



November 6, 2017

NALC Holland *Newsletter vol.4*

It is already November ! Hope that everyone is doing fine.

NALC Holland; established in September 2016, is growing with the number of people who offers volunteer activities. In this newsletter you will find the stories of these volunteers. Please, also note that there is an agenda of coming activities on the last page.

Volunteer experience story ~~at the elderly facility~~

Some time ago, I once saw an advertisement which was calling for a volunteer at a care home. They were looking for volunteers who are able to visit them on certain days to offer help. As I have been working for the Japanese society in the Netherlands for a long time, I thought it might be good to be involved in the Dutch society after I stopped my job. At the same time, NALC Holland was launched and that is why I joined NALC Holland.

Many activities like hand-craft class, chorus time, bingo game, movie time, painting class etc. are organised by the volunteers. The volunteers sometimes go to the hospital together with the elder people of this house. There is one lady who lives in this care home and do volunteer work! She was enjoying taking care of the shop at the free market at the care home.

As a volunteer, I organise painting class once per week at this care home. We enjoy pencil drawing, water-colour painting, colouring together. Once per week they come to the activity room and concentrating on moving their hands. Off course we share the joy of coffee break. I am happy to hear that they are speaking to their family that they enjoy this class. It is my great pleasure to welcome the inhabitants at the painting class who comes with their walking sticks and rollators. This is “my healing time.” (G)



Volunteer experience story ~~Maatjesproject~~

Since last Autumn I've been working as a volunteer in a "Maatjes Project". I got to know about this project through the Volunteer organization of the city of Amstelveen. Maatjes Project is mostly aimed at people who have a psychological problem. These people are coupled with a volunteer who will help them overcome the fear of getting out from their homes and help them to have more social contacts. The volunteer worker tries to stimulate them to have a more active social life.



There were two reasons for me to be interested in this project. First of all my major was psychology and also I have a sister in Japan who has been suffering from psychological problems a long time. Because I live far away from my sister I simply cannot spend much time with her. So I thought why not have contact with people who experience problems of this kind instead.

And while I was looking for volunteer work I got to know about NALC and their concept. Working hours as a volunteer accumulate points and these points can be used for getting help from other volunteers for my family abroad. They can also be saved for later use by myself. I liked this concept and system so I decided to join as a member last year.

At first I had a long interview with a coordinator from the Maatjes Project to find out about my motivation, my background, what my interests were etc... I told the coordinator that my level of Dutch was not that high and said that a person who speaks English would be a good choice for me. The next step was a meeting I had with my future Maatje and the coordinator.

It is totally up to the volunteer and the Maatje to decide what kind of activities you have, all according to you and Maatje's interests. So some of them go and find good restaurants together, go ride their bicycles or play the chess together. If you experience any trouble with your maatje you can always ask an experienced coordinator for advice. Because I'm working in my own neighbourhood I'm not getting my travelling expenses paid. But for every hour of volunteer work you get 1 Euro from the organization. I save that money to go and see a film together with my maatje or for having a cup of coffee with her.

My maatje is a Dutch lady who loves football and animals. She is about the same age as me and she has short-hair. I visit her once a week or once in two weeks. Mostly we start talking about how things are going. Depending on her condition or on the weather that day we decide what to do. Normally we go out for a walk, do some shopping or play a board game together. Sometimes we go out to see a film or play mini golf together. Sometimes when she needs to see her doctor I take her there in my car.

She has a cheerful and sincere character. At times she may get very tired suddenly and she is afraid of going out by herself. I can feel that she thinks it is important to have contact with people and to have a chance to go out as other people do. I am glad that I can be of some use to her by taking her out and let her breathe some outside air.

It is just spending time together once in a week, listening to her or talking with her, sometimes also telling her my story, or do some practical things with her. I've been doing this about a year by now. It brings me joy having a good relationship with her: we can talk freely and frankly with each other. And also I feel that the intention is not just a one-way thing from my side but I'm getting good intentions from her side. That gives me a good feeling and satisfaction. I am grateful and hope that I can go on doing this steadily. (K)

“ ANNA KOTO, KONNA KOTO”

We gathered some volunteer stories of the NALC Holland members.

☆☆ At the care home for the elderly Alzheimer patients.

☆ I walked with an old man with grumpy face inside the care home. He suddenly sat in a chair and I asked the reason. “ My wife will come to this bus stop to pick me up” According to the people from this care home, his wife passed away years before and he is walking in this building everyday looking for his wife. I was shocked to see him who is still looking for his wife with deep rumpel in his face. But there was another shock waiting me. During the gymnastic exercise time, this old man showed completely different face to me. He was happily “dancing” with music! He was really enjoying doing the exercise like a boy. After 20 minutes happy happy dancing time, he returned to the old man with grumpy face, relying on his rollator, and again, went on walking to look for his wife.

☆ An old lady with beautiful white hair asked me “ Will you come with me to the supermarket outside the care home?” OK, we will go together. “Which jacket do you wear? Do you have your wallet? Oh no, you are still waring your slipper, you need to ware shoes! ” Finally we were outside the care home. What she wanted to buy was..... her favoriet wine. “ We can buy wine inside the care home, but it is not the good one” she gave me a charming wink. It was a lovely dating time with a pretty old lady.

