

Krucek, z.s. (Krucek) is a non-governmental non-profit organization existing already for 14 years. Our main goal is to be a family, maternity, community and integrative centre and also to be an educational and upbringing, consultative, multi-generation and volunteer centre for families with small children. Every day we offer a pleasant and friendly environment, many kinds of activities and services for families, for example exercises for pregnant women, baby clubs for mothers with babies, babysitting 0-6 years, creative, music and movement workshops, English lessons for preschoolers and adults, educational courses, seminars, weekend public events etc.

Krucek is a meeting place for families with children. It offers services and activities, the main objective is to promote healthy, active and functional families and to prevent social exclusion of families with little children (from birth to preschool age). Services and activities allow families to spend time in a meaningful way and encourage them to self-fulfilment, to be active and not to stand apart. In that way, the social isolation of a family is prevented and its role in society strengthens; we also want to help children themselves with their socialisation and prepare them for the entry to schools. Next we obtain and disseminate to our target groups expertise on education, health, psychology and so on. Newly we focus on helping families with autistic children or children with handicap. We also help people (most often parents or women in before-retiring age) to return to the labour market, we look for solutions especially in flexible forms of work or business (we have experience with these areas thanks to EU projects). We also support the involvement of women in public life and in the sharing of power. Promoting equal opportunities for women and men and asserting children rights also belongs to our goals. We work with the theme of inclusion, we support it in our all activities. We also work with alternative forms of educations (montessori, foster nurseries, workshops about alternative opportunities...).

Our target groups are:

- families with children at risk of social exclusion
- families with children up to 6 years
- Parents on maternity / parental leave
- families with older children
- grandparents with their grandchildren
- Pregnant women and their partners
- people that are underprivileged because of their gender, age, social situation...

The main principles of our organization are:

- emphasis on the exceptional role of family in the lives of individuals and society
- respectful approach
- professionalism and quality of service
- expert team and its development
- creating and finding new approaches to work
- cooperation
- efficiency and flexibility of services according to current requirements of target groups
- voluntariness, equality, self-help

- promotion of flexible forms of work
- work-life balance

Statement of activities of Krucek:

- Clubs for parents with children from 0-6 years
- camps
- activities for adults (exercises, workshops of creativity)
- environmental activities
- a child-care centre BabyKrucek
- a contact centre (consultations on various issues)
- education (children, parents, adults, foster-parents)
- leisure activities for families with children (a day for little ones, treasure hunt, carnivals, St. Nicolas' day, Halloween...)
- help to return to the labour market (involving gender aspect)
- clubs for parents with children with autism spectrum disorder
- counseling (psychological, lactational, homeopathic, medical, legal, financial, for pregnant women etc.).

Volunteers can learn and get inspired by professionals. Each individual volunteer finds an area in which he/she is interested most and thus has an occasion to develop it in cooperation with the selected colleague.

Our organization has wide experience with disadvantaged people, especially from our target groups. Thus we know how to work with these people and we try to find ways to help them. We have experience with cooperation with young people with fewer opportunities as well thanks to the hosting of European volunteers. In the past several times it happened that we have found out fewer opportunities of our volunteer during the mobility of the volunteer (during the project, not before start of it). Once there were social obstacles and once geographical obstacles as fewer opportunities in our case.

If there will be interest of a candidate we can organize an introductory planning visit to our hosting organization. It is good for potential volunteers with both social and geographical obstacles. If we know the situation of a volunteer in time, we can ensure additional mentoring. For this reason it is very important to know exactly the situation of the volunteer and find for him/her the right mentor who can help the volunteer with the obstacles. We will motivate them to the process of EVS, we are good at it.

We have also many experts in our team or as external lecturers and they are also in cooperating organizations, so we try to give the volunteers help in all concrete ranges they need. We have a psychologist, a gender expert, a sociologist, a pedagogic worker, a worker of motivation, an evaluator and so on and we cooperate for example with a financial expert, a worker with (health) disadvantaged people and many other specialists in their ranges. These people can be support for the volunteers during their stay in our hosting organization.

