

The Shelter Youth Hostel Ministry NEWSLETTER

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Do you have free time in December? Can you come and help us? We need 10 more staff members.

DEAR FRIENDS

While editing this newsletter it is raining outside, windy and cold. After a great warm summer, autumn has started here in Holland. I suggest you print out this newsletter, take a warm tea, and read what has happened here lately. We will introduce our new team to you, two staff members from both hostels wrote down their stories, and we will tell you some more about the upcoming renovation and share some news and prayer points with you.



MEET THE STAFF MEMBERS

Hailey, Glenn, Emma, Jon, Janna, Lea, Charlotte, Joost, Maranda, Marijke, Martha, Ellen, Austin, Jochen, Jeff, Jono, Matt, Udo, Andreas, Eline, Celine, Kristen, Adeleida, Maaïke, Dana, Lori, Matthijs, Richie, Henk Jan, and Seth are the current staff team. We are happy to let you know that thanks to these great guys we have a complete team until November. Please pray for them! In December some of the staff members are leaving, so we hope and pray that God will send new people here.

Maybe you didn't know yet but you can meet many staff members on our Shelter Facebook page and read their stories. Please sign up to our Facebook page (search for Shelter Youth Hostel Ministry) to stay in contact with each other. In the next newsletter we will tell more about our new plans for the 40 year Shelter anniversary book with testimonies and stories from staff about their Shelter time. On Facebook you can read some stories now already. You are very welcome to add yours as well or email it to us.

A quick special request: Lately an email from Gerard Barrie staff member from 1977-78 reached us, looking for other staff members who worked with him in that period. Please get in contact with him on Facebook or email us for more information.

SEEKERS CONFERENCE

"The turning point in our lives is when we stop seeking the God we want and seek the God who is." (Patrick Morley)

For many travellers, the Shelters can be such a place to seek God, to realize what really counts in life. This autumn we will have our first seekers conference from the 16th to the 20th of November, held in the Shelter City. This conference is especially for people who are on a spiritual search. People who want to dig deeper and find answers to the important questions in life.

If you know people who are on such a search, please tell them about this conference. You will receive a digital flyer. Please forward this flyer to the interested persons. You can find more details about this conference on <http://www.shelter.nl/programmes.php>

Pray that this special programme may be a help and that God can reach the hearts of the people to give their life a totally new direction and goal. Pray for the leaders of this event.

I HAVE BEEN USED

by Emma Jackson staff member Shelter City

In a bar
On a Saturday night.
Accompanying a man named Alan who had only one night stay in Amsterdam.

It was all Charlotte's idea.

Alan walked in at 13:30 wearing a Boston Red Sox hat. This immediately caught Charlotte's attention. "Have you been to Boston?" she asked, "Yeah actually, I lived there when I was younger." Alan replied proudly. Charlotte began to explain how Boston is where she is from and also introduced me at the same time. When she told him that I am from the San Diego area he said that he loved San Diego which so happened to be where he is currently attending medical school.

I instantly shot Charlotte an, "Are you kidding me right now?" look.

The short silence was broken when he said, "I only have one night stay here in Amsterdam and I really want to do something a little more peaceful and see something beautiful and closer to the real Amsterdam... And I want to eat great food."

I instantly shot God an, "Are you kidding me right now???" look.

Charlotte and I hooked him up with three of Amsterdam most wonderful locations away from all the tourist where he could dine with locals paired with an incredible view. I loved how excited and thankful he was. He flew out the door, thanking us still.

"Man I wish we could go with him, he was so cool." -Charlotte
18:30 (finish of my shift) came fast thanks in large part to the excellent conversation that took place behind the reception desk.

As I was finishing up dinner I noticed the Bible discussion was starting.

To be honest I was not in the mood to share my feelings and I was looking forward to my walk home and early nights rest. I got suckered in by Hannah who was leading tonight. She is such a sweet girl, and I felt incapable of saying no to her.

