

Responsible. Exciting. Different.

This January Latitude sent their first group of New Zealand volunteers to South Africa. Alvaro Hudson is based in Kosi Bay, South Africa, and sent us this interesting account of his time in South Africa

"In terms of the most responsible thing I have done, I would have to say it's just what I have to do every day; which is teaching classes. I have 3 classes I teach, plus computers for grade 4-9, tutoring, and sport 3 times a week. Planning and teaching these classes takes a lot of time and effort, especially since it is pretty much up to me to decide what I teach and how I teach it. I have to keep up with marking, tests, exercises and so on. The size of the classes (grade 4 -64 students, grade 7 -42, grade 9- 42) makes it an even larger responsibility. It may sound like a bit of a burden but once you get into it, it becomes a routine (if a slightly hectic routine). So I can't really give one occasion when I've demonstrated responsibility. The responsibility come with the placement I have.

The most exciting thing I've experienced would have to be the numerous taxi rides and our unpredictable Easter holidays. The taxis here are just vans which everyone crams into. They only leave when they are full so you can jump in one and not move for a couple of hours. You have people carrying all their shopping, large bags (once a live chicken) and whatever else they have to take. For many people it is the only way to get around. They can be very unpredictable. You sometimes have to randomly switch taxis without knowing why. Once, a taxi I was in stopped in the middle of the road when the taxi driver saw another taxi coming along... The people in the taxi didn't speak good English, the driver just simply said something in Zulu and everyone in the taxi started getting out and moving to the other taxi. All I could do was just follow everyone else and hope for the best. It worked out alright though. It usually does! Our Easter holiday was virtually unplanned. We just pointed out a few places we would like to go and then we left. We booked our first backpackers in Swaziland and from there we made up the rest. One place in Mozambique we went to, we didn't book or call ahead, we just turned up. We had seen the place advertised in a couple of backpackers so we thought it would be alright. However, after walking two kilometres with our backpacks, we found that the posters we had seen were 10 years old and out of date. There were only luxury chalets available for 1500 rand per night. It took us about 5 more hours to find a cheap enough place, which was just an empty tent and for two nights, the 3 of us slept on the ground with all our clothes on to keep warm. So try and at least call ahead if you can...

One thing which is different is the friendliness of the people. Again, this depends on where you may end up. People tend to say hello to each other when walking past and there are often people who will start conversations with you from out of no-where. I've also been invited into houses without knowing the people who live there. A couple of weeks ago I was walking into town along the back roads and a lady was outside a house. She called out to me asking if I was hungry. Of course I said "sure", she invited me into the house and inside was about 20 people who were having lunch. I had never met these people before but they fed me a massive lunch and I ended up having a good chat with a few people. Its things like this that you don't really see back in New Zealand. The largest and most obvious difference where I am placed would be the area and surroundings. There is a shopping centre along the main road but as soon as you turn off onto either side, the roads turn to sand and there are houses and small buildings scattered along the tracks. Vegetation is quite thick so houses are often hidden. It's the stark contrast between the shops in town and the reality of peoples living situations that is a big difference.

I am really glad that I came to South Africa. It is an experience that you will never get from going somewhere like England. The country does have many faults and problems, but it is a place you will not regret visiting and living in."

VACANCIES AT A GLANCE

United Kingdom

10 schools placements **FOR FEMALES ONLY** 1 year placement departing January 2010

Outdoor Education Camps 6-9 month placement, departing March 2010
Community work placements Varying lengths and departure dates

School Placements English Teaching

South Africa 6 month placements, January and July 2010 departures

Poland 6 month placements, departing February 2010

Canada 1 year placements, varying departure dates

English Teaching

China 4-5 months placements, February and August departures

Vietnam 3-4 month placements, February and August departures

Contact us as soon as possible if you or someone you know is interested in applying for any of these vacancies.

Phone: 06 350 5920

Email: info@latitude.org.uk

Application forms can be downloaded from our website.

Discover a world of possibilities.

The Class of 2009

Some of our volunteers here in New Zealand are nearing the end of their time here, as a memento we asked them to tell us some of the Responsible, Exciting and Different things they have done during their time as Latitude volunteers. These entries are just a selection from all our volunteers, we aim to make a year book publication for each country group, so keep your ideas coming in to us here at the office. Email Intern@latitude.org.nz

Christian Schröder - Wanganui City College

Responsible: Coaching the soccer team

Exciting: One week after my arrival, I joined the soccer team of my school and on the second day of a one week tournament we saw the "All Blacks" playing Samoa in front of 35,000 people. I reckon this is a good way to start your journey!

Different: Driving on the left hand-side of the road.



Sandra Dewald - St Kevin's, Oamaru

Responsible: Working with two young people with special educational needs; Michael has Autism and Karla has Down's syndrome. I really enjoyed doing Physical Education with them; both are lovely kids with special characters.

Exciting: When I was travelling my friend Anja and I climbed on the top of Mt Nghauruhoe, some of you might know it as Mt Doom from 'Lord of the Rings'.

Different As soon as I arrived in New Zealand, I got to know the friendliness and openness of the Kiwis. The laid-back way of the people is unique; this is one of the biggest differences to my hectic and sorrowful home country.



Richard Carr—Fielding High School

Responsible: Being in New Zealand, far away from home is enough to make anyone become responsible and become more aware of everyday things.