About us

Krucek actively participates in events in the region. Our organization is dynamic in a number of activities, we have extensive experience with work in the field of pro-family policy. We work with the non-profit sector as well as with the leadership of the city and other local organizations (Home to the crossroads-for mentally-handicapped people, Svetlanka - the centre for seniors, Leisure Centre Tramtarie, elementary schools and kindergartens, Forest Nursery Brlenka, The Town of Svitavy, Cafe Rošambo, Regional authority of Pardubice Region, the KONEP-network of nonprofit organizations in Pardubice region, Mothers' Centres Network-family centres in the region and country, Good family, o.p.s - work with a foster family, InHelp, o.p.s - support for persons with disabilities, regional org. with EVS...).

Since 2009, we function as an accredited organization of European Voluntary Service. Our cooperation with volunteers shows that this activity is beneficial for both the organization and the volunteers themselves. We always had accreditation for coordinative, hosting and sending activities. We have been cooperating with EVS volunteers since 2009 when we received the first volunteer with whom we are still in touch. Currently, we realize our sixth EVS project called Cooperation and Learning to Learn. As a both hosting and coordinative organization we have hosted already 13 volunteers. As a sending organization we have significant experience in successfully sending a volunteer. Currently, we perceive a growing interest in potential tours from local young people, we are already in active contact with two candidates. We are the only one accredited org. for EVS in our township.

For the volunteers, our projects are interesting opportunities to gain additional skills for the labour market and their personal life (e.g. the ability to organize activities for families with children and public events, cooperation, financial literacy, foreign language) and a way to create a network of international contacts. It is as well an important opportunity to highlight the cooperation within the frame of EU in practice and thus engage other people and other organizations in various activities. Volunteers enrich both the hosting organization and the surroundings in many different ways (e.g. tolerance for diversity, different styles of work, awareness of the existence of other cultures and countries, cooperation with young volunteers...).

We try to offer volunteers variable activities thanks to our wide cooperation. They can collaborate and consult the function of both our organization and partly other organizations active in the town and its surrounding area (volunteers often cooperate especially with the centre for seniors Svetlanka, Home to the Crossroads, Primary and Nursery School Svitavy-Lacnov, a leisure centre Tramtarie, low-threshold club Hole and Cafe Rosambo). We regularly increase the value of past EVS projects and try to set up the most efficient functioning of all parties concerned.

We work with volunteers on various topics and activities (autonomy, money management, schedule layouts activities, responsibility in terms of reliability - for the maintenance of the apartment or a flat where they live, for their work. We also support them in the creation of their own mini-projects in collaboration with other volunteers and organizations or while developing creative workshops at major public events where they can create their own sites and actively participate in it. They can be present during the evaluation of actions. They have competence also to collaborate on training camps and the formation of some parts of the program, as well as activities for children, evaluation etc.).

Newly Krucek is registered as a volunteer centre to promote regional volunteering. We are a sending and hosting organization. This Voluntary Centre finds and files potential volunteers as well as the organizations that would like to welcome a volunteer service in the region. So we also coordinate volunteer services in our region (we are the only one volunteer centre in close surroundings).

Thanks to years of experience with the EVS, we were able to set up various forms of cooperation with respect to the personality of an individual volunteer. Thanks to experience we also understand that

cooperation with EVS is a learning process during which both a volunteer and our organization acquires new impulses to enrichment.

Volunteers in our organization are always accompanied during the activities, they have the support of their coordinator, mentors and all the workers with whom they come into contact.

Organization / TEAM

Now we have 14 permanent employees and about 15 other workers on agreements outside employment. Officially we have 14 volunteers within our new voluntary centre and many other fans who like helping us with some events.

The basic team of Krucek consists of special educators, a psychologist, a nurse - a rehabilitation nurse, a gender expert, an evaluator, an accountant, a motivational worker and child-caring workers. All those workers are in direct contact with the volunteers and share experience with them a volunteer. Volunteers can learn and get inspired by professionals. Each individual volunteer finds an area in which he/she is interested most and thus has an occasion to develop it in cooperation with the selected colleague. Every team is a subject to a regular supervision.

