



WHAT'S INSIDE

- 2 *Interesting Culture for a Foreigner* by Kazuki Shimada
- 3 *Business Updates* by Kasra Keykhosravi
- 4 *Projects Abroad Drama Show* by Alexandra Ichim
- 6 *Welcome to the days of Brasov* by Johanna Englev
- 7 *Volunteers' Moments*
- 8 *USEFUL INFORMATION*
- 9 *STAFF DETAILS*

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Interesting Culture for a Foreigner

By Kazuki Shimada

All of the Romanian life and culture is a novelty to me coming from Japan.

I think Brasov is a town that has many churches, interesting cultural buildings and defensive walls. When I went around Brasov, I thought I wanted to look over the whole town, so, I walked up to the highest place. When I arrived up the hill, North-East from the central park, I could look out at the whole Brasov's scenery. To the right, I could see the traditional and colourful town that includes the Black Church and many other Romanian traditional buildings with red roofs and white walls. On the left side, a completely different overview spread out, as far as the eye could see: Modernistic and colourless high buildings standing in a line. So, I got a strange feeling. : I thought it's not the same town. I felt Brasov is a place that mixes aspects from the middle ages and modern times.

I arrived in Romania on the 1st of April. Romania's climate is like the Japanese weather, so Romania is a comfortable country to me. I think I came in Romania in a good season!

Romanian's character is very fascinating too. I really think Romanians are kind, positive and passionate people. One day for example, I admired a woman's behaviour who positively helped another old woman getting off the bus. When I go around Brasov, many people waved their hands at me, greeting nicely; my host's name is Marcela and she is positive and kind too, all the time. She talks to me every day and teaches me things about Romania. I also met her son who greeted me with a smile and chatted with me for hours and also had dinner together on Saturday. If you visit to Romania, you will certainly meet this kind of people.

On the other hand, when I went around Brasov, I also saw homeless children. There are homeless people in Japan too, but I have never met children begging on the streets. Many homeless children exist all over the world, and I definitely know Romania is not an exception.

Furthermore, Romanian cuisine is so curious to me. Japanese main food is rice, but this country's main food is wheat or corn. So, they eat a lot of bread from wheat and 'mămăligă' from corn. I also tried some other traditional Romanian foods like 'ciorbă' (sour soup) and 'sarmale' (Cabbage Meat Rolls), which have a nice taste. Brasov has many bakeries too. I often see many people buying some bread and pastry to have a quick walking lunch. Romanian cuisine has a lot of meat dishes, but very little fish. As I often was having fish in Japan, it will be difficult for me to adapt and not having it for a while.

I haven't seen too much of Romania, but it's enough to realise it is a fascinating country. So, I want to know more about Romania and to discover as much as possible.



Business Updates

by Kasra Keikhosravie

The propose of the project is to work with an organisation that requires assistance in the marketing field and at the same time I would like to deal with tasks that will help me gain experience and learn more about the fields that I require for my future career.

When I joined the White Mountain Property team, I was asked to analyse all aspects of the Marketing side of the business, when I have completed all of the analysing, I was told to develop a business developing plan to show step by step the areas that can be improved, why it needs to improve and how the organisation will benefit from carrying out these steps.

It has been four weeks now that I have been taking part within this project, since then I have been working on:

- Making step by step plans for creating an alliance with group of other businesses (Law Firms, Accountants, Web designers & other firms that would bring a benefit for my placement.)
- Carefully redesigning a new business website and also assisting with the wording of the website.
- Working on a plan to create a YouTube video presentation of the company and also working alongside a third party organisation to preselect a videographer for the presentation.
- Analysing the company logo & presenting a development plan for updating the organisation's logo & image.
- Drafting a step by step plan to approach new types of clients and offer additional services to clients which will bring a lot of benefits for the organisations.

Thanks to Projects Abroad staff members and the placement staff members I feel that I have brought a lot of positive changes to the organisation and at the same time, personally I feel that I have gained a lot of useful skills that can be used for work propose in the future.



Projects Abroad Drama Show

by Alexandra Ichim

On May 16, 2013, Projects Abroad Romania Team were the hosts for the 6th edition of the Charity Show – To Love is To Give, To Give is To Receive. It was a successful event that was put together as a result of Eva and Alex's work coordinating and directing the Projects Abroad Drama Groups. The main reason why we organized this show was to raise money for one of our Care Placements – Domino from Ghimbav.