However, personally for me, the most responsible thing I did was to stay at my placement. It came very close to me wanting to leave my placement, but we sorted our differences out and now I am having the time of my life. If I had changed schools I may not have become the person I am now.

Exciting: Travelling around with 20 friends (all Latitude volunteers) in a 5 car convoy was enough excitement by itself. We saw and did the most incredible things. Making life long friends is just one of the many things that I got out of having a Gap year with Latitude. To pinpoint an experience is hard, but I could say swimming with Hector Dolphins on Christmas Eve was an amazing experience I can never forget, also to just be here in New Zealand, with friends you know are all going through the same things as you!

Different: There are so many things are different, like kiwis driving is awful!, "McDonlads" is "Maccers", everyone pays with eftpos (like a debit card) and kiwi slang is amazing! There are very few things that are similar... oh and there are so many cows you won't believe it.....



Josh Horwood — Havelock North High School

Responsible: Stealing Harry's car, as a way of celebrating his 19th birthday.

Exciting: living with a host family, whom you know very little about prior to meeting and then be being immersed in their life.

Different: Cheese and chocolate is really expensive in this country!



Gesche Knoop—Wesley College, Auckland

Responsible: I reckon driving for the school is the most responsible thing I do here in NZ. I take the students to training, outings or wherever they need to go. Once we even went with the drama class in the vans all way down to Wellington.

Exciting: The most exciting experience during this year was definitely the bungy jump and the skydive I did in Taupo and the canyon swing in Queenstown. It was so exciting!! The most scary moments were the first second of the Bungy where I was just falling and the backwards version of the Canyon swing, which I did twice! The skydive was just fun, I enjoyed it so much - just flying! I'm so happy I did it and I want to do it again!

Different: When I compare NZ to Germany, the biggest difference is probably the mentality of the people. They are so easy, out-going and nice and as a foreigner you are always welcome! The way of life is just simpler here and the people do much more together. They do everything just to have fun.



Discover a world of possibilities.

News in Brief...

Esther Boyle has been at the Royal School, Hampstead for a couple of months now and is really getting into the swing of life in the UK. Despite exam fever having hit her school hard, she is making the most of her free time, and the proximity to Europe, by popping over to Amsterdam and Belgium. As you can see from the photo she has also been taking in the sights and sounds of life in London, such as the London Eye (pictured).



Kat Beaty has added herself to the injury list. She has ruptured some of the tendons in her ankle has her foot immobilised in a moon boot . She's hoping for an improvement soon as the school holidays are looming, and *"there is no way I'm spending my week in Tonga on crutches, or doing my skydive in a moonboot!!"*



The recent volunteer farewell Barbeque here in Palmerston North was a roaring success. Approximately 40 people enjoyed an evening of hotly contested 'Sing Star' competitions, late-night ice cream binges and a lots of other fun stuff too! In true Kiwi fashion Sharyn played host to at least 20 of the group, who bedded down on the floor in her living room!



Carly Au has been busy for the last few months preparing for the Hawkes Bay production of "Miss Saigon" *'Being part of the show has been exciting and exhausting all at once. We rehearse several times a week, and at times it has meant making sacrifices when I'd much rather be off on a weekend trip or hanging out with the other Hawkes Bay gappies. On the other hand, it's been fantastic to meet so many people outside of the school and the gap community, and we've had more than enough cast/crew parties to make up for the ones I've missed!'*

ARE YOU A CURRENT VOLUNTEER?

WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU ABOUT WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN UP TO AND WOULD LOVE TO SEE SOME PHOTOS!

We recently received this e-mail from Angus Neilson, who is from Palmerston North and is currently half-way through a placement at the Arts Educational College in Tring, UK.

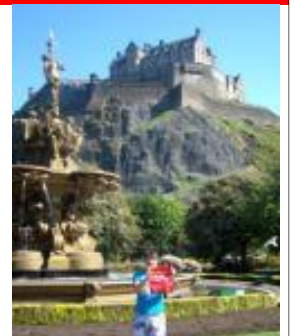
"I am so glad that I choose to do a gap year! I have grown up in ways I didn't think I could anymore. This year has changed me a lot, and I always thought it was corny to say I'll never forget this year but it has changed me a lot, and my future life choices will now be moulded by this year. I am so grateful that you guys accepted me. Be proud to know that you change people's lives on a daily basis."

The world famous Lattitude New Zealand Bag Competition



Don't forget to keep your entries coming in for our long standing Lattitude bag competition. Get snap happy and imaginative and you could be in with the chance of winning a copy of the Great New Zealand Songbook CD or a copy of the Kiwi Speak book.

This months winner is Angus Neilson, so get in touch Angus and tell us which prize you would like. Sharyn and Katie not only remembered their bag at a recent All Blacks game, they also had a Kiwi flag in tow as well!



Important Dates for 2009 / 2010

- Now— applications for 2010 departures are filling fast—we still have vacancies for most countries and are accepting applications. Please apply urgently to avoid missing out!
- June 27th —Vanuatu volunteers depart
- August 28th—volunteers arriving into New Zealand from Germany, Canada and the UK
- August 30th— Voluneers arrive at their placements around NZ
- September 6th - NZ volunteers arrive in Poland
- November and December—Pre-departure briefings for volunteers departing in 2010
- January 5th -First departures of the year (UK schools)
- January—NZ Departures to South Africa date TBC
- February 6th — NZ departures to Poland
- Early 2010—NZ departures to Canada

Our website address is: www.lattitude.org.nz