The coordinator of the project and the statutory representative of the organization Ing. Milena Zemanova. Thanks to her personal and professional experience she adapt really quickly in organization and already converged within the idea of EVS and began working on the current project. Milena is actively cooperating with current volunteers and mentors.

Our psychologist and trainer Mgr. Monika Cuhelova is available to cooperate with volunteers if they are experiencing any personal or professional problem, discomfort or stress. She is the trainer of the courses "Effective Parenting" and "Emotional Intelligence", in which she works with the emotions and respectful approach to the environment, she also runs seminars on time-management, reconciliation and others. She is the psychological support for volunteers.

Other employees of Krucek work with volunteers already for several years. The entire team undergoes regular meetings for the purpose of supervision under the guidance of professionals, which prevents problems in communication and cooperation.

Activities

The main goals of activities within the frame of our hosting EVS programme include connecting volunteers with the local community, teaching volunteers to work with children, parents, seniors and disabled people. Furthermore, we want to improve their communication in English or even to teach them some Czech. We try to develop the volunteer's sense of cooperation, partnership, self-reliance, initiative and entrepreneurship, tolerance for differences and other cultures, European citizenship, management of their time, planning, use of the elements of Montessori pedagogy (child labor with special tools, prepared environment, cooperative learning, individual approach) and alternative forms of education, respectful approach (it means a partnership approach enabling to maximize the potential of all stakeholders in the communication with children, families and colleagues in accordance with the concepts such as "respect and be respected," "effective parenting" and "free education"). Our goal is also to enrich the volunteers with skills gained from working with our organization and other institutions and thus make them more attractive for labour market. We want to highlight their learning outcomes with the exposure of Youthpass and thus also promote the international recognition of learning outcomes.

Particular activities gradually tend to sub-goals of the our EVS programme. Volunteers usually will participate in activities alternatively.

1. Participation on regular short activities (clubs) for families with children in the roles of helping lectors.
The clubs are divided according to age and a theme (e.g. art, musical and moving classes, baby clubs,

ecological and healthy classes, autism etc.). Volunteers will try to involve families to the creative process and motivate them for active participation with the main lecturers. They can also communicate informally with families or play with the children. We expect that the volunteer's competences for working with families and children will grow.

2. Babysitting – the volunteers participate in our babysitting centre for maximum of 10 small children (0-6 years). The volunteer will learn how to deal with children in this age category. Thanks to the assistance of child-care workers they will learn to have respectful approach to children, to use elements of Montessori teaching, to lead creative and movement workshops, to help with childcare.

3. Preparation of bigger events for public (50-300 people) - we arrange at least 1 bigger event for public in 1 or 2 months. These events are prepared and realized by the whole team, including volunteers. The events are e.g. a lampion parade, carnival or St. Nicolas' celebration. The volunteers will have an opportunity to realize their own ideas and we will teach them how to organize such events.

4. Conversation in their native language within the workshops in Krucek. It is often the first time that volunteers try to teach their native language, so that it is an interesting experience.

5. Volunteers participate in the entertainment program for children at the swimming pool Svitavy during summer holidays. They are there together with Czech volunteers and create a funny and creative program for children.

6. Volunteers participate in 4 suburban camps for children during summer holidays. They form the program and adventure for kids together with lecturers.

7. Volunteers participate in an activity called Street teaching in cooperation with The Town of Svitavy and Czech volunteers. Volunteers teach children English in a playful and creative way.

8. Volunteers have a chance to make their own mini-project. The topic of the mini-project depends on the volunteers. We are ready to support volunteers in this mini-project if they need.

9. Volunteers participate in the newly established volunteer centre of our organization. In the context of informal learning they meet the Czech volunteers and can enrich their cultural awareness and get a new idea about voluntary work in the Czech Republic.

10. Volunteers have the opportunity to discuss gender stereotypes and their degradation during informal discussions. They can apply their new findings in their work with children, parents and others. They can discuss newly gained experience with a gender expert, who is also the coordinator of EVS. They can enrich themselves and also the surrounding in their countries with a new perspective and perhaps with a new point of view.

