, have to make connections and some friends. Find hobbies, explore the city, country and enjoy!

Besir, flat 1, 2016-17_final report

My duties at Lebens(t)raum.e.V.

Lebens(t)raum has two shared flats for disabled people, both of them are in the city center. I am working in the second flat I often start at 15:00 o'clock and finish at 21:00 o'clock, but since March the work plan has changed for example: three times during the month over the weekend working for 12 hours (Saturday Sunday), but for this reason 15 days a month are free and 15 days a month working days. In the flat 2 has 8 residents, 4 in the first floor and 4 in the second floor. Every week the residents have a daily plan for example during the week they work, but in Thursday's they have meetings with other people with disabilities living go to the "schpiele haus" visit different places or go to the Lebens(t)raum center for any activity. Friday's they have a day of sport or go to the pool, cause participate in the various sports activities. Saturday's usually have reservations for disco, cinema and concerts or cirk etc, but also during the weekend they visit their parents.

Residents are able to do all alone but it is necessary to get help from the workers. Every night they make a shower, here it is necessary to be observed by the workers and help to shaved and tooth brushing.

On the second floor is a girl which can not walk and stays in the chair. She is very nice and funny, but for it always take a care two workers.

I am happy that during the year I was part of the Lebens(t)raum and gained a lot of experience.

Besir, flat 1, 2016-17_in between report

"Life is the same for all, but is changing in some ways". From September last year I am part of project "Weltwärts" doing my voluntary service in Lebenstraum e.V. What kind of place is Lebenstraum.e.V? It is a place where people with disabilities are living. My main task is to help these people. I forced myself to find an opportunity to be close with them and this is happening thanks to my motivation. The place where I work is a two-storey house with four inhabitants, living on the first floor. Four young boys under the age of 30 years, living on the second floor and four-year resident over the age of 30 (two girls and two boys). My duty is very simple I only help when it is needed. I started working from 15:00 to 21:00 during the day. Initially check all the rooms of residents to ensure that everything is alright then prepare coffee and tea. After being everything about everyone ok, I am sitting while sipping tea or coffee and discussing how I have spent the day at work or any other difficulties. We make preparations together for the next day and it's time till 18:30 in the evening. I personally try to help on both floors of the apartment, but the most of the time I'm on the first floor.



Merve, 2015-16



"It makes me really sad to think about leaving this place!

Everyday is another experience!"

Lebenstraum has two shared flats for disabled people. Both of them are in the city center. First one has six residents, three of them are using wheel chair. Second flat has eight residents and only one of them has wheel chair. All of residents in Lebenstraum's flats are lovely and heartwarming.

It is so easy to establish a bond with them. They all have their own interests such as collecting mini car toys, pencils or to be a fan of football team, to be good at puzzles, to be very good at handcraft etc. It is always a joy to spend time with all of them.

I am working in the second flat but I had experiences in both shared flats so I will simply try to explain my duties as a volunteer.

I often start to work at 15:00 o'clock and finish at 21:00 o'clock. I always have one or two colleagues who work with me. So there are always somebody who helps me. When everybody comes from work we sit together, drink coffee, eat cake and chat a little bit. After all we take the girl with wheel chair to her room and clean her diaper. Then if there is something we need, we make shopping list and go shopping with some of them. We start to prepare dinner around 6 pm. We finish eating and cleaning until 19:30. After dinner everybody goes to take shower. The last duty of me is to help them to taking shower, shaving, brushing teeth etc. I sometimes work also at the weekend and take free days at the week days. There is another shift at the weekend which starts at 8:30. If I work at 8:30 what I do is to watch TV with them and prepare lunch, nothing more.

Every Thursday we have a meeting with other disabled people around Halle. We have different themes every week. For example cooking, playing games, hand craft etc. Every month we go to swimming and bowling. Sometimes we go for a walk or to see a movie or a concert. So what I do is not only taking care of them but mostly spending quality time.

The first week of my volunteer service I did not know how to clean diapers, but after a while I learned how to do it and since that I have a very good connection with her, I got used to it. Now I can even do it alone without any help. I even went on vacation with her to assist which was very joyfull for me. But remember there will be always somebody who will help you if you need help!

Apart from this there will be only one volunteer who can speak English, so I had communication problems during the first month. But then they helped me to improve my German after a month everything was much easier. They even bought a dictionary for me. Over and above this I had no difficulties, because everybody at Lebenstraum is so lovely.

Additional: If you are working in the first flat your duties will be the same. But if you are male you will help only male residents by health care, if you are female only females. The only one who has diaper is a male, the other people who use wheel chair are female but all of them can use toilet with a little help so there is not a big difficulty.

Conclusion This was my first time to live abroad, so of course I had some problems. But the most important thing is I have learned how to struggle with the conflicts and how to change situations in a positive way. Of course my first goal was to learn German and so on, but more than that I improved my personality and I already feel like I am no longer like in the past. No matter what I became much more strong. I travelled around Germany and also around Europe and met a lot of great people. Now I have friends with whom I am gonna keep in touch for sure.