

# Volunteering at Durbanville Children's Home





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## GUIDELINES ON VOLUNTEERING AT DURBANVILLE CHILDREN'S HOME

### *VOLUNTEERING AT DURBANVILLE*

The volunteer program as offered by YFU South Africa is an opportunity for students, 18 and older, to participate in an outreach and upliftment program within the guidelines of YFU. Participating YFU students are therefore given the opportunity to;

*Become actively involved in the caring and nurturing of the children at the children's home,  
Acquire skills in various fields related caring and nurturing of the children which meet the educational requirements of YFU,  
Acquire intercultural skills as a result of interaction with children and other volunteers from diverse cultural backgrounds.*

It is therefore imperative that the students that apply for this program are;

*Selected carefully and consideration be given to their suitability for this program according to the above mentioned outcomes,  
Have reached a level of maturity whereby they are able to be independent thinkers and display a high level of responsibility and accountability,  
Selected students meet all the set criteria of this YFU South African program,  
Students are made fully aware as to the realities of why they have chosen to come on this program instead of having a holiday, gap year attitude.*

### *LOCATION OF DURBANVILLE CHILDREN'S HOME*

Durbanville Children's home was built 120 years ago when the area where it is located today was still a farm. Today however, it is surrounded by a high income residential suburb. The children at Durbanville however, do not come from this area but have been placed at Durbanville Children's home after they were taken away from their homes for various reasons. The court placed them at the Durbanville Children's home as a place of safety. They therefore come from all over the greater City of Cape Town and their personal backgrounds are as dire as those of any children in any other children's home. Volunteers that object to the physical location of Durbanville Children's home should rather opt for another project with another organisation.

### *EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL WELL BEING OF THE CHILDREN*

As stated above the children placed in Durbanville Children's home have all been removed from their homes and parents by the court. Reasons for them being removed range from exposure to

alcohol abuse, sexual abuse, drug abuse to neglect and poverty. At Durbanville Children's home they are placed in a safe environment where they can undergo rehabilitation, counselling and general care and guidance to try and alleviate the detrimental effects of their past. Therefore, staff and volunteers responsible for the welfare of these children must be committed to executing their chosen tasks with integrity and professionalism, and most importantly, by setting an appropriate example by serving as role-models and mentors to the children. The possession and / or consumption of any kind of illegal drugs (which includes marijuana), alcohol, or substance abuse of any kind are therefore not tolerated on the premises by those responsible for the welfare of the children. YFU volunteers that are caught with any of these substances in their possession will be sent home immediately. Please also note that the possession of marijuana is against the law in South Africa, and random police raids or searches, even outside the premises of the Children's Home, can lead to immediate arrest and deportation.

In addition no fraternisation (developing inappropriate friendships) with the children at Durbanville Children's home over and above the execution of the assigned duties and responsibilities of the volunteers will be allowed.

### *TRAINING AND PREPARATION*

Preparation and training are provided by YFU South Africa to volunteers upon arrival in the country during the post arrival orientation. After arrival at Durbanville Children's home the volunteer manager conducts her own in house training during which the volunteers are provided with detailed instructions as to their duties, tasks, responsibilities and general rules. After completion of this training they are provided with their own policies and procedures booklets that contain all the relevant information regarding their stay at and volunteering at Durbanville Children's home.

They have to sign receipt of the policies and procedures booklet and acknowledge that they are familiar with its content and undertake to abide by the rules. Violation of these rules are considered as serious by the Durbanville Children's home management and will result in reprimands that can lead to the expulsion of a volunteer if his / her behaviour does not change. In the case of expulsion of an YFU volunteer as explained above, YFU South Africa will declare such a volunteer off program and the volunteer will return home on early return.





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INSPIRED

At the Durbanville Children's home we have a wonderful group of committed and dedicated volunteers to whom we are all very grateful to, for their hard work, love, caring and for making a difference to our children's lives on a daily basis.

One such volunteer is Cozmore Fungilani who has been a volunteer at the Children's home since 2004 and has assisted us in many areas such as soccer programs, night shift and driving. Besides volunteering at the Children's Home, Cozmore is a community development officer for YWHAM. Possibly the biggest impact that he has at the moment is that of inspiring and motivating our team of 28 international volunteers to become involved in outreach projects in the nearby developments of Klipheuwel and Visanterkraal and reaching out to people less fortunate than themselves wherever and however they can. We are very proud of our international volunteers who work very hard during the week in every single facet of the Children's Home and who then give up their off days to assist in underprivileged communities under the guidance of Cozmore. Some of the projects that they have been involved in over the past six months are: Painting of schools and orphanages, repairing houses and shacks that have been damaged due to fire, bad weather and floods, assisting with food and clothing distribution, working at refugee camps when the Xenophobic attacks hit, building of playground areas, assisting with educational programs and outreaches.

