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mytripblog



Care Updates

by Melisa Melvin, Taylor & Whitney English

Brasov is a picturesque city, rich both in culture and hospitality. Most people are friendly, which makes it very easy to find someone willing to give you directions or other needed information.

Whether you are a seasoned traveler or this is your first time abroad, Romania is a great place to be. Romania is said to be one of the friendliest countries in Eastern Europe and the people of Brasov certainly live up to that maxim.

Serving as a Projects Abroad volunteer gives you the chance to explore, to see and experience what life is like for the Romanian people, to make a lasting impression and a difference in the lives of those you meet along the way.

Working in a care project is a very rewarding experience. Though the days can be exhausting, you will come away looking forward to the next day. Chances are you will come to the end of your placement feeling like you have gained more than you have given and wishing you had more time.

The children at the foster home in Budila where I have had the opportunity to serve are relatively well behaved and well cared for. Every day they are overjoyed to see us and are eager to begin the activities we have planned. They are content with simple things like play dough, balloons coloring, singing songs in English, and just sitting on your lap.

They are excited to learn and happy to teach you what they know. It can be a win-win situation as you teach basic English and the kids teach you Romanian. There will be some laughter along the way which makes it fun for everyone.

The overtaxed care givers are grateful for the help in supervising the kids. Your investment in the lives of these abandoned children brings excitement, joy and a welcome change in routine to these children. It also helps them learn and grow and gives them a chance to experience new things.

As a word of advice, remember a smile is a universal language. Having a good grasp on commonly used Romanian words and phrases is beneficial.

Bring more money than you think you will need. Prices in terms of Romanian Lei are quite high even though by American standards things are cheaper. When you are shopping try to think of things in terms of the Lei rather than the dollar or you will end up spending more than you would hope.

If your placement is in the spring or fall be sure to pack for all four seasons. The weather can be unpredictable and change without warning.

If you come to Romania being flexible, ready to give and receive you will have an enjoyable rewarding experience.

Written by Melisa Melvin



When I applied for the trip, I didn't really have any expectations, other than I wanted to experience another culture and work with kids, which is funny because the fortune cookie I had at the airport the day I left for Romania said, "Those who expect nothing are never disappointed." The cookie was right; I wasn't disappointed.

For me, the Care Project through Projects Abroad was the perfect combination of spending time with the kids, free time to explore, exposure to the culture, independence but with willing people ready to help you whenever it was needed.

Brasov is a beautiful city and from my experience the people are very kind. The city is easy to navigate and it quickly began to feel like home to me. The host family I stayed with was amazing and the food was great.

My experience with the kids was a positive one. Like working with children anywhere, it can be frustrating and exhausting, but also very rewarding. The kids I worked with seemed well cared for and the women that take care of them were nice, but the kids crave the attention volunteers can give them. One thing that was a difficult challenge was the language barrier, but it turned out not to be such a big problem at all. Instead of letting the barrier frustrate me, I embraced it and it was a fun challenge as well as an opportunity for both me and the kids to learn from each other.

They learned a little English and I learned Romanian. Singing songs (especially ones with actions) was a fun way to break the barrier. The kids love singing. The excitement and hugs they gave me every day when I arrived was hopefully an indicator that I was having as much an impact on them as they were having on me. This was exactly the experience that I was looking for and I certainly would do it again.

By Whitney English



I applied for the care program not really sure what to expect. I knew that I wanted to work with children and I was up for a challenge. I was a little nervous and slightly overwhelmed after the one-day orientation. It was a lot of information in a short time but it turned out that I had nothing to fear. Brasov is a beautiful city and is very easy to navigate. By the end of the first week, I felt at ease and Brasov quickly began to feel like home. The people in Brasov are also extremely nice, patient, and willing to help you when needed much like my host mother who is also a terrific cook.

The children that I worked with are great. They were very energetic and well cared for by the staff members. Every day I was greeted by smiling children with great big hugs. The language barrier was a challenge at first, which left both me and the kids frustrated, but it got easier and actually turned out to be a fun challenge. As the month passed, I had taught the kids some basic English and they taught me Romanian. Some of the greatest moments of the trip were the break through moments when I finally figured out what a child was trying to tell me.

My experience was an adventure, a challenge, and very rewarding. I loved the independence of the trip and the balance between work and free time was just what I was looking for.

