

## About Our Organisation

Võru Kindergarten Okasroosike is a small kindergarten providing childcare and basic education for children aged 1,6 -7. The kindergarten has got five groups. One of the groups is a nursery for children between the ages of 1,6 - 3 years. The other four groups are mixed-age groups and are attended by 2-7-years old kids. Furthermore, a so-called theatre room with necessary equipment, a small reading corner and a dining-room are created for children. Children can take part in extracurricular activities and choose their favourite hobby group: singing, folklore, dancing, art, football. In order to support the preschool children and prepare them for school a so-called King's School also exists in the kindergarten.



Games, experiential learning, fairy-tales and dramatizations present an important part in kindergarten's everyday life. The fairy-tale-like design, costumes, parties and traditional events make the kindergarten unique.

### Aims:

Our mission: We help and encourage children to be as they are, to find their personality. Everybody is unique, everybody has strengths, and everybody is valuable.

Kindergarten is a place of creation and discovery for young and old. The environment of the kindergarten promotes the individual learning, development and the mutual support/assistance. The physical environment where children grow up, supports and influences their independent activities, their creativity. The physical environment is playful, fairy-tale-like and safe.



The family of kindergarten Okasroosike values a healthy lifestyle and often stays outdoors for a long time.



The kindergarten has got its own traditions: Knowledge Day, St. Michael's Day fair, kindergarten's birthday, King's School for kindergarteners, Advent mornings, choosing the best knight, the final examination for the princesses of Okasroosike, theatre week, final play Okasroosike (Sleeping Beauty), pancake party, starting and ending the academic year with characters from fairy-tales.

### Regular activities

Teaching activities are planned by teachers and based on the best interests of the children. Children are taught in subgroups. The play time and free play which is led by the children themselves are a huge importance.

We've incorporated child initiative learning into our curriculum to ensure that the interests and engagement of the children always stays in the centre during teachers' activities.

The role of the teacher is to facilitate learning. This means **rather** than planning **what** to teach to children, they **support the learning process providing** input if needed. Teachers learn with children by using the means of observation, discussion and knowledge of the child in order to support their learning progress, development of individual skills and strengths. The cooperation



between the teacher and the child is of great importance to us. The role of the teacher is not to control the progress of learning, but to support where shortcomings are noticed.

Learning activities are organised through **long-term projects**, covering the subjects from the child's closest environment and surroundings. Projects usually include research and art activities and topics can vary from polar bears to jam making. We **focus on the process**, not so much on the results.



The volunteer role in those learning activities is to lead the projects together with the teachers and children. Being part of planning activities by giving ideas how to find answers to children's questions. Being active support during the whole project and work with the children until the project ends.

The volunteer will change the group after a project is finished and will start a new project with another group. There will be free time between two projects, in which the volunteer will be working together with the music teacher.



Children are outside at least once a day. There are sports lessons twice a week. One of the lessons takes place outside, if the weather is suitable. Music lessons also take place twice a week.

After lunch is a quiet time: younger kids sleep, older kids just lie in bed or play quietly.

There are three meals in kindergarten: breakfast, lunch and light afternoon meal. Children also get vegetable or fruit snack before going outdoors.

## About our team

There are 26 employees in Võru Kindergarten Okasroosike, including 15 people representing teaching personnel and 11 workers who are helping the teachers. (15 of those are teachers and 11 represent support personnel.)

All teachers have at least 3 years of experience in working with children and teamwork. Teachers have higher education and are constantly educating themselves.

Employees who start working with volunteers are people with a positive and innovative attitude, they are open-minded, they have enormous teamwork experience, and they are good at self-analysis.

As these people are constantly educating themselves further, they understand the volunteer's need for development, they are able to help with self-analysis, demonstrate learning opportunities and support volunteers in achieving their goals.

