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mytripblog



At first glance...

By Christopher Church

There is a fine jewel, dwarfed by high mountains; with a heart so big I feel it rise above the Carpathian Mountains. This jewel is called Brasov. This city has the air of a mysterious, beautiful woman. She is an enigma, and you yearn to delve deeper and find out as much as you can. She draws you in with her stunning mix of Baroque, Gothic and Renaissance architecture, and glorious highlands. I am truly experiencing sensory overload, awash with sights, colours and smells. Aesthetically, Brasov is very pleasing. Its food is delicious, matched only by its delectable local beers. My family has been a joy, and they have catered to my every need.

My fellow volunteers have been fantastic, and I feel lucky to have met such rich, interesting characters. We all follow a different path, and are at contrasting stages in our lives, but we have arrived here together in Brasov, like shooting stars soaring across the obsidian sky. I can tell we are all in agreement over the uniqueness of this place. I have been here only a short while, but already I feel the energy of this place; it is palpable.

The stunning century-old buildings send you into a time warp, and you are suddenly transported to a bygone era. Romania is sheer history, and I desire to know more. I find her guarded, like a true mystery should be. Prior to this trip, I spent time in Finland and Estonia, and just like Romania, I saw mystery in these two countries.

One thing that has struck me is the sense of pride I see in Romanian people. They are strong characters, with an ethereal connection to their religion. I am not used to such levels of devotion, but I have found it thoroughly interesting. Romania reminds me a little of London, in that it is a bustling, energetic place, and I feel I could spend the entire day here, walking around, soaking up the atmosphere and the sights. Each morning, I awaken to watch the sun climb above the mountains; it casts a celestial glow over the vast landscape, leaving Brasov looking resplendent. I am but a mere five days into my trip, and I truly feel I am at the beginning of a tremendous journey. I stand at the foot of a mountain of intrigue and adventure. I am relishing every inch I climb, and will feel truly privileged once I reach the precipice. Our experiences ultimately shape us and inform all that we may become. I feel this trip has already left an indelible mark on me.

To awaken very much alone, in a strange city, is one of the most pleasant things in life. Only by continually probing every nook and cranny of this city, will I feel satisfied and truly appreciative of my time here.

As Saint Augustine said... "The world is a book. Those who don't travel read only one page"



Business Updates by Ksra Keikhsravi

When I first got in touch with the Romanian team in Brasov to assist me with planning my two month trip, I was so happy, as they communicated with me regularly to step by step plan my trip and arrange my placements.

Before I landed in Bucharest I was curious about what the country will be like and how different it will be from Moldova as I was in Moldova for a different Project. When Alex Parasca picked me up from the Bucharest Airport with his chic BMW, I was very much impressed to see the Romanian mountains and the forests, when we drove past all the beautiful green environments. When I saw these small beautiful villages and green fields on the way to Brasov, I already started to fall in love with Romania and I said to myself that I would for sure have a holiday in Romania and I would want to come to this amazing country more often.



When I met the Projects Abroad team for the induction, I felt so relieved because there is more than one person working within the team and everyone is so helpful and friendly. If, at any point I needed any kinds of assistance, one the team members would be straight away willing to help me out and provide the best solution to make feel happy within Brasov.

During the couple of months that I have stayed in Brasov, with the help of my supervisor, Alexandra Ichim, I have managed to work with three different Business placements and was able to set up a Marketing Strategy workshop that I always wanted to provide to students. Project Abroad has got a basket full of placements as there will always be different kinds of choices that would suit everyone. During these couple of months that I have lived in Brasov I have had many opportunities to visit different parts of Romania & experience the different cultures of Romanian people. Overall I feel that Romanians are very friendly, helpful, open minded and well educated.

I am very much glad that I have travelled to Brasov as it has helped me to be more confident as it allowed me to meet wonderful people from all over the world. This trip has given me many opportunities to gain experience in many areas.

I would highly recommend travelling to Romania/Brasov via Project Abroad, as it will help individuals to get all of the experience that is needed for various purposes. Projects Abroad Romania has got very good staff members, who will never leave you alone in this country as and will always look after you. They will always give you any kind of help that is needed to make your stay comfortable and enjoyable as much as possible.

From Carman to Brasov in 80 days or less

by Erika Wiebe

*B*efore deciding to do a Care Project in Romania I couldn't have told you where it was on a map. I was that small town girl who didn't really know anything about Romania other than that it was a part of Europe. You know how they say hind sight is 20x20? Well they are right! Looking back now I can't believe that I thought that one month would be enough.

When I arrived, Alex was there to meet me and we drove from Bucharest to Brasov in what seemed to be record time! I was so surprised at how much the landscape resembled the landscape of home (minus the mountains) and realizing this I wasn't so nervous to arrive in Brasov anymore.