As soon as I got home Charlotte, my room mate, called to me as i was passing by the kitchen.

"Emma... Emma... Was that you? Emma?"

I considered ignoring her because I really wanted to go straight to bed but I decided to just peek my head in the see why she was being so persistent... kind of unlike her.

"The other Charlotte rang you from the City just a minute ago."

I was so pumped because there were quite a few people sitting at the table at the time and because my room mate is British almost everything she says sounds really important which by default made me feel really important that someone "Rang" for me.

I called the city shelter and Charlotte told me that Alan was so pleased with the places that we sent him today and would love the opportunity to talk to us. I suddenly wasn't tired anymore as I rushed out the door grabbing my coat along the way.

We met up at a bar that I see on my way home everyday. The name is Thijssen and it sits on the very corner of the street looking out on the canals of Amsterdam. It was starting to become very cold so we all opted to sit inside. The entire cafe is covered in a beautiful dark wood and it's character nearly puts you back in time due to it's simplicity.

The conversation started out very common. All the classic questions of where are you from? How did you get here? Where are you headed?

Alan almost seemed as if he would rather not have talked about himself as he started to ask so many questions.

Then Alan commented about how happy we seemed and how it must be amazing and a dream come true to be here. I, of course, began to smile and nod as if to say, "UHH...YEAH!!!!" when I went to see Charlotte's reaction I noticed she almost looked confused at the question.

"Actually... I really didn't want to come here. God closed all other doors and basically pushed me to Amsterdam and now I love everything about it. I knew that when I surrendered my own will and asked God to show me his will for me it was going to be bigger and better than anything I could ever dream of but I am always struggling with that kind of thing I guess."

I chimed in, "Oh man, I know letting go of trying to control everything and make it all work is strangely the toughest battle I face more often than not. Then when I finally let go not only am I consumed with the purest peace, love and contentment but I also feel complete freedom... in surrender... heh that sounds completely crazy but I know it to be the truth. Funny... Not to mention when I surrender my life to Him I end up in the coolest places and situations."

I started saying these things under the assumption that Charlotte had already asked Alan if he was a Christian... and he said yes... but I was wrong. The only reason I was able to speak so boldly was because I thought I was in the company of two trusting Christians. However as I watched Alan reaction I began to realize he had no idea what we were talking about.

The questions began to fly out of Alan.

When you pray to God what do you look for in an answer? Have you looked into other religions? How do you know the bible is true? If you love God so much where does a spouse fit in the mix? What is the toughest part about becoming a Christian? When you trust God does he always put you in a great situation? What happens when you go through something tough? Why would God do that to you? Why do you love God so much?

We sat in the bar with only coffee and tea on the table between us for three hours. I had never met anyone who was truly seeking answers without motives to prove me wrong. We answered every question... When I say we I mean God. Every time before I spoke I prayed for God to be my words. I prayed that he would be my passion and he would just use me wisely and clearly. That night I was able to fearlessly share my testimony with a complete stranger.

Alan commented that he just finished reading this book called, "The God Gene" and how he read about this gene found in humans that is what drives people to find a higher power or to seek someone more powerful. This book explains how through time this gene has always stood

through the test of time never losing the survival of the fittest match.

I found it interesting that he read the book... very much in search himself.

Finally we challenged him. "What do you have to lose? What if it was completely worth it to try to have a relationship with The God who created the universe? What if you started small and ask to be lead? If nothing happens then you have wasted nothing. Or you could be completely filled with peace, love, contentment, strength, and crazy passion. It sounds crazy but I personally feel that living crazy is way better than sitting still"

He said, "Huh. Interesting."

The bill came and I went to grab it when Alan said, "You girls really are some kind of crazy if you think you are going to pay for your drinks tonight. With everything you have done for me today... please let me get this one for you."