The sequence of events was as follows:

1. General Welcome - Ali, 2. Presentation - Domino Children's Charity, 3. Welcome to Oscars (Alex and Eva) and Introduction of Harry Potter, 4. Harry Potter, 5. Introduction of Forrest Gump, 6. Forrest Gump, 7. The Singer (song), 8. Introduction of The Three Little Pigs, 9. The Three Little Pigs, 10. Introduction of the Hangover, 11. The Hangover, 12. The Singer (song), 13. Ali's Salsa (dance), 14. Introduction of Mean Girls, 15. Mean Girls, 16. Introduction of Goldilocks, 17. Goldilocks, 18. The Singer (song), 19. Alice in Wonderland, 20. Oscar Ceremony

Each play was very briefly announced / introduced by Alex and Eva. The theme music was played for about 30 seconds and an image of the movie was displayed on an overhead projector.

The Oscar ceremony was led by Ali. Alex and Eva will receive 'the Oscar envelope' when they announced that everyone won the Oscars. Every person involved in this show received a medal with 'Oscars Night 2013' engraved.

The event was amazing, and so we want to give thanks to everyone for helping with organising it. Special thanks go to Eva Witte and Alex Perry for directing and coordinating the drama groups and for everything you helped in with putting it together. Thank you Sammy Rice and Hayley Burcher for helping with the stage, lights, sound and coordinating the groups as well. Thank you Johanna for writing the program and for the photos. Thank you Georgi Poparad for everything you helped with organising. Big thanks go to my mom, Rodica Ichim, who is always there next to us and who brought the children from Domino Centre - to the show.

Of course, we want to give thanks to all the members from Projects Abroad Drama Groups, without whom we couldn't have had any drama show. Also, we appreciate the participation of all special guests, like Oana Panazan and Step in2 Salsa.

We can definitely consider ourselves lucky to be able to share this special moment with everyone who was present at our show.

Thank you everyone for participating to our event. We are happy to announce that we raised 763 lei - 173 euros. The money was already used to buy materials to rebuild the fence of the Domino Centre in Ghimbav and also to buy a DVD Player for the children there.

'Tubind daruiesti, daruind primesti' Charity Show - 6th Edition - 'Oscars Night' was a real success!

Thank you everyone!



Welcome to the Days of Braşov! - The Junii Bids Thee Welcome!

By Johanna Engebjerg Englev

Colors, parades, music, men on horses, beautiful costumes and a week full of fun, dance, shopping and nowhere near enough time to see everything! That is what was waiting for everyone in Braşov this week, when The Junii, The young men of Braşov, kicked off the end festival of their celebrations, in the week following the orthodox Easter.

The city has in this past week been packed with people! Piata Sfatului, also commonly known among the volunteers as just “The Square”, has been more than usually crowded with happy Braşovians, which says a lot considering how many people gather there on a normal week-day.

Junii Brasovului, the feast or festival of Braşov, takes place every year the week after Easter and culminates in a big parade and a party on Sunday. Everywhere you went this week, you would stumble across either a ritual (maybe in the manner of a dance or a song) or fair (like the flower fair on the square), or just a happy citizen taking the opportunity to promote a charity or business cause. That also including the dressed up Jack Sparrow making balloon animals with the kids on Strada Republicii last Friday!

Furthermore, if you wanted a nice stroll the pedestrian street, you should have chosen another week. Small parades of traditional dressed up people, advertising their various shows and smaller festival, like the medieval festival at the Citadel, walked up and down the street, playing their music and dancing their dances.

Indeed this week has not been boring!

The Junii, or, roughly translated to English: “The young men of Braşov” are the descendants of the old, real Romanians that lived outside the gate of Kronstadt (As the old city center was once called, when Germans inhabited these parts) in the Schei-quarter of the city. Every celebration, every ritual, every song and every dance is performed by a man (or men), whose ancestors walked among the original Romanian neighborhood outside Kronstadt’s main gate: Catherin’s Gate.

This Sunday, the volunteers in Braşov, along with pretty much the full population of the City, gathered to see the parade that marks the end of this week’s celebrations. The Junii celebrates, on this day, the Dacian new-year and the beginning of spring.

And how they do it! Horses dressed in all kinds of colors (traditional colors of course), matching the rider and his role in the parade, each outfit marking the group to which he belongs. Because the Junii, is not just a big group of dressed up people. Each man belongs to one of seven groups. One group dressing even more spectacular than the other.

From the young unmarried men, Junii Tineri who wears a simple black jacket with a red flower in the breast pocket to the sparkling older groups, which all wear impressive gowns of countless colors and fabrics.

Braşov is indeed a city of culture, and if you are looking for the time to really take in these still vibrating traditions, then the Days of Braşov is a perfect time to come!

I have again and again, during my time here, been surprised by the enthusiasm and involvement, that the general citizen of Brasov shows, when it comes to nursing these traditions and this week has been no exception.

Nowhere else have I seen such a joy within the people. Seeing them laugh, barter, sing, chat and dance through the chaos of this week really is what makes the entity of Braşov.

And what makes this city a very special place.



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