## Context

It doesn't take long to drive to Võru from main Estonian cities: 3.5 hours from Tallinn, 3 hours from Narva, 2.5 hours from Pärnu, 1.5 hours from Viljandi and a mere hour from Tartu!

Võru is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful towns in Estonia. The town centre, with its distinctive street pattern and lovely low wooden houses, will enchant you more and more with every step you take. The town's pearl is Lake Tamula with a promenade connected to the historical centre of the town through picturesque Katariina Alley. Situated right in the town centre is Võru's oldest and most attractive building: a former landowner's manor that now accommodates a state upper secondary school.



The distinctive character of Võru is emphasised by the town's slogan of „Üts ummamuudu liin“ ("A town unto itself"), which relays a positive and affectionate attitude, values the friendly and open residents of this town, expresses a typical Võru lifestyle, hints at the

peculiar local dialect of the Estonian language, the original wooden architecture, the beautiful environment, the predilection for all things that are our own and good, the respect for a culture that focuses on self-identity.

Võru is a small town with a friendly community. Collaboration can be carried out with the local library as well as with the youth centre. Volunteers have the possibility to join different hobby groups, participate in the trainings in the sports centre, take classes at the music school, etc. At the same time, we have many NGOs that involve volunteers in organizing events or contributing to the town's charity events. Kindergarten Okasroosike can be a guide for young people in order to find opportunities how to cooperate and carry out projects with different organizations.

### **Proposed Activities for the Volunteer**

Beside of personal growth, being a volunteer in Võru kindergarten Okasroosike, is an opportunity for a young person to get to know pedagogical work; develop his/her organisational skills; getting to practice teaching children and improving his/her team working skills as well as gaining new experiences within this field; learning a new language and getting to know many different aspects of a new culture.



The task of the volunteers is to help the kindergarten staff with their daily tasks with the children. They can work in only “one age groups” or from time to time also support other groups, depending on their personal interests and abilities. Volunteers will never work alone but under supervision and guidance of kindergarten group teachers. The main tasks are following: helping teachers, participating in games or lessons with the children, preparing lessons and materials for activities. They are encouraged to introduce songs, games and other interesting aspects of their own culture and traditions. Moreover, this intercultural learning can consist of the preparation of festivals or special days (Christmas, Easter, and Independence Day etc): teaching songs and dances. The exhibitions about their country or some other European countries would be very welcome.

Volunteers are more than welcome to join every activity we organise either for children or only staff members. Kindergarten Okasroosike has got 55 years of history and nice traditions, like days with families, sport activity days, visiting theatres and concerts, hikes and excursions during spring and summer. In addition, together with staff members, volunteers can help to organise a Võru Christmas Fair, Võru's Birthday celebrations and participate in the Folklore Festival as an interpreter, etc.

The working time for volunteers will be 30 to 35 h per week from Monday to Friday. The schedule may vary: in some days it's from 8 to 14 and other days from 12 to 17.30.

The day in Kindergarten looks as following:

07.00-8.30 gathering and free play;  
8.30 breakfast;  
9.00-11.00 lessons, musical or sport activities, outdoor play;  
12.30 lunch and mid-day sleep;  
15.00-16.00 free play,  
16.30 light afternoon meal and free play.

Volunteers can have the meals with the children. For free time they will get money for food. During free hours volunteers can use the internet in kindergarten. They will live in a rented room or flat in Võru which is likely to be shared with another volunteer. The volunteers will have the opportunity to learn to play the zither.

The Võru kindergarten Okasroosike will ensure:

1. That the volunteer's work is safe and has been assessed for risks
2. That every effort is made that project meets high health and safety standards
3. That the volunteers are trained and familiar with the volunteering work and have access to adequate safety equipment if needed
4. That the volunteers will get all the practical and psychological support from the staff

### **Profile of the Volunteer**

We are looking for a person who wishes to work with young children, loves children, has a positive attitude and is willing to assist. We'd love to welcome a young person to our team who is open to new ideas and is tolerant with children of special needs.