

VOLUNTEERING AT BEAUMOTTE



The Centre de Beaumotte was founded in 1979 and is a non-formal educational association. It is the regional delegation of Solidarités Jeunesses' in the Franche-Comté region. The aim of our centre is to support people who have fewer opportunities and to encourage them to take responsibility for their own lives.

THE PROJECT

One of the most important things we do at the centre is to simply participate in the everyday exchange that occurs when people from different social and cultural backgrounds live together. There are about 20 people who live and work at the centre, and 10 more who come to work during the day. The centre hosts teenagers and adults who are facing social and professional problems,

and who often have difficulties functioning in society and perhaps do not have support from their family. The **exchange between the volunteers and those living at the centre is extremely important**, and together we focus our efforts to realise specific projects around the centre and in neighbouring villages. Throughout the year we also organise different social and cultural events, such as concerts, theatrical productions, workshops, and the like. This project requires no specific knowledge or skills. You do not have to be able to speak French to come but it is important to be aware that not everybody living here can speak English. So it's important that you make an effort to learn it while you're here, to make a link with people. Plus, there is the opportunity to have French lessons while you are here.

OUR WORK:

We work approximately 7 hours per day, sometimes we are based in the house, but most of the time we work outside the house. The outside work could be:

- Renovation of the local heritage (fountains, ancient wash-houses, etc.)
- Preservation of the grounds
- Renovation of the centre (masonry, carpentry, etc.)
- Environmental projects (gardening, etc.).
- Woodcutting



PLANNING:

After breakfast we all clean the house for 30 minutes. The work day ends around 4.30 pm and we have a morning break and an hour for lunch. Each day, 2 or 3 of us work in the kitchen and prepare the meals for the day. Residents and volunteers work together on these tasks.

COLLECTIVE LIFE:

Volunteers and residents live together in one part of the house. Our house is very big! The staff and their family live in another section of the house but we all eat and socialise together. It is important for volunteers to take part in the communal life and to try and get to know the residents because we live together as one group. The volunteers share their bedrooms with residents and usually another volunteer; there are 2 or 3 people in one bedroom. The rooms are mixed gender so male and female can share the same room.

As stated above, the daily intercultural exchange is a great way to achieve some of the goals of the project. The lives of both the volunteers and the residents are enriched as they confront their similarities and differences, and this produces some very powerful moments.

As can be imagined, it can be difficult to get things running smoothly when you are living with 25 other people. To make things easier and more comfortable for everyone, there are a few rules that must be respected at the centre. The first is that, with the exception of organised special occasions, no alcohol is allowed at the centre. You can use your phone when you need to but we just ask that you don't use it frequently in the house. There is also a fixed phone that is available to the volunteers and internet is also provided so you can stay connected with family and friends. The final rule is that we expect all those who live at the centre to respect night time quiet hours.



Once a week everybody from the house (and those who come here to work but do not live here) participates in a meeting where we discuss how we feel about our week and plan for the week ahead. There is also a separate meeting when its needed just for the volunteers and here we discuss anything you would like to raise. There is a person here who is responsible for the welfare of the volunteers (Anne-Lise) and she also has responsibility regarding the work that the volunteers do here.

The Centre de Beaumotte has been hosting medium and long term volunteers for the past 30 years, and each of them have left their mark. At any given time the centre hosts 8 international volunteers. As a volunteer you will have the opportunity to live a **unique life experience**, to be a **positive influence** in the lives of those at the centre, to **learn French** and **discover the culture** here. You will work at times with local youths on projects in the surrounding areas. During your time here you will also have the opportunity to lead one or two of Solidarités Jeunesses' international

work camps and to participate in events such as training seminars and general assemblies.

Why do we host international volunteers?

- To provide an intercultural exchange and dimension to all of our projects
- To enrich the learning process of the residents by mixing different people.
- To stimulate local development by working in collaboration with the community and local associations.
- To give young French people the opportunity to be confronted with new ideas and cultures, and to allow the same for the volunteers.

THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The centre is located in a small, rural village where there is not much social activity. This, however, does not mean the volunteers will be either lonely or bored! At any given time there are around 30 people in the centre, with many more passing through.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL LAYOUT:

The Franche-Comté is a beautiful region well known for its wines, sausages and cheeses. The centre is situated on the edge of a river in the village of Beaumotte (pop. 380), in the countryside of the Haute-Saône. The nearest large towns are Vesoul (25km) and Besançon (30km), though the small town of Rioz rests just 12km away. Trips into town are organised every week based on the activity schedule. A large garden surrounds our building, and we have an activity room we call "le Bateau". In "le Bateau" we arrange cultural activities with the young residents of the centre, and also organise events that the locals can come and participate in.

THINGS NOT TO FORGET: Good working-shoes, working-gloves, rain clothes, some warm clothes, working clothes, musical instruments, games, recipes, photos and postcards of your region.

THE MEETING POINT:

please let us know at what time you will arrive

ADDRESS OF THE PROJECT:

Association du Centre de Beaumotte
1, Chemin du Saussoir
70 190 BEAUMOTTE-AUBERTANS
Tel : 03 84 68 33 41
Fax : 03 84 68 33 10
e-mail : vlt.beaumotte@orange.fr
Contact: Anne-Lise Vuillemin

HOW TO GET THERE:

If you arrive by train, the meeting-point is the train station at **Vesoul** or **Besançon Franche Comté**

TGV

PARIS GARE DE L'EST -> VESOUL
(last train from Paris at 18h41)

PARIS GARE DE LYON -> BESANCON

Check the timetables on www.sncf.com

If you arrive by car or hitchhiking, the meeting point is the center of Beaumotte. Take a map!... Beaumotte is situated 30 km North of Besançon and 25 km South of Vesoul. Between the villages Rioz and Montbozon.

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT SOLIDARITES JEUNESSES: Leaning on the resources of the associative regions, Solidarités Jeunesses has developed an action for and together with the young people by using international workcamps and places of intercultural exchange to break down the barriers between the generations and promote active solidarity.

Also Solidarités Jeunesses is a movement of Popular Education, which gathers different associations. These associations organize short and long term voluntary projects, inclusion activities, different training programs, actions promoting international solidarity and they also run rural centres hosting people and contributing to local development.