11. Volunteers have at least 2 presentations about their country and culture during the EVS. It is an opportunity to introduce their culture to the local community.

Next it is possible to cooperate with other organisations in Svitavy. Volunteers can choose from these activities what they want to do (or try everything gradually). It is based on their individual range of interest.

12. Participation in Nursery and Primary school Svitavy-Lačnov – volunteers lead the children to knowledge of English language in a playful way and with the help of a teacher. The school has the status of "creative school", individual respectful attitude towards children and the elements of Montessori pedagogy are applied. This school integrates the underprivileged and Roma children. The experience with such an inclusion school is a very important call for volunteers.

13. Světlanka-house for elderly and mentally handicapped people. Volunteers can play games with seniors, they can read them, dance with them, prepare some short art activities or they can try to speak

with them in Czech. The volunteers can learn how to work with the elderly, which activities can help them stay active and how to communicate with them. They can improve their Czech there as well.

14. Volunteers will have the opportunity to go into social housing or to a shelter for mothers with children in difficult situations. They can help to prepare a short programme together with the social worker.

15. They can attend low-threshold club „Hole“. It is the centre for children from 8-15 years old in bad social or family situation.

16. House at the crossroads – an organization for mentally handicapped people. Volunteers can participate in creative workshops.

17. Volunteers can see how Czech family-oriented policy looks and works.

Location

Krucek is located in Pardubice region in the district town of Svitavy. The town of Svitavy has approximately 18 000 inhabitants and it covers an area of 3133 hectares. It is a small town with a beautiful historical square and many other interesting places. Svitavy is located in a lightly hilled country of the Svitavy highland in the northeast of the Czech Republic. It is an important transport junction; it has a good position for tourists as well as interesting surroundings.

Svitavy has very nice surroundings. There is a beautiful countryside (e.g. Toulcovy mastale, Zdarske vrchy...), but also charming historical towns in the neighborhood (Litomysl, Policka, Moravska Trebova) from which everyone is worth seeing. There is a very good connection with other cities and towns. You can get there by bus or by train. From Svitavy it is also possible to travel directly to Prague or Brno by bus or by train (1 hour to Brno, 2,5 hours to Prague).

Svitavy is quite a small town so it is possible to get everywhere by foot or by bike. Our volunteers can use bikes that we give them. From one end of the town to another it takes about 20 minutes by bike.

There is an opportunity to visit various cultural events such as theatre, cinema, concerts, balls, museum, markets and library. There are also many sport activities in the local stadium, ice rink, swimming pool, or in a sports hall. There are also bowling centres, football and volleyball clubs and several in-line trails, fitness centres or gyms with aerobic and other exercises. Not far from Svitavy we can find routes for cross country skiing, but also several pistes for downhill skiing. There is plenty of tourist routes and bikeways as well. There are also some open-air concerts and music festivals in summer in Svitavy. It is possible to spend pleasant time with friends in various cafes, restaurants, pubs or in an alternative club or a disco club.

There are many shops and supermarkets in Svitavy where volunteers can buy their food. There are also many restaurants that offer lunch menus for 60-90 crowns and there is also a possibility to buy lunches in some canteen.

There are many young families in Svitavy because Svitavy is a perfect town for family life. There are also many students of secondary schools and young people but it is not so striking as in big cities because we have no university here (university students concentrate in big cities).

More information about the town on www.svitavy.cz.

Krucek is located in the multipurpose educational and community centre called Fabrika Svitavy, where there are several other organisations located (e.g. library, centre of social services Salvia, centre of cultural services, restaurant or antiquarian bookshop). There is also a big hall for various cultural and community actions, several study rooms and a passageway where you can sit for a coffee.

More informations on: www.fabrikasvitavy.eu

Krucek has its own space at the back of Fabrika. There is a separate room designated for playing and for various short activities, office room, toilets, kitchen and a changing room. You can use the printing machine, copy machine, work cell phone, internet or kitchen appliances here (volunteers can use microwave oven or cooker to cook or to heat their lunch there).

