

LTVSJ01-La Maison des Bateleurs – (2009-TU-24)



Being an association of youth and popular education, "La Maison des Bateleurs" is the regional delegation in Poitou-Charentes of the national french movement "Soldarités Jeunesses". She aims to promote peace between people by organising voluntary work and intercultural encounters.

One of our main values is the appreciation of each individual in a group, so one can develop oneself while respecting and being considerate of one's fellow being. It is our wish to build a collective project, in order to demonstrate that we can live together, every participant being provided with a different cultural background, and use our potential in a constructive way. The association believes in values of tolerance and respect, she opposes every form of exclusion et discrimination. The entire of the actions of the association aims to facilitate the encounter of people with divers horizons, in order to provide them with the opportunity to contribute to the construction of an open society, where all generations, cultures and nations can live in peace.



The « Maison des Bateleurs » is situated in the Haute-Saintonge, in the municipality of Montendre, a town with 3300 habitants. Montendre organises different activities which imply the hosting of young europeans for already 20 years. Montendre is strongly implicated in the work of the different associations located in the town and is interested by the international dynamic of the "Maison des Bateleurs".

In a rural environment, the most important branch of economic activity is the production of "pineau" and "cognac". Furthermore, green tourism is about to develop recently, due to the proximity of the ocean (70 km). Being relatively hilly, the scenery is enjoyable and wooded by stone pines. The inhabitants of the region are mostly labourers, but the development shows that many employees working in Bordeaux -the 6th biggest city of France- settle in the region.

The arrival in Montendre is quite easy, by car, bus or train. Bordeaux, Angoulême, and Saintes are at the same distance- about 60 km, whereas the seaport La Rochelle is at a distance of 140 km.

During the year 2009, the association decided to orientate her key activity towards environmental and ecological projects, in order to gain a reputation of a location of alternative and experimental living in terms of sustainability. In fact the association supports a considerate style of living, in respect of the nature (consumption, economisation of water and energy, conscious food, waste separation...)



Source : Google

All year long the « Maison des Bateleurs » hosts long term volunteers (VLT), a minimum of five or six VLT so as to assure the continuity of our activities and the cultural mixture of our group. The group consists of french, european and international volunteers from other continents.

The volunteer wants to contribute to the collective life of the house (cooking, washing up, cleaning...) but he also realise practicals activities to learn manual tasks such as masonry and last not least the french language. The motivation of taking responsibility in the functioning of the « Maison des Bateleurs », and in the carrying out of creative and artistic activities.

Furthermore, the volunteer has the possibility to develop a personal project. It is therefore

important that he knows –or learns- to evaluate and appreciate his interests, his goals, his limits and also the means to achieve his personal objectives in the end. This approach is a iterative means of the philosophy of the association: by developing an active citizenship and a distinct sense of responsibility it aims at the concrete construction of peace.

The activities organised with and by the volunteers are generally activities of manual work, gardening and activities of local development in partnership with local associations and people of all ages.

The majority of the organised activities take place in the "Maison des Bateleurs", but some also take place in Montendre or neighbouring villages, or in other delegations of "Solidarités Jeunesses".

Typical week:

From Monday to Friday :

07h45-08h15 : Breakfast
08h15-08h45 : Collective cleaning
09h00-10h30 : Working time
10h30-11h00 : Break
11h00-12h30 : Working time
12h30-14h00 : Lunch
14h00-17h30 : Activities
19h30 : Dinner



Saturdays and Sundays will be devoted to the discovery of the region, French culture and the practice of sportive or cultural activities..

Generally, working times are during the morning. They consist in the house' s upkeep (carpentry, masonry, joinery) or environmental projects (bamboo forest, gardening, ...) or introduction to the specific activities (stonecutting, mosaic..).

The afternoon is devoted to sportive, cultural, artistic, musical, linguistic or social activities according to the proposals of the inhabitants of the "Maison des Bateleurs" and of its partners and visitors.

Another branch of the association's work is the hosting of groups: for example, the « European Week » (a week of encounters between young Europeans, which deals with a current topic), social worker trainings and groups of young people in difficulties which need special monitoring and company (social centers, reinforced educative centers, ...).

Moreover we are actively involved in the local development via activities in partnership with the associative network of Montendre. Each inhabitant is asked to work with other associations and local institutions. The "Maison des Bateleurs" also participates regularly in artistic and cultural events like for example the city's carnival.

In spring and in summer, the association organises about 15 international workcamps with international volunteers all over the region. These workcamps take place in three weeks periods and mostly in a rural environment. It can consist of renovating local patrimony (old wells, ancient bread ovens, ancient fortifications...); the valorisation of cultural heritage (events like reports or exhibitions around historical and cultural themes), environmental projects (renovating the banks of a river or building a nature trail) or artistic animations (e.g. organisation of a festival). One of the basic interests of the workcamps is to weave social links between the participating foreigners provided with completely different cultures and the people living in a rural context with few or no contact with the 'outside' world. For the volunteers

hosted by our association, it is also an opportunity to become animators during one of these international summer workcamps.

The volunteer service is an experience for everyone. Our only wishes to new arriving volunteers are :

- His or her motivation and will to help us in our projects
- The recognition and support of our values and the acceptance of the hosting conditions

During his or her volunteering, the volunteer is granted two days of vacation per month, and more if it is really needed and on a decision taken by common agreement.

The associative project of the "Maison Des Bateleurs" gives volunteers the opportunity to learn to exchange and share their culture, to learn new skills and to live in collectivity. It is a way to comprehend democracy.

