

# Youth Sociocultural Activator – main aim of the project is to facilitate life-long learning

of all actors in EVS project - receiving organizations, target groups and volunteers. To provide participants with possibilities to gain and strengthen intercultural, linguistic competences, to support social services in our community, to promote European values.

Project dates: **01/08/2017-29/06/2018**

Place: Kaunas, Lithuania

Topic: social care, babies.

3 volunteers at the centre.

Application deadline: **8<sup>th</sup> May 2017** to [istitutomorcelliano@gmail.com](mailto:istitutomorcelliano@gmail.com)

## About the host organization – “Lopšelis”

Habilitation hospital "Lopšelis" consists from two departments. One - the babies' home department, provides primary care, social service and education for healthy and disabled 0-7 years old -children. Habilitation department provides outpatient and inpatient habilitation services for 0-18 years old disabled children from all over the Lithuania. Children with different neurodevelopmental disabilities come there with their parents for functional evaluation and habilitation activities.

The staff of our organisation: medical staff (doctors, nurses, physio-, speech-, occupational-, music, art therapists, psychologist), social worker, pedagogue, assistants of nurses and social worker.

Target groups we generally work with: healthy (0-3 years old) and disabled children (0-7 years old) living in babies' home, with children with developmental disabilities living in families, parents, staff.

Volunteers are hosted at care-home of healthy and disabled children.

## Environment

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Geographically Kaunas is the second largest city in Lithuania and the fourth in the Baltic States. It is 100 km away from the capital Vilnius and about 250 km away from the seaside. The population in Kaunas is about 300 000 inhabitants. Ethnic composition: 93,6% Lithuanian, 3,8% Russian, 0,4% Ukrainian, 0,2% Belarusian, 0,4% Polish, 1,6% others. The most interesting things about Kaunas are that it is resting at the confluence of country's two largest rivers in Lithuania, Neris (the river mother) and Nemunas (the river father), Kaunas has an island in the city centre, which is called “Nemuno sala” (en. Nemunas island) and at the side of Kaunas city there is Kaunas sea (water reservoir for hydro power station). Kaunas sea is the largest body of water in Lithuania. There're 8 universities, variety of museums (few of most interesting ones is Devils museum, and Museum for the blind), and six theatres in Kaunas.

## Motivation and experience

Hospital of Lithuanina University of Health Sciences Kaunas Clinics branch - Children rehabilitation hospital "Lopšelis" participates in European Voluntary Service longer than 12 years. Each year we have 1-3 volunteers from different countries in "babies' home" department. They stay in our institution for 10-12 month and become members of our staff. We usually host 3 young volunteers.

We are happy to not only to have "additional hands" in routine activities with babies and small children, but to get new experience as well. Young people come with new ideas and assist the staff in organizing children's paintings exhibitions, different celebrations and other activities with kids. Volunteers tend to question routine tasks and help to keep the fresh look at what we do, also bringing lots of energy and good emotions, which is healthy for the personnel.

Tutor Vida Bajoruniene - is hosting volunteers at her group since the very beginning of the programme. She does not speak English, but invokes all possible communication skills in order to understand and to be understood by the volunteer. Laima Marciulygienė and Draša Jarmulkaitė have three years of experience hosting international volunteers at their groups. Draša can speak English and has good skills in training volunteer.

Jolanta Ulozienė is head nurse and contact person, who supports tutors and volunteers already 5 years. Jolanta speaks English.

## Role and tasks of the volunteer at “Lopšelis”

EVS volunteers give great possibility to our children to get individual attention, more learning possibilities, warmth, creative activities, etc., though it is also beneficial for the volunteer – 11 months is a good period to specialize into this environment and to get deep understanding of children needs, ways of learning, parental skills, to understand this social problem and its consequences.

Example of the tasks:

- assist in daily care of the children and babies' activities (dressing up, feeding children or helping in eating, helping with the toilet);
- assistance for workers in doing different therapies for the children (music, art therapy, swimming pool) (bringing children to the therapies, help for the volunteers in the therapy);
- playing games, doing tasks for their development;
- going outside for a walk with the children;
- organizing celebrations for the children;

- volunteers' own initiatives.

What opportunities the volunteer will have in terms of learning:

Children's care skills:

- The volunteers will assist the workers in doing daily life care for the children. The volunteers will gain parental skills, how to take care of the kids, how to create healthy relations with one adult person.

Social skills:

- Through communication with children with and without emotional problems and the staff.

Teamwork skills:

- In some activities volunteers should cooperate with the staff and plan activities together with the workers. The volunteers will have tutor in the activities, who will support them in learning how to treat the children, how to deal with difficult situations, like conflicts with staff members, when people have different views and how to find the compromise and to get a better understanding of the structures of the institution.

Linguistic skills:

- Volunteers will attend Lithuanian language courses, in order to learn the language. The volunteers will communicate with their tutor and coordinator in English and in this way will improve their English language skills.

Educational skills:

- It is very important to assist children in their developing process and to create some challenging tasks for them.

Most important thing for the volunteers in our institution is to create contact and long-term relationship with children. The volunteer would spend together time in activities also in free time. In this case child has opportunity to become safely attached to grownup person and has a chance to learn things, which are not seen, but very important in each day living - building relationship, getting into the contact with another person, learning through playing, etc.

### Volunteers' profile

We will be happy to host all kind of volunteers, we will consider all applications received, but it is crucial that the volunteer would love children and would be eager to work with them, volunteer should be ready to spend the day in noise and intensity due to energy of the children. We are always happy to host initiative and relaxed young people who are open to learn and challenge themselves! Creativity, knowledge and experience in art or music subjects would be an advantage. Also in our institution all volunteers before starting to work are asked to get health certificate, which they may get in their home country.

### Practical arrangements

The project consists of two main parts – volunteering and life under hosting conditions, therefore please take a look at what we offer and what do we expect:

1. **Volunteering 35-40 h/week** at your chosen receiving organization. There will be one person responsible for planning the schedule with you, advising on everyday tasks, but most likely this person does not speak English, or a bit, although there are more people in the organization who most likely will help with translation in the beginning. Please take careful look at the target group description and tasks, this would be your everyday life 5 days/week, thus think very carefully!
2. You'd also meet with your **mentor**, who would help you to learn from your experience - reflect :), once a month at least.
3. You will be part of the **group of volunteers** at coordinating organization A.C.Patria – participate in monthly meetings where we share our experiences, apply non-formal education methods and learn from each other. Volunteers group also are asked to help in making the volunteering and their project visible in society, encouraging other youngsters to volunteer, sharing good practices.
4. **Language courses** at least 36 academic hours in a group of volunteers.
5. We provide **local transport tickets** for public transport in Kaunas.
7. Regular **volunteers' allowances** consists of 80 EUR/month pocket money and 120 EUR/month food allowances (200 EUR in total).
8. Volunteers pay their phone and **internet connection** fee which may reach ~5.8 EUR/month.
9. **Accommodation**. One volunteer gets private room in shared apartment (3-5 people living in one flat or house). Usually accommodation is modest in the old buildings, which might look so much different from what you expect it to be. Temperature inside the room in winter might be ~18 oC. We ask for 20 EUR deposit in order to prevent damage or loss related, but if no damage done and if there were no abuse of rules, deposit is given back - be free to ask about it :)
10. Since the **travel expenses** have fixed prices, we would be able to cover only what is under the given amount by Executive Agency, given budget is 275 EUR for round trip under 1999 km and 360 EUR for longer distance.