

**Work experience /voluntary placements
as Arts Assistant/s**

at Koestler Arts Centre
adjacent to HMP Wormwood Scrubs
168a Du Cane Road, London W12 0TX www.koestlertrust.org.uk

Background

Founded in 1962 and based in the former governor's house in front of HMP Wormwood Scrubs, the Koestler Trust is the national charity that awards, exhibits and sells artworks by offenders.

Arts Assistants are part of a small team of volunteers and part-time workers who process more than 4,000 artworks submitted to the Trust's Arts Awards Scheme every year – paintings, sculptures, ceramics, woodwork, needlework, poems, stories, tapes of music – in all, 49 categories of art. The entries are judged by a panel of arts experts, who give about 1,000 awards, ranging from certificates to prizes of £100. The winning works are exhibited and sold at an annual exhibition.

Tasks

The tasks for each Arts Assistant may be varied by mutual agreement to meet particular needs, but will include:-

- keeping the Koestler Arts Centre clean, tidy and presentable at all times;
- receiving and unpacking hundreds of parcels sent from prisons, special hospitals and probation services (especially in the Spring);
- making records of all entries and following the Trust's administrative procedures;
- sorting and displaying the entries for judging and exhibitions at the Koestler Arts Centre;
- sorting the entries for the annual exhibition (usually held at a gallery elsewhere in London in the summer or autumn);
- helping at the exhibition and events, eg. with construction and dismantling and welcoming visitors;
- helping with mail-outs of entry forms, publicity, prizes and certificates;
- re-packing unsold artworks for return to establishments;
- helping deal with dozens of enquiries from prisoners and education staff;
- helping with administrative and other practical tasks.

Skills

Koestler staff can provide support and some one-to-one coaching, but voluntary Arts Assistants need to bring or have enough potential in the following skills:-

- physical dexterity to carry large items and handle fragile ones;
- meticulous respect and care for offenders' artworks;
- enough literacy and numeracy to work with lists, labels and files;
- common sense and creativity - eg. about how to wrap parcels carefully or to display artworks in an attractive way;
- good time-keeping and reliability – eg. commitment to working particular hours and days;
- social skills to respond to queries and work as part of a team
- enthusiasm for the work of the Trust.

Time commitment

Hours and days are negotiable, but in general we will expect you to work more days a week if you wish to volunteer for a shorter length of time. Eg. for people volunteering for more than 6 months, we may be happy with a day week; for people volunteering for less than 6 weeks, we will expect 3 or 4 days a week.

Application process

To apply, you must:

- submit a CV with a written statement setting out how you meet each of the skills criteria above and what time commitment can make;
- if selected, attend an interview at the Koestler Arts Centre with the Arts Co-ordinator (Joss Blake) or other member of staff;
- give two referees who send satisfactory references;
- given your written agreement to carrying out the tasks set out in this document and to following the policies and procedures of the Koestler Trust.

Send your application to Joss Blake, Arts Co-ordinator:

jblake@koestlertrust.org.uk

The Koestler Trust is especially keen to recruit offenders and ex-offenders as Arts Assistants.

Placement structure

The role will have a placement structure, in which the Koestler Trust offers:-

- a written agreement about boundaries and learning goals;
- informal coaching from an allocated member of the Koestler team;
- regular review meetings with line manager;
- chances to gain experience of other areas of work, eg. admin, sales, publicity, development;
- informal advice about future training or work in the voluntary sector or arts, and possible contacts;
- an end of placement report, and reference for future job applications.

Some practicalities

- Length of placement to be negotiated: minimum 6 weeks, maximum 18 months.
- Hours to be negotiated within working hours of 9 am to 5 pm Mon-Fri. Minimum of 7 hours a week.
- Sandwich lunch provided.
- Travel expenses met within London.

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