

November 2011

MissionPost

„Where Word and action meet“

First weeks in the house

Friendship at a stake

Welcome to
the 7th group


MISSION
HOUSE
AMSTELRANK



EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

Welcome to our first edition of the Mission-Post in the new Mission House year. Please keep giving us feedback on MissionPost, so we can constantly improve it.

This summer Erjo Beitler left the house and Willemijn Heikoop moved her thinks in the big famous room with the channel view at Nieuwe Herengracht. Shortly afterwards the nieuwe group arrived in the house.

The website become a professional make over and is since September in a lovely new

modern design. With the new website also our MissionPost distribution list changed. We didn't migrate the email adresses from the old to the new site, which means you have to sign up for the "NEWSLETTER" again on the new site.

September and October have been really busy for me personally. Therefore this edition comes in mid november instead of september. We hope we are able to make the next one on time (around eastern).

Yours

Toby and Buck

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MissionPost

„Where Word and action meet“

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FIRST WEEKS AS A HOUSE LEADER

It is Wednesday evening, 31 August, the day before the new volunteers arrive in the Mission House. Nervously I'm checking weather I did everything: rooms ready, keys sorted out, cupcakes baked. Yes, it seems everything is ready

for Lennart, Simon, Kaisla, Agi en Christi to come.

The next day Agi is the first to arrive, in the early afternoon with a big suitcase. Not much later Kaisla arrives with a bleed-

ing knee. My first task as a houselider is taking care of this knee. Hopefully this is not representative for the rest of the year. The coming of Lennart is already announced by a big heavy parcel brought by the postman who doesn't believe I could take it up the stairs. (but I did!) While Kaisla and Agi are busy making diner, I have the time to drink a nice cup of tea with Simon and Lennart. Late in the evening, after diner, coffee and dividing the rooms, finally Christie arrives and the team is complete. Everybody is in the house, the new season of the mission house has started! Very exciting!

The first few days felt a bit like a rollercoaster,

the moment it starts you have no choice then go, no time to think, just go with the flow. It was a very nice rollercoaster ride. Friday was our bicycle-day: painting the bicycles and discovering Amsterdam on the bike. Saturday was a cooking -day: making snacks for a reception and soup for our open house on Sunday. Sunday was a church-day: with first our own welcome service and in the afternoon the profession service of Roland Putman one of our house friends. And then from Monday the visiting of the projects started. I didn't have to go with them to the projects and first it was a bit strange to let them go. But it was good and everything went well. It's nice to hear the stories when they go back from a visit, every time very enthusiastic. I think it will be a hard decision for them to choose which project they want to work in.

Now it has been three weeks since they arrived, but it feels like months. It is good to have the house full with people, the empty rooms are finally filled with life. I'm enjoying every moment together, the good talks, the silliness, the fun, the dancing. It's a group full of energy, ideas, craziness and enthusiasm and I'm blessed to live with them. I couldn't wish for a better group in my first year as a houseleader! I'm looking forward to a good year, full of challenges, new ideas and most of all FUN. And I am convinced that with Kaisla, Lennart, Agi, Christie en Simon it will be an unforgettable year!

Willemijn



AN OLD PROJECT LEADER, SAME OLD IDEAS?

1st September 2011 saw me begin my 6th year in Amsterdam and my 6th year involved in the Mission House. I remember coming up the stairs, hot and sweaty on that first day and wondering what it was that was getting myself in for. I remember thinking that I couldn't wait to go back to good old blighty and start my career as a policeman. How my future has changed and my dreams have evolved and changed. 1st September saw not only my 6th year in Amsterdam

had to evolve as a house, we had to expand so that the house could continue for many years to come and give countless more volunteers the opportunity to live and work in Amsterdam. I wanted to Mission House to become part of the landmark for gap years! This summer saw us launch our brand new social media integrated website. A site that was inspired by the work Tobias and Buchanan into the previous site and driven by a passion to exceed the best. This



summer saw the house cleaner than it ever has been as Willemijn moved in and set about putting her mark on the house. It was inspiring to talk to her and her vision on the house, it is going to be an exciting year in the house. This is already easy to see in the house. September saw the bi-annual council meeting from

but my 3rd year as project leader. It could be easy for me to get back into regular swing of the Mission House and just flow through this year with ease, not challenging myself, the volunteers or the project. How easy it would be to sit back and relax, after all have I not earned it after all these years?

As I pondered the year ahead I knew that we

the Mission House and change is on the horizon. These coming months we are working on new plans to bring the Mission House forward and in a time of budget cuts where the youth are feeling the effects we want to make a house where all are welcome. Plans that hold true to our vision of making it a place 'Where Word and action meet' but also a place for all. As the plans



develop we will keep you up to date via the website, Facebook and of course Mission Post.

but it is a disgrace to have no stars to reach for." For not failure but low aim is the sin

As I ponder the new year ahead I am reminded of a text that I give to all the Together volunteers at the start of the year. I ask them to put it in the wallet or somewhere safe so that they will be reminded that it is ok to dream. In these times of job cuts and budget cuts let us never forget that it is ok to dream. *It must be borne in mind that the tragedy of life doesn't lie in not reaching your goal.*



The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach. It isn't a calamity to die with dreams unfulfilled, but it is a calamity not to dream. It is not a disgrace not to reach the stars,

So perhaps I won't sit back just yet, I have a feeling that it going to be far too exciting to just sit back, but isn't that the same every year?