Second place of Krucek (called BabyKrucek) is located near a local sports hall. There are toilets, a playing room, a sleeping room for children, a kitchen-forge and a changing room and also a forge for coworking place. There is an internet connection in both places of Krucek.

Accommodation

Our volunteers live in a big three-room fully-equipped flat in a block of flats lying at the housing estate called "Lany" and about 1.5 kilometers from their work.

Each volunteer will live in their own singleroom in the flat. They share bathroom, toilet and kitchen together. We equip the flat gradually through donations or funds. There always live 3 young people (two European volunteers and one Czech young person) in the flat. This fact offers the opportunity of meeting and of sharing the daily affairs. Czech roommate helps the volunteers with operational matters in the house (cleaning, water, gas measuring, communication with a caretaker etc.). There is an internet connection in the flat. Volunteers also have the use of the cellar where they can put bikes.

They will cook themselves. There are also many shops and supermarkets In Svitavy where volunteers can buy food. There are also many restaurants that offer lunch menus for 60-90 crowns and there is also a possibility to buy lunches in some canteen. There are also vegetarian restaurants in Svitavy.

Svitavy is quite a small town so that it is possible to get everywhere by foot or by bike. Our volunteers can use bikes that we give them. From one end of the town to another it takes about 20 minutes by bike. Krucek is situated about 10 minutes by bike (20 minutes by foot) and BabyKrucek is situated about 15 minutes by bike (30 minutes by foot) from the volunteers' flat. There is no public transport but some local buses travel from one site of the town to the second one. Volunteers can use the buses especially during travelling to Nursery and Primary School Svitavy-Lacnov.

Benefits

Volunteers will be trained by Krucek and cooperating organizations to work with families, children, the elderly, mentally handicapped people. Information is specified during the stay according to the needs of individual activities. They will be instructed about safety at work.

They can visit the First Aid Course for adults focused on children which is held by our organization several times a year.

Mentors will accompany the volunteers throughout the whole service, initially intensively and then according to the needs of both sides. They show them the town and institutions and tell them the necessary information and help them with organizational matters and the incorporation and integration into the community. Mentors are first informal volunteers' friends. They are psychological support both in times of crisis and in times of contentment. A volunteer should trust his/her mentor, they should have a close relationship together and not be afraid to talk about problems and ask for help. A mentor may be a mediator between the volunteer and the third party if the communication is stagnating. They should be on the part of volunteers, but basically should cooperate with all sides in the project. At the end of the service they may help volunteers with filling the Youthpass (in cooperation with EVS coordinator), summarizing the personal achievements and developed abilities and knowledge.

Mentoring is voluntary work. We already have motivated mentors chosen but it also depends on individual sympathies between a volunteer and a mentor.

Volunteers are all the time encouraged by the coordinator of EVS, mentors and hosting organizations. Krucek has a professional team, so that technical assistance or psychological support will be provided if needed (e.g. we can use the experience of the lecturers at the workshops, one of the workers is a psychologist who always offers help in solving personal problems). Volunteers will also be encouraged to create new activities and to implement their own ideas, to integrate into the local community and participate in social and cultural life in the town. We implement many activities that can stimulate additional ideas and inspire volunteers to creativity. The work team is used to inviting volunteers to visit families for dinner, coffee, to join actions of the city, friendly gatherings with friends, trips and so on.

We provide professional lessons of the Czech language for volunteers (if there is no online language support). Knowledge of the language draws the local community and people near. There will be regular meeting of the coordinator with volunteers. We will speak about future activities, fulfilling of goals and potential changing of activities and development of important competence.

Working time is max. 35 hours a week, much will depend on the personalities of volunteers, what activities they choose and when. They will be free from Friday afternoon through the weekend plus two days in each month. During the holiday season (July and August) and the Christmas season they will have more free days. Once a month a weekend event takes place, days off in replacement for such activities can be collected during major holidays or by arrangement.

Support will be provided to volunteers throughout their whole EVS thanks to the good cooperation of the hosting organization, mentors, the sending organization and national agency, with whom we are in continuous contact. If required, after previous experience, we are able to help them manage the assigned sum of money.