

## **The European Solidarity Corps**

The Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband Niedersachsen e.V. has been accredited by the European Solidarity Corps (Youth for Europe; in the following: ESK) as lead organization on 26.08.2022.

The goals of the project are the skill development of young people in the social labor market, bridging intercultural and social gaps, and strengthening the identification with Europe and European values of all project participants.

## **The Institution Weidenhof**

The Weidenhof, run by the Irene Foundation, has been a place to live for autistic adults since 1983 and was the first facility of its kind in Germany. The facility has over 40 years of organizational knowledge and practical experience in working with autistic people.

Our main topics to be addressed by taking part in the project are the promotion of alternative forms of participation specifically for disabled people and to support the employability of European youth.

The Weidenhof is located in Hitzacker, a small town with 5000 inhabitants, directly on the river Elbe, in the district of Lüchow-Dannenberg in Lower Saxony. The historic core is located on the city island, which offers a variety of shopping, restaurants and cultural facilities. Hitzacker has rail connections to Lüneburg and Hamburg and offers excursion and recreational opportunities in the Elbtalau Biosphere Reserve.

The locations of the Weidenhof are in Seerau with 15 residents\* in the two houses "old building" and "new building", in Hitzacker in the house Elbufer with 17 residents\* in the groups "broom", "lilac" and "dandelion" and the 2019 built "forest house" with 8 residents\*.

The 40 residents of the Weidenhof have significant disorders in perceptual processing. They lack the ability to organize their experience and behavior appropriately and to adjust to the outside world. Typical are strong behavioral conspicuities as well as individual, very compulsive and ritualized courses of action, the smallest disturbance of which may have considerable effects.

All residents work according to their interests and abilities in the facility's own therapeutic workshops. The Weidenhof offers employment in the woodworking/carpentry workshop, pottery, creative workshop, weaving and textile workshop as well as in gardening and housekeeping. In addition, therapeutic horseback riding, swimming and running as well as movement and music therapy are offered on a weekly basis.

The residents of the Weidenhof have a high need for support due to their autistic impairments and are cared for 24 hours a day, 356 days a year by approximately 80 employees. The employees support the residents in organizing their daily lives and guide them in household activities. They assist them with personal hygiene and personal care and take care of their health and medical needs.

In addition to assisting with practical daily activities, the organization of leisure activities plays a major role. Group activities such as joint parties, excursions, trips, visits to markets or concerts, restaurants or cinemas, but also individual activities for single residents are offered.

Interns and volunteers who support the work of the staff in the residential and workshop areas for a certain period of time are always integrated into the care. The facility has its own residential house in Hitzacker, where volunteers and interns live together. It has a common area with a fully equipped kitchen, single rooms and shared bathrooms. The placement site, shopping facilities, restaurants and train station are within walking distance.

## **The Volunteers**

Interns and volunteers who support the work of the staff in the residential and workshop areas for a certain period of time are always integrated into the care. The facility has its own residential house in Hitzacker, where volunteers and interns live together. It has a common area with a fully equipped kitchen, single rooms and shared bathrooms. The placement site, shopping facilities, restaurants and train station are within walking distance.

## **Your task**

You will work in a team with experienced colleagues and support the residential groups in their daily activities. You will accompany the residents in their housekeeping activities and, together with the staff, design leisure activities for the residents.

## **Your strengths**

- You enjoy working with people and you like to get involved
- You find the concepts of empowerment and self-determination important
- You are reliable, responsible and committed
- You are open-minded and interested in learning new things

## **Our offer**

- You live and work in a small town with a variety of cultural activities, train connections to Lüneburg and Hamburg, located on the Elbe River, surrounded by forest.
- You will receive a monthly allowance and live together with other volunteers in our volunteer apartment in Hitzacker.
- You will take part in the meals in our residential groups while you are working.
- Common leisure activities with the residents will open up the offers of the surroundings of Hitzacker to you.
- A German course with other volunteers will support your language acquisition. A personal mentor will be at your side to help you integrate into your new environment.
- Multidisciplinary teams await you, who will accompany the people living here with great joy and commitment and offer you comprehensive learning opportunities!

We would like to start our cooperation with you in August 2023 and look forward to receiving your application to

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