

Karula Kodu

ORGANISATION DESCRIPTION

Karula Kodu is a home for 109 adults with special needs - mental and physical disabilities. Ca 80 of our clients have profound and multiple disabilities, ca 30 need less support and are better able to communicate with the outside world. We provide 24 hour full support for our clients in all of their daily activities. Many of the clients use medical supportive devices, such as wheelchairs etc.

The total number of staff is 69. Our staff has received special training and are well experienced, many have worked with our clients for more than 10 years.

Our clients live in 7 modern family type houses, 12 persons per each family. Additionally, one of Karula Kodu units is situated in Viljandi Town – 2 family type houses that accommodate 10 + 10 persons. There is also an extra building for daily activities, such as sports, music, handicraft, sensory relaxation etc. We have our own kitchen that caters for all the family houses. For transportation there are 2 electric cars and a minibus (that also takes on wheelchairs).



Project environment

Our Home is situated in a naturally beautiful area within a nature reserve on the shore of lake Karula in Southern Estonia. The clients are accommodated in modern 1-storey family-type houses surrounded by garden and green area. In the houses the clients and the staff have all comfortable living and working conditions. All of the houses have Internet access, some of the houses have WiFi. The clients are mostly friendly, though many of them have limited abilities for interaction and communication. Still, many are very communicative (and eager to communicate) and with some clients one just needs to take some time to get used to their ways of communication and our staff will help and guide the volunteer in this process.



One of our units is situated in Viljandi Town, the clients (20 persons) living in Viljandi unit are more independent in their everyday activities, needing less support from the staff. Viljandi unit is situated close to the town centre. The two houses are surrounded by a garden, where the clients together with the staff can do some work, maintaining flowerbeds etc, there is also a greenhouse where the clients can grow their own vegetables.

Lively and beautiful Viljandi Town (ca 19 000 inhabitants) is just 3 km from Karula and Viljandi is a kind of capital of culture in Estonia, there is Viljandi Culture Academy that provides higher education in Estonian national culture, dance and music and is very active in the community, organizing concerts, performances and study groups frequently, also international cultural events take place frequently. The medieval capital of Estonia, Tallinn, is about 185 km from Viljandi (2,5 h by public transportation - bus or train).

The volunteer(s) would be accommodated in Viljandi Town in a rental apartment

Proposed Activities

The volunteer(s) will have an opportunity to learn about the life - the joys and difficulties - of people with special needs and multiple disabilities. They will learn, if not experienced before, how to work and communicate with people with learning disabilities, people with special physical needs etc. If interested, they will learn about Estonian social welfare system. In case a volunteer intends to build a career in social services, this experience will be invaluable for the future.

Proposed activities:

Either with a group of clients or individually - the volunteer(s) could organize educational and fun leisure time activities for and with the clients - sports, dance, music, games,

handicrafts, hiking, taking walks, going to concerts and trips, cooking together etc. Just giving extra attention and communicating with clients is also very welcome.



Profile of Volunteer and Recruitment Process

We will welcome motivated, mature and committed volunteers understanding the nature of the project and its particularities, including working with people with serious mental and physical disabilities. Some experience in working or relating to people with special needs would be an advantage. We would like the volunteer(s) to be open-minded, positive and flexible, helpful and active. Taking initiative from the volunteer's side is welcome, though of course the staff provides support and advice. We would prefer volunteer(s) being not under 18 years of age.

Risk Prevention, Protection and Safety

The host organisation will ensure that:

1. the volunteer's work is safe and been assessed for risk
2. every effort is made that project meets high health and safety standards
3. the volunteer is trained and familiar with the volunteering work and have access to adequate safety equipment if needed
4. the volunteer will get all the mental support from the staff if needed
5. all staff in Tõrva Home have been informed and guided about tasks of volunteer
6. the volunteer will have a tutor to guide and work with the him

Mentor and tutor will be offering psychological support to the volunteer. The volunteer is also always welcome to turn to the supervisor, coordinator of EstYES and sending organisation if necessary. Communication is the key to solve the problems that may occur.

As participants of EVS program, volunteers will be covered by AXA insurance plan for EVS volunteers, which covers possible medical expenses and help to solve possible health-related issues during the EVS period.

Support

The volunteer will have an 30-35h estonian language course at the beginning of the service. It starts within the first month of the service. Receiving organisation in cooperation with coordinating organisation finds a proper teacher before the beginning of the service. Teacher is going to be someone who is able and willing to teach foreigners. Before coming to the service, coordination organisation EstYES recommend the volunteers to start learning basic estonian by offering them different options for this: <http://www.speakestonian.co.uk/>
<http://www.loecsen.com/travel/0-en-67-2-21-free-lessons-estonian.html>
<http://www.innove.ee/en/language-examination/keeleklikk>
<http://www.surfacelanguages.com/language/Estonian>
<http://www.livemocha.com/learn-estonian/aprender-estonio>
<http://www.digitaldialects.com/Estonian.htm>
http://mylanguages.org/learn_estonian.php
<http://en.eki.ee/index.php> - Eesti Keele Instituut web page where you can find Estonian Explanatory Dictionary, Estonian-English and Estonian-Russian dictionary and Estonian language rules.