*We currently have 55 South African, and 30 international volunteers, representing over 10 nations.*

Should you wish to become involved in our volunteer program please attend one of our compulsory information sessions held on the last Tuesday of every month at 6:30.

Application forms will be handed out and all processes explained. Any further info can be obtained by emailing Yvonne at [yvonne@durbanvillekinderhuis.co.za](mailto:yvonne@durbanvillekinderhuis.co.za)

*Urgent volunteering needs at the moment:*

- Home work assistance
- Computer room assistance
- Driving

Thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers – without your help we truly could not survive!!



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## International volunteer program at Durbanville Children's Home

We can accommodate 25 international volunteers at a time.

*Volunteers live in dormitory type accommodations and must be prepared to share their living space with up to 25 others. ( two or three per room depending on room size )*

*We are a Christian based home, we welcome volunteers from all different cultural and religious beliefs must respect and tolerance must be shown towards the religious lifestyle that we try to instill in to our children.*

- We provide basic bedding and furniture and kitchen appliances / equipment.
- We provide weekly laundry services
- We provide three basic meals per day
- We provide cleaning materials to clean your own rooms and living areas
- We would prefer volunteers that already have driver's license- we require lots of help driving to and from hospitals and schools on a daily basis.
- Volunteers are provided with three basic meals per day, main meal at lunch time. Volunteers eat the same food as the 169 children in our home and they must be able to adapt to the types of food enjoyed by South Africans. Fussy eaters will have to provide for their own meals as we cannot accommodate different taste buds and preferences – although we can make vegetarian meals if requested.
- Volunteers must be able to work at our home from between 6 months to one year.
- We do have a qualified nurse on the grounds and very basic medical needs can be attended to and we will assist where ever possible but volunteers should carry their own personal medical insurance for serious situations as well as having their own travel insurance.
- Volunteers must be older than 18 years; we would prefer volunteers from 20 upwards as some of our children themselves are 18 years old, but this is not compulsory.
- Volunteers who have previous work experience, even if only part time work will be given preference. Volunteers must be able to show respect for managers and childcare workers, they should know how to work in a team and how to be responsible and on time.
- We have a desperate need for more males to volunteer.
- Volunteers must be able to talk and understand English, even if only basic.
- Volunteers must be prepared to work on a shift rotation roster as well as working nights and weekends. It is compulsory that all volunteers work night shift at some stage during their time with us. I try my best to allow volunteers to work in different departments during their stay with us but they must be prepared to work night shift – this is a compulsory area of running and learning about a children's home. Volunteers that want to work at our home must seriously think about if they can cope with working night shift and the effects that lack of sleep will have on them.
- Living quarters: As there is such a large group of volunteers living together, we have strict rules on cleaning and living together. Volunteers need to be able to work as a team towards keeping all living areas, kitchen, bathrooms and private spaces clean and tidy. Inspection of all areas is done regularly to ensure that all volunteers are cleaning and can enjoy a healthy clean living space. Volunteers need to be able to follow the cleaning guidelines set out by the children's home. Just because at home they may have been allowed to live with clothes and chaos all over the floor does not mean that this will be allowed when sharing with other volunteers. Volun-

teers that continuously refuse to clean and work as a team, may be asked to leave the program

- We have many different areas where volunteers can work, but many of the areas cannot be chosen by the volunteer before they get here. The reason for this is that many of the positions/ areas of work are determined by the volunteer's personality, their past experiences and the attitude that they project while at our children's home. If volunteers prove to be hard working and have the correct profile they will be allowed to work in areas such as social work office, satellite house and volunteer office.

#### *Areas that we use volunteers in as follows :*

- Night shift
- Day shift
- Assisting the program coordinator – office work
- 1 volunteer assisting the Manager of the volunteer program- office work
- 2 volunteers in the driving department- assisting with driving to and from schools as well as collecting donations.
- 2 volunteers working at our satellite house
- 1 volunteer assisting in the social work office – office work and therapy work as well as driving
- 1 volunteer assisting in the fundraising department – office work, admin arranging functions and special events
- 1 volunteer assisting the educational program co-coordinator
- 1 Volunteer assisting the sports co ordinator.

#### *Other areas of volunteering included :*

- Library
- Toy Library
- Music instruction
- Choir
- Drumming
- Horse riding
- Ballet
- Soccer
- Netball
- Athletics
- Arts and crafts
- Outreach to nearby informal settlements
- Homework and computer studies



Any volunteers working in the offices will work Monday to Friday but must be on standby to assist with functions that may take place over the weekend. If volunteers work extra over the weekend then they will get time off in the week.