☆ I go to this care home once per week as a “coffee lady” I do not know if they remember my face and name from the last week. I thought, “If I say every time my name, then maybe I insult these old people..... So, everytime I was there, I said only “ good morning” and slowly went into their rooms. I did not know what I should do. After few times volunteer, I joined a meeting for the volunteers. I brought my question: How should I start my visit everytime? “ A lady who is doing same kind of volunteer gave me the answer: “ I am visiting this care home around 30 years. Every time I give hands to everyone saying my name. Some people remember my name and face. Others do not. Anyway, I shake hands with everyone, and ask if they are doing well. I advise you to do the same.“ Since then, I do so following her advise. I feel more happy to go there every week.

Do you also have “ a scene that I never forget” “ a nice memory” “ a sad memory” “ Oops, I should have done in another way” “ what I felt through the activities “ etc. etc.?

Every short/long stories are very welcome. Please share with us.

~~ Active listening course ~~

Active listening is to listen with your heart to the story of your conversation partner.

It is used in various fields, but can also be used in daily life such as conversations with your family or your friends. I think that the knowledge of active listening is very useful for people who are volunteers or want to start volunteering in the future.

The lecturer is Prof. Masako Iwasaki. She is taking her precious time for this course, while having a busy time travelling between Japan and the Netherlands.

The course will be 24 hours in total and divided into 6 lessons. Students are required to take all 6 lessons. Sorry for the people who could not participate to the course because of the schedule!

What we have learned so far:

We have learned what active listening is, the basic attitude of active listening and we have worked on many exercises.

The cases appearing in the exercises are various, such as relationship with your family (parents/ children/ partner, etc) or with your friends, colleagues, or with your own problems (illness etc), and so on.

The exercises are: reading examples carefully, understanding how the person feels through their experiences (and the associated strength of his/ her feeling) understanding the problem, and practicing how to communicate your understanding and empathy in your own words .

I think that everyone may feel comfortable just by talking about their problems to somebody. And if you can accept the suffering and trouble of your conversation partner as if you were in their situation it will heal their heart more. Moreover, they might be able to find a solution by themselves and it might make them more positive. I think that active listening could be such a help.

Three other people besides me are taking this course this time.

It is a good experience for me to listen to their opinions during the exercises.

I am very much looking forward to the lectures from February next year!

(KM)



NALC Holland 1 year!

We celebrated at a Potluck party



One year passed after the establishment of NALC Holland. The number of people who offers volunteer help is growing gradually (2016: 11. 2017: 20) NALC Holland is making progress !



We had a potluck party to celebrate this opportunity. 12 people joined this celebration which was held on the 20th of September, from 18:00 in Amstelveen. After toast, we enjoyed hand made dishes which were brought to the party table by these participants. We introduced ourselves briefly how he/she is involved with volunteer activities / NALC Holland. Many other things were discussed as well: information about care-system in The Netherlands, about someone's old days stories, the future of NALC Holland, etc. etc. In between, there were also people who are happy to see each other after long time, serving the foods, shopping / cooking information..... in short: lovely, lively happy hours for everyone! These nice group of people are looking forward the 2nd year celebration of NALC Holland.



NALC Holland Activities (2017)

- ◎ Jan 7, 2017 Potluck (Amsterdam)
- ◎ Jan 29, 2017 Committee meeting (Heemstede)
- ◎ Feb 22, 2017 Meeting of the Administration team (Almere)
- ◎ Feb 26, 2017 Committee meeting (Amsterdam)
- ◎ Mar 19, 2017 Potluck (Amsterdam)
- ◎ Apr 22, 2017 Potluck (Amsterdam)
- ◎ May 20, 2017 Potluck (Amsterdam)
- ◎ Jun 11, 2017 Committee meeting (Amsterdam)
- ◎ Jun 17, 2017 Generaal meeting (Amstelveen)
- ◎ Jul 12, 2017 Meeting of the Administration team (Almere)
- ◎ Jul 29, 2017 Potluck (Amsterdam)
- ◎ Aug 9, 2017 Meeting of the Administration team (Almere)
- ◎ Aug 20, 2017 Potluck (Amsterdam)
- ◎ Sep 20, 2017 Potluck (Amsterdam)
- ◎ Sep 23, 2017 Committee meeting (Hillegom)
- ◎ Oct 4, 2017 Meeting of the Administration team (Almere)
- ◎ Oct 20, 2017 Potluck (Amsterdam)

Activities in the future

- ◎ Nov 8, 2017 Meeting of the Administration team (Almere)
- ◎ Nov 26, 2017 Potluck (Amsterdam)
- ◎ No potluck in December 2017
- ◎ Jan 13, 2018 Committee meeting (Heemstede)

~~ From the treasurer ~~

To cover the running cost of NALC Holland, the annual contribution is fixed.
That is 22euro.

We kindly ask you to pay this amount to the following account:

Stichting WELnu

NL 13 INGB 0007 4290 16

Thank you for your kind co-operation.

Colofon

NALC Holland URL: <http://www.nalcholland.teqtqs.nl>

Contact : masako@telfort.nl / 06 2425 2523