



March 21, 2019

NALC Holland *Newsletter vol.7*

~~ From the Committee ~~

* New "point system" of NALC Holland

At this moment the following 3 are done / planned /requested to do as NALC Holland activities. Please be introduced to the new point rules of these 3.

- ① Volunteer activities between the NALC Holland members
(ex. Helping house keeping of the elder NALC Holland member)
- ② Volunteer activities at the Dutch welfare oranisatitons
(ex. Volunteer activities at the old people's house, a house for the handicap people)
- ③ Other volunteer activities
(ex. Joining potluck, taking care of the animals/plants at the non-profit organization /public organization)

This is the new rule about ③ above. The committee decided to register ③ as our volunteer activities in the separated category.
The aim of this decision is to stimulate the volunteer activities of the Japanese in The Netherlands.

[Point use rules]

You are able to send your points that you earned by the activities ① and ② to your family in Japan. (only in case that your family is the member of Nalc Japan) Please report your activities to Ms. Matsubara.

When you earned your points by activities ③ above, you are able to use your point only in the Netherlands. You can use your points by yourself, and you can also send them to your partner, parents, or children living in NL. This activities are called NAC (Nalc Additional Club) point. Please report your activities to Ms. Kannan / Ms. Osada.

* The General Meeting

The general meeting will be held on the 15th of June (Sat.) in Amstelveen. We can share our experiences of the volunteer activities and discuss for the beter circumstances. Please join the meeting !

The good Use of Timebanking

Anthony Millenaar

In the Newsletter of April 2018 (Vol.5) I wrote about Mantelzorg ;the way family support the vulnerable family-members in the Netherlands.

Traditionally in Japan it was also common sense that family members helped each other.

However, since about the 70ties last Century the family in both countries became more mobile because of various reasons (e.g. labour ;partnership far from their own family ;)

That`s the reason Japanese people found the way how they could continue the support of their family. That what they called “Time Banking.

Since the Kick-off NALC Holland in 2016 September we started this exchanging system, a number of Japanese Volunteers earned ‘Credits through Timebanking “ and we wrote about their experience in 6 Newsletters .

Nevertheless I want to summarize this one time more because the Volunteers sent their credits for registration to Matsubara-san but *until now* they did not use these “credits “ . Maybe the reason is that they have difficulties to ask help?!

Although the principle is quite simple , it is clear the implementation is not easy .

You will support a person in Holland with special needs and for this you receive Credit-points. You can use these points in various ways

-a- your family member (e.g your mother) with special needs lives faraway (e.g Japan) and you are not available to give her the necessary daily care .For this you are able to use your earned credits for a volunteer who live in the region of your mother and can take of her .

-b- you also can save your credits in the future when you need support for yourself and you can ask a volunteer of NALC Holland

-c- you can promise your credits for other members of NALC Holland who need support .

So, in this context I would like to emphasize one time more that the system has been based on “reciprocity ;this means :everybody is equal on the one side you give support and on the other side you ask support

Since the start of NALC Holland the so-called Potlucks in Amsterdam are organized regularly for exchanging experiences with Time banking. So I want to ask the members to reinforce each other in spending the credits. NALC Holland also has plan to start branches in other part of the country (e.g in and around Arnhem in September 2019). In this way it will be easier to attend the Potluck for local members.

In the next Newsletter I like to write more about the meaning of Reciprocity and the way how people can support each other on an equal base. Referring to the next article: “Loneliness”, Time-banking can help to overcome loneliness.

Thema: Loneliness

Many people experience “it is surprising to see crowds of people in a busy shopping street, in a big station etc.” At the same time you realize that you know nobody in that mass of people. This time I followed media with the theme “loneliness.”

“Luisterlijn komt 1000 vrijwilligers tekort, veel oproepen onbeantwoord”

-NOS December 2018-

“Luisterlijn” is a phone line that one can call when one has problems, like: “I have no one to talk to”, “I’m depressive”, or, “I need someone who can listen to my family issues as a third party”.

The Luisterlijn is run by 1500 volunteers, but this number is not enough. As many as 135,000 calls or e-mails out of 450,000, remain unanswered.

“We can see which telephone lines are on ‘waiting list’. I feel restless when I see them, but I cannot handle all calls by myself. I wish volunteers did not have to feel pressured that we must take more calls,” said Miriam, one of the volunteers.

“I do my volunteer work on Wednesdays. Calls received on a Wednesday when it’s Christmas, are from people who have no one to celebrate Christmas with. Conversation on such a day is especially heavy. It’s different from any other Wednesdays.”

<https://nos.nl/artikel/2264472-luisterlijn-komt-1000-vrijwilligers-tekort-veel-oproepen-onbeantwoord.html>



“Why some Japanese pensioners want to go to jail”

-BBC NEWS 31 January 2019-



“Elderly people in Japan who depend on (National) pension often don’t have enough money to make a living. Their children tend to live in difficult circumstances too and often far away, making it difficult for the elderly to rely on them.”

