

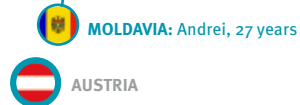
“I would certainly recommend other people to do the European Voluntary Service because it is something that may open new doors for you, new doors to gaining something new and useful which later on could brighten your life and future.”
(Andrei, 27)

Project granted by
the Youth in Action National Agency in:
Austria

Hosting organisation:
Caritas - Flüchtlingshaus
www.caritas-salzburg.at

Sending organisation:
Pädagogische Universität «Ion Creanga»

Activity dates:
01/07/2009 - 01/09/2010
(12 months)



HELPING TO GIVE RELIEF IN SALZBURG, AUSTRIA

Andrei (27 years) from Moldova had never been involved in social work before spending 12 months (2009/2010) as a volunteer in the Caritas Home for Refugees in Salzburg, Austria. It opened his eyes to a whole new world and perhaps to a future professional commitment.

CARITAS is a network of Catholic relief, development and social service agencies operating in some 200 countries around the world. Its centre in Salzburg runs a home for refugees, many of them asylum seekers caught up in recent conflicts in South-East Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The centre provides shelter for them until the legal proceedings allow them to move on.

Andrei's main contribution to the work of his hosts was to make the residents feel welcome in their new surroundings. He used his communicative skills and big-hearted personality to allay the fears of children and adults seeking refuge from their recent experience of conflict and natural disasters. His fluency in various languages helped him to communicate directly with the refugees and made them feel at home. He accompanied the refugees in their daily routines, helping the children do their homework, going to the doctors with the adults, doing translations and simply making himself available to answer their needs.

Andrei was always thinking and acting as a member of a greater team in the service of others and not just as a private individual. He discovered social work as a volunteer and developed a deep commitment to the mission of Caritas. He earned the trust of the refugees and clearly enjoyed his stay at the centre. The experience awoke in him the ambition to continue working in the field of humanitarian aid and to contact other agencies with a similar mission.

Andrei clearly established friendly relations at every level and the residents of the centre benefited from his open-minded and generous approach. His presence also helped the centre's fight against xenophobia.