Brasov has that small town feel that I love even though it is by no means a small town. My housemates were kind enough to take me out my first night and that was when I knew I was in trouble. Comparing the dollar to the lei everything was very cheap and for that first week there was a disconnection between the fact that I was NOT dealing in dollars but in lei! A bit of advice to future volunteers bring more money than you think you will need. Yes the book says that you can survive on \$50 to \$60 dollars a week but those figures are only true if you don't buy any food or bus tickets or phones or taxis....long story short....bring lots of money.

The first day of my placement was the mind blowing kind of day. I got the bus to this supermarket called 'Profi' and from there, we took these "taxis" (I use the word loosely) to Tarlungeni. Another piece of advice regarding the taxis...don't be afraid to say NO...some of the drivers are pretty...interesting, so if you would rather wait, DO....your family will thank you.

Arriving at the orphanage I didn't expect to fall in love with the kids. I was never really a kid person, but seeing as my future profession deals with children, I thought that I should get more comfortable dealing with the little humans. Those kids could bring the tenderness out of the coldest human being. Being a part of the Care Project usually meant 9-noon at the orphanage plus prep time for any activities or arts and crafts that we wanted to do with them.

As I write this I have less than a full week left and honestly I just hope that I can hold it together until I get on the plane because otherwise that 2.5 hour drive to Bucharest is going to be AWKWARD! The idea of having to leave after only a short month just makes me want to come back that much more.

Yes, everything was cheap and the culturally rich but the other volunteers and the children at the placements are what made my trip incredible.



Events Updates by Kazuki Shimada

Days of Brasov at the Fortress □ 12th of May in 2013
(written by Kazuki Shimada, journalism volunteer)

Many entertainment events were available in Brasov Fortress on the Days of Brasov happening in May. As a beginning, pleasant drums welcomed us at the entrance in the fortress. When entering the magical place, we saw old weapons, people putting on old costumes (warriors, knights, dancers and so on), and artisans selling traditional clothes, earthenware, accessories and the like. We were able to experience wearing knight costumes; we saw people putting on traditional costumes and perform demonstrative knight fights.



Care Updates

by Christiane Lily Reymond-Pache & Erika Wiebe

Décembre 1989 : Chute des Ceausescu et diffusion bouleversante des orphelinats roumains. J'étais horrifiée. J'avais alors 38 ans et était maman de deux petites filles de 4 et 2 ans.

Septembre 2012 : J'ai 61 ans, mes deux petites sont devenues adultes et ont quitté leur nid, mon mari est à la retraite et mon boss a décidé d'installer sa société à Dubaï. Je ne le suivrai pas et décide alors de prendre une retraite anticipée pour réaliser enfin certains projets qui me tiennent à cœur.

Les images de Roumanie me reviennent et je décide que ce sera mon premier projet. Je surfe sur Internet et recherche quelle organisation voudra bien d'une femme de mon âge.

Je tombe alors sur PROJECTS ABROAD. D'emblée leur site internet et leur sérieux me séduisent. C'est avec eux que je partirai. Je n'ai pas été déçue.

Mai/Juin 2013 : J'ai demandé à travailler avec des petits enfants et accepté un travail humanitaire dans l'Orphelinat d'Albina, à Codlea, petite ville située à 15 km de Brasov et extrêmement bien desservie par les transports publics.

Cette institution abrite entre autres une quarantaine d'enfants lourdement handicapés physiquement et mentalement. C'est là que j'ai œuvré pendant un mois. Mon travail consistait à changer les couches, laver les enfants, les habiller, les nourrir, jouer avec eux, mais surtout à leur donner du temps, de l'affection. J'ai chanté de multiples berceuses pour endormir les plus récalcitrants, tari les larmes des plus malheureux et massé inlassablement les petits corps lourdement handicapés.

J'ai aussi voulu me mettre au niveau du personnel et n'ai pas hésité à les aider à nettoyer le sol, à évacuer des montagnes de couches et à faire la vaisselle lorsqu'une aide supplémentaire s'avérait nécessaire.

Je ne cacherai pas que les débuts furent difficiles : handicaps des enfants, relations avec un personnel débordé, communication difficile voire impossible du fait de la méconnaissance de la langue.

