

MY EVS EXPERIENCE IN LYON



After I finished my studies in Poland I decided to get some international experience. I choose France because I really want to live in this beautiful country and learn it's difficult language. So I was very happy and excited when Pierre Perra called me and said that I am accepted for the EVS in Unis-Cité, in Lyon. In the beginning I didn't really know what to expect. I just knew that I will be living in a flat with other EVS volunteers from Hungary and Austria. We met at the airport in Lyon, on August 31st.



EVS in Lyon :Timi, Raphael, Aleksandra



On-arrival training in Sommieres

The first month, September, was more like an orientation month, when we had an intensive French course and we were walking a lot, trying to get to know Lyon ! We also took part in the "on-arrival training" for many EVS volunteers in Sommieres. We spend 5 days, taking about our expectations, plans, fears and possible problems. I had a really nice time and I met many cool people.

In the beginning of October, we met French volunteers, who were also part of the Unis-Cité team for this year. All in all, we were 48 volunteers in Lyon (45 French and 3 international). In Unis-Cité all volunteers are working in groups. They have one long-term project and two or three short-term projects. The groups for a long-term project and for a short-term projects are different so you are working 2 day a week in one group and 2 other days with another group, which is very nice because it allows you to meet more people and it is making your EVS more interesting ;)



Integration week in October



Chantier: painting, cleaning, reparation... ☺

During the first week of October we were playing games to better know each other, the coordinators were explaining us the available projects, we were making some group assignments and finally we chose our long-term projects. For the short term projects I was integrated in a team of 5 French volunteers. Before we started our project we were working in a “chantier” to get to know each other and to feel like a team ☺



Long term project: “pedagogical apartment” in Venissieux.

My first choice was an environmental project. I was integrated in a team of 3 French volunteers and the main goal of our project was to teach and instruct people how to save energy and water in their homes. We were making animation and workshops in the “pedagogical apartment” in Venissieux. We were also organizing games for children, from the local social centre.

Our first short term project was in EHPAD. We were making animations for old people, for example we were playing games with them, drawing, painting, playing cards, organizing the spectacle for Christmas etc... Our second short-term project was in the association La Miete (Maison de l'Initiative, de l'Engagement, du Troc et de l'Échange) where we were supposed to organize some events in an idea of “exchange of the services without money”.



Short term Project: EHPAD maison de retraite

But EVS is not only about working and projects ☺
We travelled a lot and had many parties ☺ Together with the EVS volunteers from St. Etienne we went for a 9-day trip to Toulouse-Bordeaux-Nantes, we also went to Paris and Grenoble. We made many cool parties in our big and beautiful flat, and met many, many nice people during weekly international language meetings with an association Polyglot and KoToPo.



Travelling and having fun with EVS volunteers from St. Etienne

If I have to sum up my 10-months EVS experience I would say that I'm very happy that I've decided to do it ! I spend a great time and learned a lot about myself. I am definitely more tolerant, patient and open-minded person ! And I can speak in French, even if in the beginning it was very difficult and I had many problems to express myself.

If I have to give any advice to the future EVS volunteers, I would say: don't worry if sometimes you will feel lost, lonely or the projects will be boring. It will happen, so better be prepared, but remember to use your time in France as good as you can !

Stay positive, be friendly and motivated and I can guarantee you that your EVS experience will be as great as mine !



!!! MERCI PIERRE !!!

Aleksandra Chodorowska
EVS volunteer in Unis-Cité Lyon
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