This article is about the increasing number of pensioned elderly in Japan who deliberately shoplift or blackmail others, so they can live in prison for a few months or years. When they are out, they repeat the crime again to go back to prison.

It’s sad to hear about this, but since I knew that there are these kinds of people everywhere in the world irrespective of age, I was not shocked when I read the title of the article. I was a bit ashamed that Japan was featured for this topic, but I just thought, “OK, such elderly exist in Japan too.”

But reading through the article, I was shocked by the words of this man:

“(I do this) because when I’m in jail, I’m not lonely.” He admits that that he is unwillingly committing the crimes. He does feel ashamed to be in prison. But he is saying: “I’m not lonely when I’m in jail.”

I have no words to think how this elderly man must have felt, when walking outside the jail through the crowds of people.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-47033704>

Solution for loneliness! Elderlies take care of neighbors' pets when convenient for them:

Stichting OOPOEH = Opa's en Oma's Passen Op Een Huisdier

I often hear from elderlies: "I want to have a pet, but I'm afraid that I'll get sick and won't be able to take care of it anymore." On the other hand, young people also have problems:

"I have a pet, but I don't have enough time for it because of work or holidays."

OOPOEH is the simple solution to these problems. Elderlies who want to temporarily take care of neighbors' pets are called OOPOEH. Stichting OOPOEH is a system that matches OOPOEHs with pet owners who need their service.

A very simple and good idea, which is typically Dutch. Furthermore, I think that the communication between the people will be better.

In its website, you will see some nice videos featuring OOPOEHs interacting with the animals. A lady who is over 90, walks happily in a park with a small dog from her neighbor. "I take care of this small friend once in a while. It's a lot of fun!," she says. A man welcomes a parrot in his house while his neighbors are on a holiday. "I'm specialized in birds and my little friends visit me like this." OOPOEH has a soft and fun sound to it. Pets make lonely elderly people happy!!

<http://www.oopoeh.nl>

Note: The article about OOPOEH was quoted from "AJISAI vol.33", published by Nichirah Silvernet in June 2017.

Masako Higashi



" ANNA KOTO, KONNA KOTO"

" I thought that I went volunteering to help the old man. Actually I learned many things from him. I also got a trigger to think about subject that I have never thought of, but I realize that it is very important for me." We often hear this kind of stories from volunteer workers.

" ANNA KOTO, KONNA KOTO" ①

Once a week I visit an old Japanese lady who is living alone. She said "as I want to do things what I can do by myself, please help me thing what I can not do by myself". It has been already three years since I started helping her, but what she can not do by herself = what I am helping is still the same.

When I started visiting her, I was suffering from so-called "50 years old shoulder (a stiff and painful shoulder)". I did not know this kind of pain until I experienced it. I also went to physiotherapy but it was not helpful.

She told me "I have not experienced 50 shoulder, but my mother -in -law had it. It was quite severe but it cured naturally in about a year".

"Naturally cure in a year?" It was like a magic word for me.

One day, she put on TV and it was a program that shows exercise to stretch your body like "everyday exercise".

"Would you like to try it?" she invited me and we tried it together. She was advising me like "you do not have to do it if it hurts." After the exercise, "Oh? I feel good!". I did not feel the shoulder pain after several weeks later.

"I visit this old lady to help her.", but I certainly feel that I am getting something special back that I can not express in words.



“ ANNA KOTO, KONNA KOTO” ②

A story of many years ago.

Once a month was visiting the elderly person who was living alone. It was ten years after I came to Holland that I got acquainted with him. During the conversation with him, we found out that during the Second World War he had stayed as a student soldier in the town where I was born and raised, and that the place where he was born and raised is a memorable place where I had spent as a university student. We said each other "It is very surprising that such two people could meet in the Netherlands after many years later".

One day, he said "Let's make udon (Japanese noodle soup) for lunch today." And he started playing CD while preparing the ingredients in the kitchen. The song which came out was Ayumi Ishida's "Blue Light Yokohama".

I started singing along in a nostalgic feeling.

He asked me "Do you know this song?".

I answered "Of course! It was a very popular song when I was a child."

After I responding, I realized: Ah, he had been already away from Japan and living in Europe at that time.

I thought that he misses the daily life feeling, sounds, smell, and the scene of Japan in Showa era after the war, and he is trying to feel it by listening to this song.



Do you also have “ a scene that I never forget” “ a nice / sad memory” “ what I felt through the activities “ etc. etc.?”

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

Membership fee: 22 euro/year

This membership fee is to cover the expenses for the meetings, and the office supply. We appreciate your understandings and kindly ask your payment.

- Financial Year 2018/2019 is from Sep. 2018 till Aug. 2019). Please mention this at your payment.
- Account: NL13 INGB 0007-4290-16
- Any questions about the fee: please contact Ms. Matsubara

Colofon

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