By Taylor English



Teaching Updates

by James Hogan

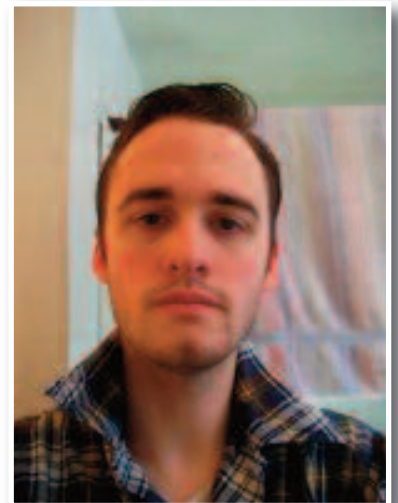
Coming from a small town in the United States, I found the city of Brasov to be a large and fascinating place in which to live. The city never really seems to go to sleep. I have found myself wondering down streets broad and narrow, old and new. But no matter where I go, I have always found plenty to see. No matter how tired my legs are from walking, there is something which often pulls me to keep walking down the streets and around the next corner.

Brasov is not a city built on speed. Rather, it is a good place to slow down and enjoy living life the way it should be lived. This might take the form of sitting for half an hour on a bench in the park or in the main square, watching the world go by. It might mean buying a pastry or dessert at one of the many small shops throughout the city. In short, the one thing I have learned from Romania is that life is really more about quality than it is about quantity.

Prior to my coming to Romania, I had worked in public schools in the United States. My interaction with the students here has shown me that they differ very little in most respects from their American peers. Any differences I found in the school were to be found in the way the classroom was structured, the way the students were taught, and the way the students related to their teachers. However, I couldn't really disapprove of the way the Romanian school was structured, since their methods seemed both effective and appropriate.

My interaction with the students has been as an assistant to their main teacher. I worried before coming to Romania about the attitude that the Romanian students might take towards me. My worries were largely unfounded, however. The students have been friendly with me and will often greet me with a 'hello' when they see me. On my part, the more I work with them the more I have come to relate to their difficulties in learning of a foreign language. Many years ago I was that student sitting in the classroom learning another language.

My time here in Brasov and the school could best be summarized as a learning experience. While the students work to learn another language, I have slowly learned more about them and their environment. Every day here in Brasov is a new adventure waiting to happen, whether inside the school or outside it... The only question is where to find that adventure.



Donations Update

by Georgiana Poparad & Alexandra Ichim

1. At the beginning of this week, one of our dearest and most passionate volunteer, Christiane Lily Reymond-Pache has returned to Romania, for a second time this year. When talking to the chief of staff at the orphanage for children with severe disabilities, where she volunteers, she realized the children are in great need of medical supplies and hygiene products. She offered to buy and donate all that was necessary to make children's lives easier and less painful. Her first donation consisted of new kitchen products, like pots, silverware, detergent, bleach and gloves. The second time she donated medical supplies and hygiene products like: disinfectant, soap, body wash for children, pacifiers, thermometers, blood pressure reader and medicine. The totality of her donation is 2350 RON (530 Euros).

Thank you Christiane for choosing Romania for the second time. Thank you for your great heart! Your work here is highly appreciated by the community.

2. November is a month in which people prepare for the Winter Holidays and start giving. As a preparation for the Season of Giving, many of our volunteers start fund raising events or projects through which they want to raise money to help children from foster homes where they worked while volunteering with Projects Abroad in Romania.

Rosie Prebble was one of our Care Volunteers, in 2008, whose actions, thoughts and words are still highly appreciated. Now, in November 2013, she organized a fund raising event, a Gift & Craft sale, in her cottage, to raise money for the children in Bradet. She supports them continuing with the "Gardening Project" they started last year. As a result of her fund raising event, she states: 'I am amazed at the result, many people came and at the end of the day I had made over £800!! I am still getting donations. Children of Romania I love you. Xx' (source Facebook)

Thank you Rosie Prebble for everything you still do for our community. Thank you for choosing Romania as your destination, 5 years ago and for still caring and keeping connected with us.

3. Marie Roques is another good hearted former Projects Abroad volunteer, who worked for 'Buburuza Foster Home'. She ended up loving those children so much, their creativity, their passions, their innocence, their will of learning and evolving, their joy and happiness, so she is sending them packages every month. These donations consist of school products, clothes, cleaning products and anything they need. On Christmas, she also plans to send Christmas decorations and gifts for all of them. Each package also contains her good thoughts and best wishes and they are always accompanied by your love. We thank you, Marie, for all your contribution and we give you our gratitude, respect and consideration for all that you are.



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