He walked away to go pay the bill when I turned quickly to Charlotte, "HOLY COW!!! That was so cool! Ah man I think I have been praying for the last 3 hours straight. Ahh I didn't know what I say sometimes and then you stepped in with something so awesome." Charlotte came back at me with, "Are you kidding me? I have been praying for 3 hours! Ah man I had no answers but God was all... Hey let me take this one... and I was all... OKAY!! Yeah that would be good if you did"

We began to walk him back to the shelter when Charlotte said, "Alright since it's your last night in Amsterdam there is one thing you have to do..." she looked at me and said, "We have to sit on the bridge" to which I replied, "Oh man. Good call!"

In the most beautiful part of the city there is a small dainty looking bridge that has the most incredible view of the canals at night. When the sun goes down the bridges are lit with little lights that outline the under curve of the bridge. The lights nearly hover over the water and create the appearance of floating candles in the canal. Not to mention that it is the one of the only bridges in Amsterdam you can properly dangle your feet over.

We didn't sit there for long just enough time to soak in all the beauty. Alan continued to thank us for the incredible evening. He mentioned that if it were not for us he might have ended up at a trashy dive bar by himself but instead he got the chance to talk to two beautiful passionate women and how this is a night in Amsterdam he will never forget.

Alan was really trying to figure it all out and piece things together. Ahhh!! It was so cool to be used like that! I prayed for that kind of experience! I wanted to watch someone, right in front of my face, start to crave a passion. I wanted to see God just pushing buttons in their head ya know?! Aw man so cool! Incredible to know that God is using you and your life to reach out to someone who is searching for God and they didn't even know it!!!"

GOD IS WORKING IN THE JORDAN

by Matthijs Hoogenboom, staff member Shelter Jordan

God is working in the Jordan!
Father, show us that you do your work among us...

That's what we pray when we start our shifts. We love to see the fruits of the spirit when we work and if we do not see it we easily become frustrated. We sow the word, but unfortunately we do not see the result of that so often. One thing is sure though: God's word will not return empty (Isaiah 55:11).

Looking back over the past few months we have been able to see God working in our Shelter! This is just a small example of what we have experienced recently.

Tamar came back for the 2nd and the 3rd time. She had a hard time when she went back to

England. She returned to Amsterdam in hopes to really be able to let go of her old lifestyle fully and gain a better knowledge of how to live a life pleasing to God. We all love her so much. It is powerful to see God's love running through her.

At the same time we had Ricardo as a cleaner in the hostel. It actually was the best time ever having him at the hostel in the Jordan. We watched the Alpha course dvd's together and ended up crying in amazement of God working and speaking in his life so clearly.

Working with the cleaners is amazing! We have so much time to spend with them and every morning we have the opportunity to share the gospel in a devotion time.

Sometimes it's hard. We had a very critical team lately. Two of them, Mark and Murray, loved discussions on an intellectual level. We got to speak with them, but they would always come back with, 'But...'. This reminded us that it's only the Holy Spirit that can change a heart. It is good to know it is His job to work in there to make dead people alive!

At the moment we have Raphael doing the Alpha course. He is from France and is very open to hearing about God. We can see God is knocking on his heart daily.

Our staff member Mo is able to talk with him and relate because they both have a Muslim background. It's an incredibly difficult step to become a Christian, but our Mo was able to answer his questions. God is so awesome, just sending the right people at the right moment.

Now he will be starting the Alpha course and he could not be more excited.

People often are touched by the atmosphere in the hostel. Sometimes words are not necessary because the Holy Spirit is very present in our hostel. A woman named Heidi from Finland left a long and desperate letter. She had bad experiences in her love life and asked for our prayer knowing that we would certainly pray for her.

I want to mention two amazing evangelism activities.

One of them is the hostel night. Our new evangelism manager is developing new programs. She is an amazing organiser! All the staff gets excited. A lot of guests show up to hear teachings and testimonies with themes like 'Dutch masters and the masterpiece'. A masterpiece is the most valuable, unique and beautiful work of a master. See the comparison... Not only the message, but also the (free) food is incredible!