Volunteers are expected to work 40 hours per week or a total of 160 hours per month. Public Holidays are given off unless a volunteer is working in an area where they cannot get leave, in this case volunteers will be able to carry the day over to another time that is suitable to them and their department of work.

Volunteers are encouraged to take leave during the school holidays and have to apply for leave the same as staff members and need to discuss when it is most suitable for their department. Volunteers are granted 2 days leave per month. Volunteers are expected to keep a log of their hours worked so that correct time can be given off.

Please note that we recruit volunteers 6 months in advance so should you be interested please contact [ymathieson@durbavnillekinderhuis.co.za](mailto:ymathieson@durbavnillekinderhuis.co.za) urgently so that the correct application forms and info can be sent to you!

#### *Articles on our Volunteer Programme*

Durbanville Children's Home can boast with an active volunteer programme. A lot of our work is made possible by our many local and international volunteers.

We have an extensive local volunteers programme in place consisting of 40 volunteers that assist with, homework, library duty, administrative tasks and assist with events at the Children's Home. Our volunteers' information sessions that are held on the last Tuesday of each month have proved to be very successful.

During the reporting period we have had over 100 international volunteers (30 at a time) living in the children's home from many different countries including; Scotland, England, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Austria, Panama, Brazil, Holland and Italy. Although their main job is child care whilst assisting Child Care Workers in houses during the day or on night shift, they also help in areas such as the driving department, the sports department and in the offices with members of our management. The volunteers bring with them a wealth of education and expertise as well as the most important aspect of broadening our children's horizons to the great wide world and giving them a glimpse at the excitement, opportunities and possibilities that may await them later in life. Our group of volunteers are a wonderful help to all of our staff and children and bring enriching experiences to all. We have also received international coverage this year on our volunteer program by being included in German television documentaries, German newspaper articles as well as being invited to attend an international conference on the usage of volunteers in Africa.



The international volunteers have great fun in helping with events which take place for our children. On the 14th March a sports day was held for the Durbanville Children's Home Children. The international volunteers own enthusiasm helped to get the children excited about the event. With team coloured t-shirts and face paint organised by the volunteers the children were prepared for the day with their team spirits! The Children even had the enjoyment of seeing their international volunteer's race themselves in the 400m sprint! It was really nice to also see some of our national volunteers attend the event to also show their support.

The spirit of love was definitely spread by the international volunteers at the children's Valentines Ball. With three volunteers dressed up as cupids, girls in full gowns and men in their suits, the evening certainly had love in the air! It was a night to remember with music, food and ball room dancing and the children and international volunteers thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

The new sports program has really taken off this year with new amazing activities to keep our children busy all week long. Many of our local and International volunteers accompany our children to these activities, which makes it possible for our children to attend.

*Over the past 10 months here at Durbanville Children's Home I developed as a person and become involved in so many areas of work which I could not have done in a normal working environment in England. During my time here, I have built up relationships with many of our children whom make my work here truly amazing! All 144 of our children has inspired me and changed my view and aspirations of life ... I couldn't possibly have any regrets on my gap year here in South Africa!*

The constant hard work that is put in by our local volunteers makes it clear the amazing support that we still get from our surrounding communities. Many of our local volunteers use much of their spare time to build individual relationships with our children and assist them with their homework or develop the child's existing talents and interests. The commitment, persistence and dedication which our volunteers provide means so much to our children and really do make a difference to their lives. Our local volunteers whom assist with the driving and maintenance of the children's home allow the smooth running of the children's home and really make a difference by completing tasks which our staff may not always have time or be able to do themselves.

Our needs for volunteers to assist with homework, maintenance and driving still exist but we hope to address these through our volunteer recruitment program in the next book year.

We want to use this opportunity to thank all our local and international volunteers for their passion and goodwill without them the Children's Home would not be able to operate effectively. It really inspires all of us that there are so many people in the world who are willing to give up so much of their spare time to giving and caring for our children! All of the help that we receive from our volunteers warms our hearts that they all give so much love, time and dedication to all of our children!

Thank You so much for making a difference to our lives!

## Durbanville Children's Home International Volunteer Program

Our work is greatly enriched by the large number of people who help us voluntarily and support us in all manner of ways. We remain most grateful to all of them.

