



**EUROPEAN
SOLIDARITY
CORPS**

ESC NEWSLETTER - August 2021

**YMCA
BOURNEMOUTH**

Bournemouth/Poole/Christchurch



SUPPORT & ADVICE

ACCOMMODATION

FAMILY WORK

HEALTH & WELLBEING

TRAINING & EDUCATION

THE CHATTERBOXES



Cayetana (Spain) and Mate (Hungary) are two of our volunteers, both volunteering at "The Chatterboxes", a youth action project run by young people with disabilities aged 11-25 years old from Bournemouth, Poole and other parts of Dorset.

At the beginning of the year, due to the COVID-19 situation, they were doing the project online, but as soon as it was possible, they became live sessions. We have asked them why do they like the project, and they only have nice words:

"Chatterboxes people are amazing: nice and friendly. They make me feel really happy. I enjoy spending time with all of them so much. I will always be grateful for this big opportunity", Cayetana said. She has been in the project since January 2021 and she will finish at the end of December.

Mate, who started the project in March 2021 and will be on it for a year says "When I had started volunteering for the Chatterboxes, I had a vague idea about working with young people, but it was really nice to get to know them online before I got my Visa. The real journey started when I got here, each and every one of us is different in their own ways. My favourite part of every evening is the start of the sessions when we all have a chance to share some of the highlights of our week. It is so nice to see that they are really busy and enjoying what they have been during the week. Sometimes they have good days and sometimes they have bad days but all in all they are one of the most welcoming groups I have ever had the privilege of being a part of." This is Mate, who started the project in March 2021 and will be on it for a year.

The Chatterboxes is a project with many movements, always looking for new volunteers. So if you want to join the project, contact us!



THE CHATTERBOXES
PART OF YMCA BOURNEMOUTH



The Chatterboxes Current Offering

Mondays on Zoom	Tuesdays at Townsend Youth Centre	Wednesdays on Zoom
5.30-6.30/7pm Online zoom session for peer mentors	5-6.30pm: 11-18-year-olds 7-8.30pm: 18-25-year-olds	6-7.30pm: Online zoom session for 16- 25-year-olds.

We will also continue to offer 1:1's either face to face or online for young people who need it outside of these sessions.

If you would like more information or have any questions, then please contact Poppy Sargeaunt on 07827848479 or email poppy.sargeaunt@ymcabournemouth.org.uk

OUR LONDON TRIP

Visiting London was not something new for most of us. Mostly we all had already been there, but well... as we always say, a trip is not only about the place but for the people.

So, early in the morning and after leaving all our staff in our "temporary Waterloo hostel-house", we started this adventure. We had planned a three day trip to London to visit everything by walking... EVERYTHING!



The trip started with a big welcome to Bruno, one of the latest volunteers of the last year. He came to visit us, the connections during ESC Projects can be awesome! The first day was one of the longest... we walked a lot! We saw the Graffiti Tunnel, we enjoyed the views of London from Oxo Tower (it's free and you don't need to book!), we walked in different markets: Borough Market, Spitalfields Market, Camden Market... and of course we were very surprised by the amazing street art that you can find in these boroughs. Maybe you don't believe it, but that day we achieved more than 50.000 steps! Crazy, isn't it? But well, we had our award having dinner at "Pizza Pilgrims", recommended by our italians volunteers!

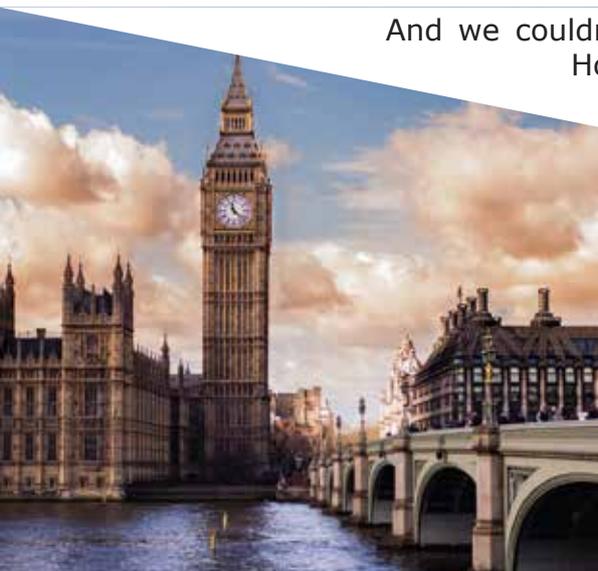
The next day was even crazier, the rest of the volunteers who were missing, joined us trickling in along the day (thanks WhatsApp "live location" for exist), and we visited probably some of the most iconics places in London: Westminster, Buckingham Palace, Harrods, Oxford Street, Little Venice, Covent Garden... to end up having dinner in Piccadilly Circus (at night with the lights is amazing!) and dancing "La Macarena" in Leicester Square with a group of spontaneous people who was there playing music and dancing.

