MCC YAMEN Service Opportunity

**Assignment Title & Partner Organization:** YAMEN: Peacebuilding Program Assistant – Corrymeela

**Term:** August 17, 2021 to July 21, 2022
**FTE:** 1.0
**Location:** Ballycastle, Northern Ireland
**Date Required:** August 17, 2021

*Program information and policies can be found at mcc.org/yamen*

*MCC is an equal opportunity employer, committed to employment equity. MCC values diversity and invites all qualified candidates to apply.*

**Synopsis:**

The YAMEN participant will serve with Corrymeela Community to assist Programme Managers at the Ballycastle Centre in the practical tasks and responsibilities inherent in welcoming and hosting the groups that visit the centre. They will assist with the Programme and Hospitality Departments to welcome guests and participants and assist in the facilitation and delivery of peacebuilding, reconciliation, community building and inter-relational programmes. They will also be serving refreshments and welcome in order to help guests feel at ease and at home in the intentional, supportive and safe space.

**Qualifications:**

*All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to a personal Christian faith and discipleship; active church membership; and nonviolent peacemaking.*

*An invitation to an assignment is contingent on the successful completion of a criminal background check.*

- The ability to share in the Christian commitment to reconciliation and peacebuilding
- A commitment to develop a strong awareness of Corrymeela and Northern Ireland before arrival (reading materials and a recommended reading list will be provided)
- Understanding of the dynamics of living and working in community.
- A desire to build relationships with people of diversity where difference is acknowledged, validated, celebrated, and honored.
- An ability to balance community and individual needs.
- Excellent communication and inter-personal skills.
- Experience of working and co-operating as part of a team.
- The ability to initiate and complete tasks with minimal supervision.
- Experience of working with groups in a leadership role or the ability to clearly demonstrate transferrable skills.
- An ability to understand and communicate in English as an Independent User under the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

**Key traits and abilities:**
• Celebrates diversity; is able to collaborate with team members from diverse backgrounds and communities
• Self-reliant and emotionally resilient
• Seeing challenges and new experiences as a positive learning journey
• Flexible, adaptable and able to work under pressure.
• Reliable and trustworthy.
• Friendly, welcoming and approachable.
• Willing to actively engage in all areas of work at Corrymeela.

Assignment Narrative:

Corrymeela is Northern Ireland’s oldest peace and reconciliation organization. Their mission is to embrace difference, heal division, and enable reconciliation. Their vision is of a peaceful and sustainable society based on social justice, positive relationships and respect for diversity. Corrymeela consists of people of all ages and Christian traditions who, individually and together, are committed to the healing of social, religious and political divisions that exist in Northern Ireland and throughout the world. For more information, see: http://www.corrymeela.org/

As part of a small global volunteer team, the role of the Peacebuilding Program Assistant is to support and assist staff at the Ballycastle Centre in the practical tasks and responsibilities inherent in welcoming and hosting the groups that visit the centre. The assistant will be part of a long-term volunteer team and the program established for the team.

The program for the global volunteer team is for young adult leaders aged 18-30 who are interested in being exposed to the broad continuum of peacebuilding practices and services as part of a living/learning community. A core methodology is that the participants become part of a living/learning community. Every year they welcome more than 7,000 visitors, some for a few hours, others for a residential experience. S/he will be supervised by the Volunteer Manager and have formal and informal pastoral support from staff, Community Members and Host Families.

The nature of the activities at Corrymeela is such that being involved in the life of groups at the centre means undertaking long and irregular hours. It is not unusual for volunteers to be on duty from early in the morning until late at night. A rhythm of regular time off, averaging 2 days off each week over the month will be agreed upon in consultation with the Volunteer Manager.

A schedule of duties will be created by the Volunteer Manager upon arrival and includes taking a turn in each of the 3 areas of focus:

1. Programme Work – Throughout the year, there will be opportunities for programmatic exposure, shadowing professionals in their field of work and elements of delivery. The types of groups coming to the centre range from university, schools, faith, family and youth.

2. Hospitality Work – As part of a holistic programme, all volunteers will work in other departments to ensure the smooth running of the residential centre through the Programme and Hospitality Departments.

3. Training Curriculum – There will be an Intentional and responsive training programme throughout the year with the opportunity to come away with skills in Conflict Management,
Duties:

Principal duties required are:

Hospitality of Groups:

• To be a welcoming presence to groups as they arrive – helping with luggage, assisting with centre orientation, registration and bed plans. To ensure that all residential units are prepared for groups’ arrival and cleaned after groups depart.

Supporting Groups:

• To participate in any pre-residential meetings and to assist if necessary, in program planning and design activities.
• To aid program staff, facilitators, and group leaders assisting in program design and delivery. For example:
  - Leading icebreakers
  - Leading out adventure learning exercises
  - Leading out discussions
  - Facilitating small group discussions
  - Leading arts and crafts sessions
  - Facilitating sessions for young people and children including small group work
• To ensure that visitors and groups share in a positive experience at mealtimes. When linking with a group, dine and converse with the group participants.
• To encourage visitors and groups to assist in dining-room clean-up and the washing of dishes after mealtimes.
• To ensure that the common areas, for example meeting room, foyers, and dining area are clean and tidy.
• To ensure that at the conclusion of the group’s stay, the unit is reasonably clean and ready for the arrival of the next group in co-operation with the cover person and house-keeping staff.
• To actively participate in and contribute to post-residential evaluation meetings.
• To lead out residential programs. We hope that the participant may, after a period of time, training and experience, be capable of leading out-group activities and programs. In such circumstances, volunteers would be responsible for:
  - Planning program content and schedule.
  - Managing program resources.
  - Taking the lead in the co-ordination of the residential program – working under our staff guidelines.
  - Participating in post-evaluation reviews and discussions.