This year saw our international volunteer program grow extensively and to date we have had over 100 international volunteers pass through our doors in the past 12 months. We work with an average of 25 volunteers at a time varying in lengths of stay from 3 months up to a year. The volunteers live on the premises between three houses and assist in helping in every aspect of running our home, from childcare and driving to office admin and fundraising. But perhaps most importantly of all, the volunteers help in providing extra love, care and special attention to all of our Children.

Our volunteers come from many diverse backgrounds and at the moment we have representatives from 10 different countries around the world, namely Brazil, Panama, Scotland, England, America, Zimbabwe, Belgium, Holland, Germany and Switzerland. The volunteers bring with them a wealth of education and expertise as well as the most important aspect of broadening our children's horizons to the great wide world and giving them a glimpse at the excitement, opportunities and possibilities that may await them later in life. Our group of volunteers are a wonderful help to all of our staff and children and bring enriching experiences to all.

Volunteers receive extensive in house training and we run a full orientation program on their arrival. Weekly meetings, daily support, supervision, ongoing training and counseling are all vitally important in the successful running of this program. A great amount of work goes into the marketing of our volunteer program ( in order to recruit such a large amount of volunteers ) and we currently have relationships with 6 international volunteer agencies who help us to source, select and recruit potential candidates . This year also saw our Children's Home volunteer program being featured in a 5 week documentary television program shown in various European countries to help promote the need for volunteers and also highlighting our program. We will also receive 12 promotional articles in international newspapers over the next year.

Not only do our international volunteers do a wonderful job helping at our home, but they are also actively involved in community projects as well as working regularly with Church outreach programs. Many of these young people even give up their off days to help others less fortunate than themselves. In the past year they have helped rebuild houses, helped flood victims, assisted at soup kitchens, painted schools and other orphanages, build playgrounds in township areas and assisted refugees. They have indeed been an inspiration to others and have proven to be excellent role models for all of our children.

At times it is difficult having so many different cultures, different personalities and language barriers. But together everyone has managed to overcome all of these barriers, and in doing so have learnt so much about each other ...volunteers and staff learn how to work as a team, strong bonds are formed, they all learn about how to cope with diversity and enrich each others lives. It is so encouraging and motivating to see so many positive young people that have given up time and finances and traveled half way across the world to help to make a very real difference to the lives of others.

I am very proud of all the wonderful volunteers that have come through our doors this year, they have changed my life and the lives of so many children and the memories of each and every one of them will remain in our hearts forever.

*"This year has been the best year of my life. I have done so many things, met so many people, learnt so much about myself and about life, matured quite substantially but above all I have learnt how to be humble and grateful for all that I have. My heart has been touched by the staff and children, giving me some of my happiest memories that I will never forget. I am very sad to be leaving my new home here in Durbanville and I don't quite know how I am going to survive. My heart will always be in South Africa and I dream that one day I will be able to return to Durbanville Children's Home."*

Katie volunteer from Germany

*"I didn't go on a trip, my life moved. I didn't visit South Africa, I made it my home. After three months I thought I knew everything. I was wrong. I developed more and more with every passing month. By the end, I wasn't going home, I was leaving home"*

Hugo volunteer from Brazil

*Night Shift can be quite daunting due to the long hours and the awkward sleeping pattern. It is not always easy and it does take a while to settle into the rhythm of staying awake at night and sleeping during the day. But it is definitely an important job...which I didn't really appreciate until one night, while on duty we got call from the police who had 4 abandon babies on there hands and no other place which had the means to care for the babies needs. I all of a sudden understood the importance of our work and the importance of our Childrens home in Society. Now Through out my year I often resorted to night shift as a break. A break from the daily routine and some time to myself*

*I have often been asked why I decided to come to South Africa work for free and spend a whole year away from home. I came to South Africa as a volunteer for several different reasons.*

- *To gain some experience in a new environment out with my comfort zone*
- *I needed a break in between school and university*
- *It was very important for my self to gain confidence and become more self assured within my self.*
- *To prove to my self that I can cope in new situations*
- *I feel this time last year I was not ready emotionally to go to university I would only be attending because that is what was expected of me, but now I know it is because I want to study. I have the confidence to make the most out of it and I think I have learnt to adapt*

*I came from a small rural village in the North East of Scotland to this surreal environment of living with a 144 children off all ages and 20 + volunteers. At first I felt very out of place and homesick as it was my first time living away from home and the prospect of not seeing any of my loved ones for 12 months scared me. I felt timid amongst all the other volunteers who on the out side appeared to have everything together, they had there groups of friends there routine and close bonds to the children.*

Katrina volunteer from Scotland

Yvonne Mathieson  
Volunteer Project Manager  
Durbanville Children's Home





Become a part of Durbanville  
Children's Home