The next day, for some of us, was the last, but it didn't mean it had to be the least. We started the day by renting some bikes. We cycled through Hyde Park, an incredible and very recommended experience! And finally, after a few inconveniences (it started raining, one of us fell off the bike and there was a mistake with the tickets and times), we arrived in Notting Hill and Portobello Market... What a magical place to get lost! The colours of the houses, all the second hand things... enchanted us.

And we couldn't leave the place without eating the buns from "The Bun House" in Soho, one of the favourite places of a couple of our volunteers, and... we don't want to reveal how they are, you should go, try them and then thank us for discovering this place!

So yes, even if some of us had already been in London, we would always remember this trip: Bruno visiting us, Lola and her favourite buns, Helen and her secret corner of Covent Garden, Melly and her crazy but essential shopping, Giulia as our guide through the parks of London, Alba and her all-day calls, and Nina and Maria with their Tik Toks and counting steps.

Which adventure will be the next?



SLEEP EASY 2021



Arianna, our ESC volunteer from Italy, has been involved with Sheena in organising the YMCA fundraising event, 'Sleep Easy'. Arianna helps Sheena with the event administration, finding new companies and individuals to get involved with the event. Arianna also manages Sheena's social networking profiles for the promotion of Sleep Easy.

Sleep Easys are YMCA's main fundraising event across the UK since 2010, seeing more than 7,000 people sleep rough and raising more than £1.5m for local YMCA services that help people rebuild and transform their lives.

Sleep Easys offer a fantastic challenge to individuals and organisations who wish to help raise awareness of the hardships of homelessness and raise funds for a charity that works to bring homelessness to an end. Participants, who can be individuals, groups or businesses, set themselves a fundraising target before wrapping up warm, building a cardboard shelter and then 'sleeping rough so others don't have to'.

Upon arrival, participants will be given two/three cardboard boxes to set up their shelter in a secure outside games area. The shelters can then be decorated as desired, with prizes awarded for aesthetics and innovation.

The YMCA provides boxes for people to build their 'house' overnight and they are given dinner and breakfast. It's also a good time to meet new people and spend time together.

The big event takes place on 16 October, but schools between Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch are also involved. If a school wants to participate, it can choose the day of its choice.

Last year due to covid the event could not take place, so this year they will need a lot of help from everyone.

ARE YOU READY FOR THIS BIG EVENT?

[READ MORE](#)



OUR FIRST VOLUNTEER LINN

My name is Linn and I was the first European volunteer to arrive at YMCA Bournemouth. I'm from Kassel, Germany and I was originally in Bournemouth for a language course when I thought about returning here for a gap year. In Germany, it is common to do a gap year after high school and I was interested in spending my year as a volunteer in the UK. I went to Westover Road and asked the YMCA if I could volunteer with young people so they sent me to see the youth work team at Fusion. I met Karen and Poppy first and then Angela. They tried to figure out a way of accommodating me and then we discovered the European Voluntary Service (now European Solidarity Corps). They started all the paperwork to join the European programme. I needed a Sending Organisation so, as I was due to go to the YMCA Germany University after my gap year, I contacted them and asked if they could represent me. They actually helped a lot to set up the partnership and secure the funding. Everything was exciting but hard because I was the first one.



Nowadays, the ESC volunteers all live together in Bournemouth. I lived by myself with a host family – a friend of Poppy's. I didn't have any other volunteers which was ok but sometimes hard at the same time. However, my host family welcomed me and I soon felt a part of the family.

It's hard to think of highlights of my year as I felt like I was jumping from highlight to highlight. But if I had to narrow it down it was the experience of volunteering in a youth-led programme (something we didn't have back then in Germany). Almost 11 years ago, I saw that the UK was already practicing peer-led education which was fantastic to be a part of and to learn from. Another highlight was a Sandyholme residential that we took the young people on. And my final highlight was my farewell surprise party that made me feel really cared for. Not being there with other volunteers, was a different experience so to have my YMCA co-workers whisk me off to Brownsea Island was certainly a highlight. There was an open-air Shakespeare theatre there which was magical.

At the time of being in Bournemouth, I didn't notice the challenges within my personal journey. Now, I look back and realise that I am where I am now thanks to my experience in Bournemouth. Organising my year helped me to grow a lot as a person and taught me that if I want something, I can achieve it. After that year, I returned to Germany to study Theology and Social Work. Then I came back to the UK and did dance training in London. I wouldn't have done that if it weren't for my positive experience.

In 2019, I founded my own organisation in Germany for young people. I ask the young people what they want to do and they can genuinely influence and shape the projects within the organisation.

While I was in London, I visited Bournemouth several times to see all the people from the YMCA because I was grateful for my experience there and I enjoyed seeing what the youth team was involved with. When I found out that YMCA Bournemouth was hosting more and more volunteers, I was happy and proud. For me, it is something that I didn't achieve alone but it was a team effort that happened thanks to people like Angela who supported and helped me realise my idea.

If I can give some advice to others, it would be to apply to do an ESC placement because it's an unforgettable experience.