Another cool activity is the Jordan guided tour. Lately 25 guests showed up! They learn a lot about the history of Amsterdam, different architecture, and the Jordan's finest cafés and restaurants. We have a great opportunity to get to know our guest. In the tour we also mention Rembrandt's painting of the prodigal son and the 'Hiding Place' of Corrie ten Boom. Also, we take them into the Noorderkerk and share what it is all about in a protestant church. The tour ends at the Northern Market.

I just gave you a short overview. There is a lot going on in our lovely and lively hostel. The new 'fall team' is full of enthusiasm. We have work to do. Our first task is to pray. Please, pray with us. I mentioned several names of people to pray for. The staff, the cleaners and the guests need it. Thank you for your consideration. God is good!

RENOVATION SHELTER CITY

In January we will renovate the first floor of the Shelter City. The big 16 dorms and the hallway will be changed into smaller rooms for 4 to 6 people with showers in the rooms. This renovation is very necessary to be an attractive hostel for guests in Amsterdam and to keep the Shelter Youth Hostel Ministry going. Due to the general economic situation we also have to deal with the fact of less guests and less income. So this renovation will cost us a lot of money and comes in a time of tight budgets.

Some of you might have read already about our bed sponsoring action on the website. Maybe your church can be sponsor of one bed? Or do you have another creative idea to help the two Shelters financially. Every donation small or big is welcome. Do you want to come in for action

with the Shelters? Then please get in contact with Jacob: jacob@shelter.nl.

NAMES & NEWS

*"The Lord has done this and it is
marvellous in our eyes"
(Psalm 118,23)*

Maarten van Slooten (technician Shelter City) and his wife Anja received a little daughter called Natasha on 3 September 2009.



Only a few days later on 9-9-2009 Ewout de Vries (manager from the Shelter Jordan) and his wife Lianne got their third son Mark Johannes. Not only the parents but also his brothers Joa and Benjamin are very happy.

We congratulate both families and pray that God might bless and use the families to glorify His name.

PRAYER POINTS

Give thanks that we have enough staff members for October and November. Also for December more than half of the places are filled. Give thanks for this great team.

Give thanks that Jon Mills found Jesus and could be baptised on 26 of August.

Give thanks also that recently two other guests Mohammed and Birgit found Jesus.

Give thanks that we can start the renovation on January 4th.



Pray for our staff team. They have a great desire to reach out to people and lots of ideas and talents. Pray that they may live and serve in the strength of God. He knows best what each of the team member needs.

Pray that the whole Shelter Youth Hostel Ministry team with all its parts: the two hostels, the living community, and the ministry training programme is focused on Gods will and way. Pray that we seek Him first in all what we plan and do.

Pray for the cleaners that are currently doing the Alpha course together with staff members. Pray that the staff members have wisdom and love from the Most High for these meetings.

Pray for the seekers conference that we will find and reach the people who should be at this conference.

Pray also that the fire department will grant the necessary permissions for the renovation

Pray that the money that we need for the renovation will come together

Pray for the coming period, for enough staff workers, for good ideas and preparations for the Christmas season.

The Shelter Youth Hostel Ministry is a Christian ministry to travelers. In the centre of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, we run two Christian hostels: the Shelter City and the Shelter Jordan. Each year, we provide accommodation to 40,000 travelers from all over the world. Our desire is to be a

blessing to them and to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with these travelers. The ministry is part of the association Tot Heil des Volks, a non-denominational mission organization registered in Amsterdam. Internet: www.youthhostelministry.org

Donations. The work of The Shelter Youth Hostel Ministry would not be able to continue without financial support. If you want to help us with a gift you are very welcome: 541914057 t.n.v. Stichting Tot Heil Des Volks, Amsterdam
International: IBAN: NL75ABNA0541914057, BIC code: ABNANL2A

This Newsletter can also be found at www.youthhostelministry.org

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