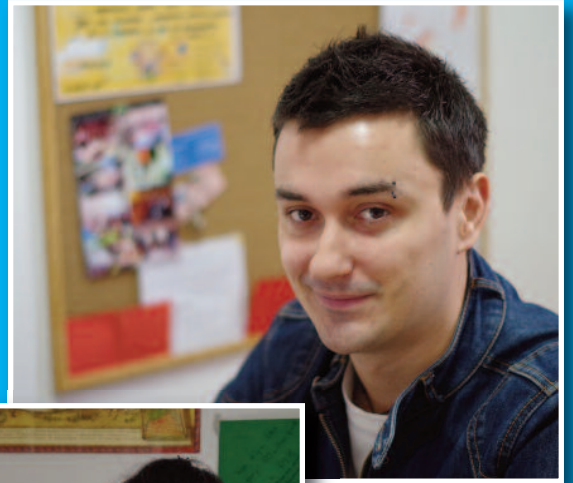
Je tiens ici à remercier Georgianna, ma responsable de Projects Abroad, de son soutien inconditionnel et de son aide précieuse, ainsi que toute l'équipe de l'organisation. Ils font un travail exceptionnel. Tout est mis en œuvre pour accueillir et soutenir le volontaire durant toute sa mission. Bravo !

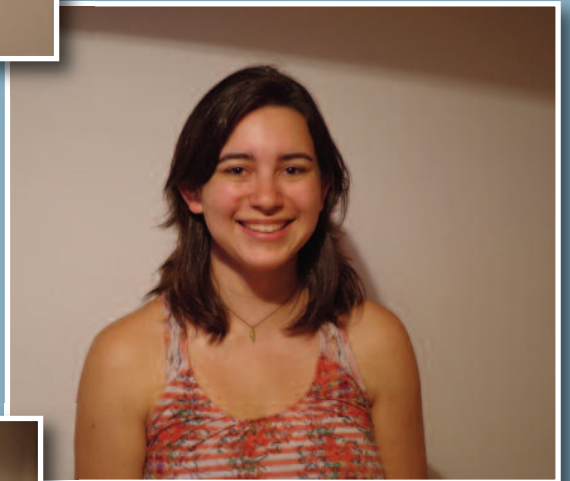
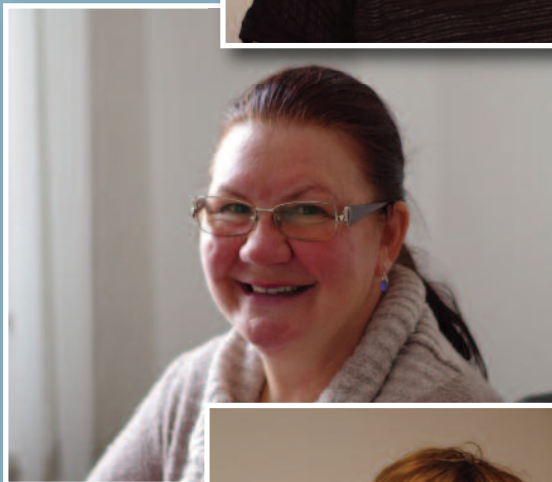
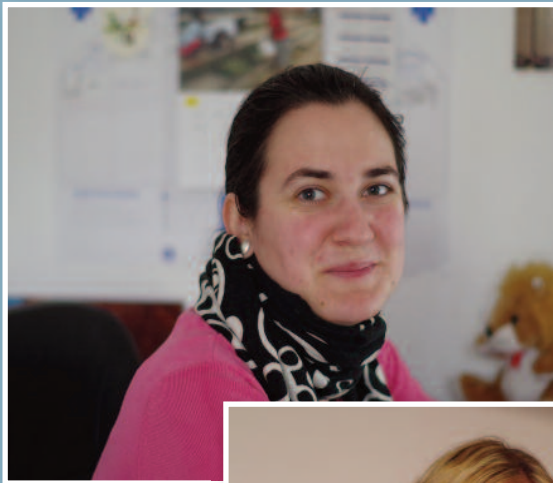
Conclusions : J'arrive au terme de mon engagement et je suis fière de l'avoir mené à bien. J'espère avoir donné aux enfants d'Albina autant d'affection qu'ils m'en ont apporté. Cette expérience a été riche d'émotion et de bouleversements intérieurs.

Une expérience inoubliable qui ne s'arrêtera pas le 8 juin car j'ai décidé, à mon retour en Suisse, de proposer mes services bénévolement dans des institutions d'enfants handicapés et de repartir un mois, l'an prochain, à la même période, mais cette fois en Moldavie.

(written by Christiane Lily Reymond-Pache)







Telephoning in Romania

Having difficulty telephoning in – or to – Romania?

THIS GUIDE SHOULD HELP

When phoning a Brasov number from a Brasov number, use the prefix 0268/0368 followed by the six digit local number.

When phoning a Brasov number from out of county, dial 0268 before the six digit number

When dialling a mobile phone number from within Romania that begins with 07x always include 07x

When dialling Romania from overseas dial up your international connection (usually 00) then 40 (for Romania), followed by the area code without 0 (that's 268 for Brasov, and 7x for mobile phones) and local number.

Callers from overseas are reminded that the time in Romania is GMT + 2 hrs