

PeaceWorks ESC volunteership at Staffansgården, Sweden



organisation topics

- Access for people with disadvantages
- Disabilities - special needs
- Creativity and culture

description of the organisation

Staffansgården was founded in 1975, as part of the international Camphill Movement and is situated in the small village Delsbo, outside of Hudiksvall. Staffansgården consists of a village where about 30 adults with different mental disabilities live together in smaller units, each in their own, self-contained, flat.

The aim of Staffansgården is to give adults with mental disabilities support in their daily life and offer them a meaningful existence. With the help of employed staff, our villagers (as the residents in need of special care are called), live and work in four different places: Staffansgården and Backvägen in Delsbo; Dellengården 13 km away near the North Dellen and Mickelsgården, a farm just two kilometres outside Delsbo.

Being part of the project is a unique chance to understand and learn about *anthroposophic*^{1*}

¹ Camphill is based on the principles of anthroposophy, the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner that seeks to integrate spirit, body, and soul. Steiner formulated the concept of curative education, which includes the arts as healing and educational forces. The Camphill ideal is to engage all the members of each community


methods of creating, developing and enriching activities for mentally challenged people.

There are several daytime activities and some of the villagers work with things such as gardening, farming (there is a small farm in the village) and in different art workshops, in a bakery, weavery and carpentry/wood workshop. They also have access to several forms of therapy. There are about 80 employees at Staffansgården.

tasks of the volunteer

The volunteer will have a different role from the staff members, the most important difference being the level of responsibility. The idea is that the volunteers should have a social role and encourage understanding of other people and cultures, something that another regular staff member maybe could not do. In other words, the volunteers add value to the activities and inspire the villagers. The volunteers will never work alone, but instead

in meeting their own needs, as well as those of the community at large, to whatever extent their abilities allow.



always be accompanied by other staff members who will lead the work and instruct the volunteers when taking care of the villagers. The mentors will make sure that the volunteer will feel comfortable with both the villagers and the staff group, and will make changes in distribution of tasks if needed and/or preferred by the volunteers. The volunteers will participate in the villagers' daily life as well as work in different areas of activities, in the farm, the bakery, the carpentry, the weavery etc.

The volunteer will work with a few main areas:

- **support the co-workers and villagers** in baking and working in the bakery.
- **support the villagers in their work** in the **wood workshop and the weavery**.
- **support the co-workers and villagers** in the **work at the farm (cultivating, taking care of animals etc.)**.
- take care of **general tasks** in the running of the home unit where they live (contribute to cooking food for the house mates, cleaning common areas etc.).
- **take part in and support activities** and projects at Staffansgården (e.g. sports activities, cultural events etc.).
- give support to villagers depending on their needs.
- optional and if possible: **run own projects**, depending on interest and background, such as a volunteer-café or improving the communicational performance of Staffansgården (homepage, web shop etc.).

The workweek of the volunteers consists of 35 hours from Monday to Friday. Monday-Friday work starts at 8.30 with morning gathering in the hall at the main house of Staffansgården. They will stop for lunch at 13.00. After lunch volunteers take care of the dishes or take care of other tasks. Volunteers also participate in afternoon activities such as gymnastics,


swimming, dancing and theatre. No volunteer will need to take responsibility for the villagers. In contrast, they are expected to have active participation in the assigned work and different activities. All volunteers are working in the various workshops such as wood-workshop, weaving, farm/garden, kitchen or the bakery. One day a week you work in “your” house and one day volunteers are, for example, cleaning the buses at Staffansgården. The workplace will be assigned as needed, but we try to take into consideration personal preferences. “Home work” – i.e. washing, cleaning, shopping, cooking etc – is shared in the house community. Every working day starts with all of us gathering in the hall at Staffanshuset or Mickelsgården at 8.30 in the morning. You will receive a schedule for your work and responsibilities. You are allowed to go on leave for 4 weeks during your year. It is important to apply in advance and make a plan for the work.

living conditions and free time

At Staffansgården you will be a group of 4 volunteers along with the staff and the villagers. You will get your own room in one of Staffansgårdens group houses, with a shared bathroom. You are responsible for cleaning your room during the whole stay.

Meals are taken together with the villagers. Days start with preparing breakfast together with coworkers and clearing the table afterwards. Lunch Monday - Friday is served at Staffansgårdens dining room at 13.00. Dinner is cooked and eaten together with coworkers and villagers in the house. On the weekends you are free to arrange your own meals or eat together within the house.

The closest city in Delsbo is Hudiksvall where you can also spend your free time. There you have several shops, cafes and places to go



out. You can borrow the vehicles from Staffansgården and have up to 70 km/month for free if you want to borrow cars/buses.

volunteer profile

- Genuine interest in working with mentally challenged adults
- Interest in learning from anthroposophic methods
- Willing to adapt to new environments and a rural setting
- Open for and interested in other cultures and lifestyles
- Patient, empathic and willing to listen to others
- Taking own initiatives and be active to contribute to the project
- Interest in creating own cultural projects and physical activities
- Driver's licence

