



## CONCORDIA AUTUMN UPDATES



Dear Volunteers!

*I hope you are all doing well.*

*The summer season is finally over and we would like to thank all the volunteers who joined our projects overseas and in the UK for their fantastic contribution!*

*We are pleased to send you this newsletter where you will find the report from Pawel, who volunteered in Korea for 3 months this summer, as well as upcoming events, volunteer opportunities and calendar with some dates for your diary.*

*We hope you'll enjoy reading this issue of CHAT*

*All the best for a fantastic end of 2010!*

*Francesco, Fiona, Chloe and Francesca  
Concordia Team*



### A life changing experience volunteering in Korea.

It was already hours after the scheduled arrival time when the message finally came on the speakers – the ferry was ready for disembarking. I have reached South Korea after long 30 hours sail from China. Upon the immigration clearing I was able to catch the last glimpse of Korean sun disappearing behind the horizon - another adventure had just begun.

The means of transportation I used to get to South Korea were probably as unusual as the reason I came there – to volunteer in a medium term volunteer project as an English teacher at a Horseback riding high school. Anytime I would tell my friends back at home where and for what reason I was leaving home for months, they would only shake their heads in disbelief. They did not know what was out there though, but neither did I at the time. Soon I realized what a great decision I had made.

My project was based deep in the rural part of Korea just on the outskirts of a tiny village, surrounded by long chains of mountains stretching as far as you could see. The school was still relatively new, well equipped and at the same time small and friendly. At first it seemed perfect. Later I discovered it was far better than that!

The first days in Korea seemed like a dream – I could not believe I was there. Just a short time before, I was living my life back in England – yet here I was, surrounded by Koreans, deeply submerged in their culture and life. At first, shocking and unbelievable, soon I found myself adjusting to this new way of life – life that involved a lot of effort, will and contribution but gave plenty of joy and satisfaction in return. Everyday the alarm clock went off at 7am. The mornings were not the most pleasant part of the day but even there you could find a bit of solace. After a mouth-burning breakfast (naturally consisting of rice as most of the meals around here) the day would take off. A cup of coffee in the teacher's room and the last look at the morning class' notes

and I was ready to meet my students again. Teaching was the most challenging part of the project – in order to keep the class interesting and full of fun, you really had to put your efforts into planning it – and the better class the greater satisfaction when the bell finally rang. To wash out all the stress or frustration caused by naughty and sleeping students in your class, you could always spend the rest of the day by playing mini golf, sweating in the gym, making use of karaoke machine, learning horseback riding or simply taking on a hiking trail and disappearing for the rest of the day in the endless routes of hiking trails running between rice fields – and if you ever got tired of all of that, you could always sit down for a while and watch the rice grow. Another good idea to spend the time was to make use of the 24 hours language course – with school full of friendly and helpful students willing to teach you something at all times, I found it amazingly easy and fast to start speaking Korean! Not to mention the simple joy of staying with the students, playing games together and getting to know them (weekend stay at their home is a possibility too!).

*(In the picture: "Teaching was the most challenging part of the project...")*

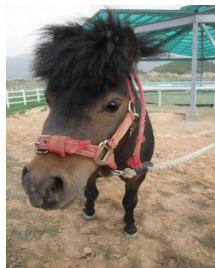


Still there was more to come. One of the things that struck you about Korea after you have spent there some time is the kindness and hospitality of people. Here and there somebody will offer you a meal or drink together, needless to mention random smiles waiting at every corner. Especially in rural areas it is very easy to meet people who are always happy to meet a foreigner and there is no better way to get to know the country other by getting to know the local people.

Knowing nobody in the area, one day I found myself getting involved with a local badminton and tennis club having some 50 local people around – and even though hardly anybody spoke English there, the satisfaction of being able to communicate with them with my basic Korean language skills, was just enormous.

