

## **VOLUNTEERING IN THE LIBRARY – IT IS A GOOD CHOICE!**

Our great EVS voluntary project at the library of Piekary Slaskie started 6 months ago, and will last for 6 months more. For all of us it is really great journey. We met here, volunteers from different countries, and started our projects all together. At first it was a real battle with foreign language, culture and totally different way of life.

That's what says Vicente, volunteer from Spain: "I am in the middle of my volunteer period and it is time to write. After the firsts six months here I feel good. The beginning was difficult because everything was new. I had to know the flat, my neighbours, Piekary Slaskie, my work in the library and more things. When I started in the library I was worried all the time, because for me the language is difficult and I couldn't understand anything. But now everything is changing.

Polish continues being difficult for me but I can understand more. The polish lessons for me are useful and I am travelling across Poland and meeting new people all the time. The work in the library is so nice. We are doing activities with kids and trying to do surprises all the time. My relation with the workers is amazing. They are helping me when I have problems and when I find difficulties with the language. I feel comfortable here and I am beginning the check if is possible to continue in Poland after the volunteer period. Maybe I can find a job here and for me would be fantastic.

I want to continue improving day by day in different ways. I've made a good choice when I arrived here. Is a good period in my life."

"My name is Oksana and I am volunteer from Ukraine. I suppose I had little less problems with language here in Poland, but still it was a challenge for me to leave everything behind and come on this project. And I've never regretted I made this choice.

I wanted some changes in my life that's why I've decided to come on this voluntary project. I think that it was really a good start. After six months here in Poland working at the library in the Piekary Slaskie I can say that I've opened new things in myself. It's very interesting to discover new corners of your own personality.

Working with kids and adults is really exciting. You always have to try to keep their attention, make them to be interested about the topic. Every time I try to invent something new, some interesting ideas and games.

Now I know for sure that you always have to take the chances life gives you. Every step you take brings you to new possibilities and knowledge. And the most incredible is that you meet new amazing people. I really like all the people I work with at the library and people I met on the project. Everyone is very open, interesting and ready to help. Also I understood here that no matter how far you are from home you are never alone, because everywhere you can find good people, good friends. Such things you will never discover until you leave your so called 'comfort zone'.

Such projects give us possibilities to self-fulfillment and that's why I think they should have a place to be.

I feel very happy because I still have time on the project to fulfill some of my ideas, I can meet a lot of nice people, and the most important, I can improve myself."

Laura from Madrid, Spain also works with us. Here's what she says about volunteering in the library: "I decided to come to Poland because I like meeting another culture and another language. I visited other country for short time, on holiday. But I think this is a good opportunity I will know more about Poland during one year here. I liked this project because I like children, I think you can learn many things for them. Also you can teach them, because they will be the future, and for me it is very rewarding. Before I arrived at Piekary Slaskie I was very nervous, it is a big change in my life. Now I am very happy because I learn a lot of thing about Polish culture, I learn Polish although it is a little difficult and I improve my English with my mates in the library. At the end, I think I can give different point improve the quality of the volunteer programme and I will learn a lot things of my mates on the library and the same time they will learn of me. The deep this is the idea volunteer programme."

This project we've started with Sara, volunteer from Italy, but for her it lasted only for 6 months. She's really a nice girl and for her it was really interesting to work in the library in Piekary Slaskie, because in Italy she was working as a librarian as well. Sara was working with kids and had some lessons of Italian language.

And now we have a new friend Thea, volunteer from Denmark, and for her this journey just begin. Thea came here only one month ago, so she's kind of new here. But we think she became part of our team very fast. And that's what she's thinking about the project and of course her hopes about it: "Hello! My name is Thea, I'm 20 years old and I'm from Denmark. I'm a volunteer at Miejska Biblioteka Publiczna. I chose to become a volunteer because I would like to get to know another culture and to be a part of it more than what you get to do on vacations. Also I would like to challenge myself. I chose this project because of the fact that it involves lots of people in all age groups, and I also found it exciting that I had never been to Poland before. So far I find the project very nice and I think that the people have been very sweet and accommodating. I hope to both teach and learn from the project and I hope that, in spite of the language barriers, I will get to learn how to communicate in other ways. In general I find Poland very beautiful but also very different from Denmark. One of the first things I thought of when I arrived was that all of your houses are squared and flat, which is very different from the houses in Denmark, where almost every house looks different. Also I thought of the fact that I have only seen five bicycles since I arrived and in Denmark there are bicycles everywhere, literally. My favorite moment in Poland so far was when I took the bus to Katowice and I saw all these green fields where the farmers where working and the sun was shining. So beautiful and idyllic!

In September this year, I hope to be accepted at the university to be a nurse. Right now I'm thinking of working on a department with cancer patients or a department with kids. I love kids and I hope that the kids in the library will like to play with me and that everyone will be interested in getting to know me and maybe learn some Danish or practice some English."

For each of us work at the library is something new. But we can admit that working at the library is really so interesting and fun. To meet different writers and people of art, discover new ways of showing yourself is very important. Library is a perfect place to learn new things, to work in this little kingdom of books and knowledge is such a nice experience. I think that very often in this modern time people start to forget that books are perfect source of the most interesting place in the world - your imagination. So I also think it is our work to remind about this and to teach little kids to feel and see beautiful in simple

things.

We still have many hopes and many ideas how to make this project more interesting and more exciting. Voluntary is really a great idea to help people and to open yourself to the world. And we are so happy we can do this thanks to EVS project and Library of Piekary Slaskie!

We greet users of libraries across Europe and encourage to take part in the volunteering in the library!

*Vicente (Spain), Oksana (Ukraine), Laura (Spain) and Thea (Denmark)*

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