Occasional reception duties:

• To welcome visitors to the centre and assist them with their enquiries.
• To handle incoming calls and e-mails in an efficient manner.
• To provide a welcoming and friendly service in the Corrymeela shop.

Occasionally there may be a need to assist in the following areas:
Administration and Marketing:

- To carry out a variety of administrative tasks associated with the centre’s work. These tasks could be in the program office, the finance office, the volunteering office, or the reception area.
- To assist in the design and development of marketing and promotional literature.
- To attend and participate in relevant events (e.g. conferences, meetings, networking events, community events, seminars, careers fairs, etc.) as a representative of Corrymeela.

Maintenance and Security:

- To assist in the evacuation of the Centre in the event of a fire or other emergency.
- To assist in and contribute to site safety and security.
- To assist in and contribute to the maintenance of the site.

Location Description:

The Corrymeela Centre has over 50 years of experience working across community divides in Northern Ireland. Inspired in 1965 by Rev. Ray Davey, the original vision was to create opportunities for people to gather and experience a sense of community. These initial gatherings quickly grew into a movement of passionate young adult leaders who attempted to counter the sectarian tensions that eventually manifested into violence during The Troubles. Concerned by emergent extremism and the terror felt in urban areas such as Belfast and Derry, they established an “open village” near Ballycastle, on the northern most coastline of Co. Antrim (about 100 kilometres from Belfast, the capital of Northern Ireland) where all people of good will could come to dialogue and learn together. From its inception, Corrymeela has been a place of gathering, work, faith, and discussion; bringing people of different backgrounds, different political and religious/spiritual beliefs, and different identities together. This commitment and practice is anchored in an abiding conviction that there is strength in gathering, and that when people make a commitment to learn how to live well together, no difference is too great to overcome.

Accommodation is provided on-site. The participant will share a bedroom with 1 other volunteer and will also share bathroom facilities. The Volunteers building also contains shared facilities, such as a kitchen, dining area, and TV lounge. Food will be cafeteria home-style meals (vegetarian options available). The YAMENer will be part of a group of volunteers at Corrymeela from around the world.

There are daily prayers and Sunday worship services right at Corrymeela, which the YAMENer will be expected to participate in. The participant will also have a local Host Family to relate to, and church attendance with the family is expected. It is planned that they would also have support from the MCC Advisory Committee and alumni member’s family living in nearby Holywood.

Very good health facilities are available and with the help of Corrymeela, the participant will be able to register with the local General Practitioner (doctor) at the Ballycastle Medical Centre.

Northern Ireland has a temperate or oceanic climate, with rainfall throughout the year and a narrow range of temperatures. It is significantly milder than some other locations in the world at similar latitude, due to the warming influence of the Gulf Stream. Winter temperatures reach 7°C daytime on average, falling to 2°C overnight. During summer, the average high temperatures are 18°C and low temperatures are 10°C.
The MCC Europe and Middle East Area Directors currently have direct responsibility for the YAMENer in western Europe, although that may shift to another staff person in the next months. The MCC point person for the YAMENer will live in a different country but will have regular check-ins and also can be contacted if the need arises. Plans to join in a retreat in another location with other MCC staff will depend on developments around ease of travel.

**Challenges:**

- The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect countries around the world. While we remain hopeful that the pandemic will be under control by August 2021, to prioritize the well-being and limit risk to our participants and the local community, assessments of each assignment will continue on a regular basis. If it is deemed that an assignment is no longer viable, we will do our best to help you secure an alternative assignment.
- The nature of the activities at Corrymeela is such that being involved in the life of groups at the centre means undertaking long and irregular hours. It is not unusual for volunteers to be on duty from early in the morning until late at night. Therefore, it is important that volunteers make good use of their time off. Volunteers are encouraged to spend time away from the centre when off work and encouraged not to engage in work during off time under normal circumstances.
- Long distance walking/biking may be required at times.
- West Europe is more expensive than many other regions where MCC has programming. The monthly stipend that MCC provides does not stretch as far as in other assignment locations.
- The community at Corrymeela is very inclusive, and actively celebrates diversity. There might well be people of LGBTQ+ orientation visiting/volunteering/working at the centre. All volunteers are expected to treat people of all communities, experiences and backgrounds with respect, honor and dignity.
- Managing frustration when things don’t turn out as expected can be hard. While we do our best to determine and outline job responsibilities with our local partners, assignments really come alive based on the passions, skills, and giftings of an individual. Responsibilities may change or be refined over time in communication with supervisors to meet the ongoing changes and needs within a local context. As such, the greatest characteristics a participant can bring to an assignment are adaptability, flexibility, patience, a willingness to get your hands dirty, and humility to complete even mundane tasks.
- For those who are very task oriented, it can be a challenge to recognize the importance of "being" instead of always "doing" as building healthy relationships and mutually transformative learning is an important part of the participant experience. We hope participants will come with a desire to walk alongside others, rather than see the assignment solely as a way to "get things done".