Some experiences cannot be described by words - medium term volunteering surely is one of those experiences. By

taking part in this project I had not only developed personally, but also got to experience so many new things, starting with teaching and finishing at opening myself to all those people, new things and customs I had never even imagined before. Medium Term Volunteer projects are something I can honestly recommend to every one. Even though three months seem to be a long time, once you arrive at your project site, the speed of time will simply skyrocket. The tiniest communities will be able to offer you plenty of new experiences and opportunities guaranteeing great quality time and lifetime memories, at the same time providing you with great knowledge and new skills that will surely come helpful in the future. Do not be afraid, with all



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the help around, even the most dreadful tasks seems friendly and easy to accomplish – all you need is the will, open mind and positive approach!

(In the picture: a funny looking horse at the project!)

(Pawel Klapuch, volunteer on a MTV project in Korea, Summer



## MORE NEWS AND EVENTS!



### North South Preparation - 16<sup>th</sup> October 2010

This event is for anybody aged 19+ interested in joining an international volunteer project in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The preparation will explore issues such as health and safety, cultural awareness, relations between the North and South, living conditions and development. There will also be the opportunity to talk to people who have been in the past to the countries involved. Participation fee is **£10 for the day** – lunch and refreshments included. Booking form available on our website.



### Join our Post Season Event!

Concordia is very happy to host the annual Post Season Event in Brighton **from the 12th-14th November 2010**. Run like a mini project, this event is open to all volunteers who went on a project with Concordia, their friends as well as anybody who wants to know more about our volunteer opportunities. The weekend will be a mix of **volunteering, socialising, sharing your stories** and experiences about volunteering overseas and hearing about other great opportunities that Concordia offers, plus loads of games and a night out on the town. This year we will be volunteering with the [Friends of Shoreham Beach Project](#) and we will be clearing a stretch of Shoreham beach near Brighton.

**You can book a place online on our website or use the postal application form enclosed with this Newsletter.**



### Winter/Spring Projects available

If you want to volunteer abroad this winter and spring, check our website for over 200 projects still available.



### UK Coordinator Training 2011

Would you like to contribute to Concordia, gain useful leadership skills and have a great international volunteering experience in the UK? If the answer is yes, then you might be interested in joining our next project co-ordinator training, which will be running from **14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> April 2011**. If you want to know more

about it, please contact the office for any questions and to receive an information pack.



### Volunteers needed for inputting New Summer Programme 2011 and Publicity Support

Concordia is looking for volunteers to help with the inputting of the new 2011 Summer Programme online. This is a great opportunity to have a **sneak preview of the projects before they actually go live by the 1st April**, and all you need is enthusiasm, some spare time and access to the internet. The actual inputting will start at the beginning of March 2011. Also, we are looking for people available to **distribute leaflets and put up posters in local Universities, Libraries and Volunteer Bureaus**. Let us know if you are interested!



### Photo Competition

Are you a budding photographer? Would you like to win a fantastic prize? If so we want you to capture the **'Concordia volunteer experience'** in a picture. We are looking for dynamic pictures of volunteers participating in a Concordia project in a variety of roles and settings. We would like to capture volunteers in action. **Deadline to enter the competition is 15<sup>th</sup> December** and more details about terms and conditions are available on our website.

### Global Messengers Project – final evaluation



Concordia, supported by funds from DFID, trained 15 volunteers in May on Global Issues such as sustainability, social justice, human rights and more; these volunteers, or "global messengers", then went on 10 of our UK project and successfully ran awareness activities with the international volunteers. The final part of this project will consist of an evaluation weekend in **November 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>**.



### EVS

Concordia is currently looking for volunteers for a series of long term fully funded volunteer projects in Europe through the [European Voluntary Service programme \(EVS\)](#).

**For more information about any news or events in this section of CHAT please contact the office on 01273 422218 or email [info@concordiavolunteers.org.uk](mailto:info@concordiavolunteers.org.uk)**

### Calendar 2011

- **16th October 2010** North South Preparation Day
- **12th-14th November 2010** Post Season Event
- **19<sup>th</sup> February 2011** : North South Preparation Day
- **1<sup>st</sup> APRIL 2011 : NEW SUMMER PROGRAMME GO LIVE ONLINE WITH 1500 PROJECTS AVAILABLE**
- **14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> April 2011**: Co-ordinator Training

- **17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> June and 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> July 2011**: North South

Thanks to all who contributed to this issue of CHAT.

For any questions please feel free to write to:  
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