

## Volunteering

Two weeks helping at a Bulgarian Orphanage

*(Fylde Scholarship assisted with air fare)*



My 2-week trip in Bulgaria involved volunteering in both the family centre and the orphanage of Veliko Tarnovo.

The family centre is the home of 10 children, with the youngest being 8 years old and the oldest 20. Since most of them were teenagers we tried to have conversations with them rather than just focusing on activities. It was a difficult task as the children had a poor English knowledge but we managed to chat with them about school, music and their interests and we got to know them better.

Our activities involved drawing, decorating a chair with napkins, simply by cutting the napkin's designs and then carefully sticking them on the chair, card games /UNO and puzzles. Furthermore, we tried to help them learn a few basic words and phrases in English (e.g. colours, numbers, and days of the week) and in return they

tried to teach us the same things in Bulgarian.

Every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon we played Badminton. In our surprise all of the kids had really good skills.

On weekends, if the weather was good, we were allowed to take the children to the park where we could do some sports such as football or volleyball or just have a walk and a chat.

On our last day, we tried to do some different activities. We played "pass the parcel", (we prepared the parcel using newspapers and we put candies between each layer.) and "beer pong" (we used candies instead of beer, of course,- we placed 6 cups with a candy in each and each kid had a small ball. If they managed to throw the ball into a cup they would win the candy!)

The orphanage was bigger than the family centre and almost 40 children 5-17 years old lived there. Since we had to deal with many more kids than the family centre and with a wider age range we could only chat with the oldest kids. We mostly focused on other activities such as drawing, sports – the kids of the orphanage were playing Badminton as well and so we joined them. We bought them balls, Frisbees and skipping ropes which the kids loved.

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