lain

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FRIENDSHIP AT A STAKE

A Tuesday in November, long before the holiday will start. It's matchday. Not just a match. It's a football match. Between Germany and the Netherlands, in Hamburg, Germany. I decided to go there, together with my three German friends I met during my three years in the Mission House. From every year I chose a German to travel to the match. The lucky ones were Ferdinand, Tobias and Cornelius. Ferdinand, Tobias and I decided to already travel to Hamburg for the weekend and enjoy watching the crazy Dutch footballfans on the Hamburger Reeperbahn. Cornelius studies close to Hamburg and joined later. Though we thought we had arranged everything with our stay in Hamburg and our

tickets, it still costed a lot of stress and courage to finally get our tickets. We still don't know whether they were real tickets... But we don't care, because we were there. One little dutch boy with three Germans. In a stadium full of Germans. 'Holland!' was silenced quite soon..

After three goals of Germany it was clear to me that I was there at the right time, with the right people at the right place. I was just supporting the wrong team.. And it is still not really clear whether I will overcome this disaster and whether our friendships will survive this disastrous loss. However, on the way back to the trainstation, we joined all the other footballfans. With our songs about Ajax and Amsterdam, we showed



everybody that countries do not care, it's Amsterdam that counts and still binds us. ' Aan de Amsterdamse grachten'. Much better than the Reeperbahn. Much more important than any stupid football match, is what I say now we have lost :)

Luckily, 13th May 2012 there will be revanche. Backstreet Boys in concert in Malmo, Sweden.

Erjo



A PARENT'S VIEW

Buchanan's opportunity to travel to Amsterdam to take part in a 10 month voluntary programme has benefited him as a person, and has expanded his horizons in many ways.

Before committing to the project Buchanan had a few hard decisions to make, one being an interview for a local Police job involving despatching officers to areas where they were needed. After some soul searching the Amsterdam project won - and he never looked back. Exciting and challenging experiences faced him most days, along with the challenge of learning, and using, a new language. Buchanan still uses his Dutch now he is back home - he gets lots of Dutch tourists to chat too :-)

One of the big differences I see in Buchanan is his ability to deal with different situations more calmly and with a lot more confidence. Meeting, living and working with folk who were total strangers has allowed him to develop trust and an understanding that would have taken a long time to learn in normal walk of life!

He has a better insight into issues affecting some homeless groups - substance abuse etc and all this experience has made him a more rounded person, with the ability to see many different issues - and not just black and white!!

Wendy Grant, mother of Buchanan Grant

MISSION HOUSE AMSTELRANK

A gap year with a difference in Amsterdam

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Welcome to the Mission House

Our Mission Statement

The Mission of the House is where Word and action meet. This Mission isn't individual but Community based. The centre of Christian life is Community. Where we come together

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New blog is online!



BUCHANAN'S FUMBLE WITH A THOUGHT.

Say the phrase 'gap-year' to a number of people in your community, either church, school, university or amongst peer and you'll often get a mixed reaction. For some gap years represent an inability to get on with life, while others see the gap year experience as a rite of passage that finally allows you to be recognised as an adult.

Those reading this (thank you mum, the money is in the post) will undoubtedly know how diverse the gap year field is, maybe to the extent that you're wishing I would use the term 'voluntary year' instead. Certainly in the past a gap year really was that: a gap to be filled before University. These days, if chosen for the right reasons, a voluntary year allows you to live your lessons received sitting behind a lecture desk or school desk. All those quiet words of wisdom from mentors and friends can be challenged, for surely the best pupils are those who don't completely believe the teacher and seeks to challenge the knowledge laid upon them?

Employability is the big phrase in the voluntary sector right now, it's been kicked about for a good 5-10 years but has only seriously been invested in more recently. It used to be something connected with homeless adults who were poorly educated and poorly skilled to survive in the modern employment. However more increasingly it has been commonly linked with school leavers, under and post graduates, those facing or being made redundant, and tragically those who have yet to finish school.

In Scotland the voluntary sector has started to invest heavily, along with central government, in providing meaningful internships to both under and post graduates. At one time internships were associated with Law, Engineering, Architecture and Finance (namely). Now, however, we see opportunities to put

words into works as a primary means of accessing the employability of a person.

Voluntary years have much, much more to offer the young (though not restricted to of course!) of today if they pick wisely. For me I needed a project that would offer diverse life experiences, throwing me into situations I never normally would come across living in rural Scotland. Should I be successful in the coming years with my chosen careers it will be largely because of my time in Amsterdam, with Mission House.

Voluntary years are not always the answer, they will not always deliver. However with Mission house you get a chance to shape the challenge ahead of you. You are faced with numerous opportunities to enhance various areas of your life that otherwise would go unpolished or even worse, unnoticed.

Mission House is far ahead of many voluntary programmes that it's a surprise there isn't 1000's of applications each year (maybe down to the Dutch postal service?!) because what I see in the best Internship programmes, namely: access to a wide range of experienced mentors, a chance to develop skills in a work environment, an opportunity to push yourself in unknown directions and a chance to contribute to a cause....is exactly what I see in the Mission House.

So let us all make an effort (you, me and my mum) to spread the word about Mission House this month in hopes that we're unknowingly giving the youth of today the tools to succeed tomorrow (I didn't lift that last line from a politician though it has undoubtedly been used before and I feel very embarrassed for having used that phrase here).

Buck