



Act 4 in Action

Time to say Goodbye

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I have never really enjoyed the end of the school year. I suppose one of the reasons for this is that, far too quickly, it is time again to say goodbye to some fantastic and talented young adults who have given up their year to come and work with us. I think in the past we often lamented how we had invested all this time in training and supporting these volunteers and then, come July, they go and we have to start all over again. However, I think my feelings are starting to change. Back in early May, I found myself sitting next to the otter enclosure at the zoo in Washington DC. With me and my family was Kristin Vought. She was one of our volunteers 2008-9. It was the first time I had seen her since she left. As we sat there on a very humid afternoon, she told me how her time as an Act 4 volunteer, had had a life changing effect on her and the choices that she went on to make. Wow and what choices, from going to seminary to working for a large Christian not for profit organisation (to marrying a minister!!). She told me how she still sang Act 4 songs and had used them with children. She even told me how she was still inspired by our R Rights programme. I had not expected to hear any of this!

I know Act 4 can not claim to be the sole cause of these choices, but if we are able to give young adults a foundation that can help encourage them to find their best path to make a difference in this world, then let's train and release as many volunteers as we can!

It has been great this year working with the URC Thames North Synod and particularly with The Church at Fairford Leys, in setting up a new Time to Act team. Not only has this team already established a presence in a number of schools, it has allowed the church to expand its community based programmes, as they build off the ongoing model that is working in Potters Bar and Brookmans Park. So this year not only have we been able to work with more children, it has also allowed us to work with more young adults. So, although I feel sad to say goodbye to our volunteers (we have been so blessed to have Elise, Johann, Dadka and Beatrice), I do so with great excitement, looking forward to hearing about the next chapter of their stories.

As part of our development goals we are now looking at how we can make more of the volunteer year, and how we can continue to build a programme of excellence that can train and support our volunteers to be even more effective in reaching out to children, but which will also serve them on into the future.

Sam Frankel
Director

Act 4 Supporter Meeting 2015

A big thank you to all who attended the Act 4 Supporters Meeting 2015. Some thirty people attended which really made it a worthwhile event.

The purpose of the meeting was to take the opportunity to thank our very generous supporters for both their time and money. It was also an opportunity to outline what Act 4 has achieved in 2014/15 in both the schools and churches. On top of this we also discussed our financial performance (costs and income streams) and our aspirations of growth for the next 5 years, whilst retaining our quality of content.

Thank you to all those who contributed to a very well received meeting of supporters. We look forward to making this an annual event.

Bernard Gorry
Trustee Act 4

Goodbye Johann, Elise and Dadka

Johann's final words:

I really enjoyed my time with Act 4 and it is strange that it is coming to an end quite soon.

One of the biggest things I got out of my time with Act 4 here in the UK, was to improve my language skills. But also the work with the children.. even though I know now that I don't want to become a teacher or work with children every day, I did enjoy the work I did for Act 4.

After this year I'll go to the University of Cologne to study Music management and Philosophy. This was my second choice after becoming a brewer or a professional beer tester.. but that didn't really work out!

So I'll keep doing this just as a hobby as I did it back in Germany and also here. I really enjoyed meeting up with friends and going out to pubs and clubs with them and it was always a highlight. My real highlight of this year was meeting lots of new friends. I had so much fun with them all and I am very thankful for them. Also the TFG conferences were very good. I got to know many different people from different countries all over the world.

And finally the question what cake I would be.. maybe a pancake. It's a yummy cake and many people like it and enjoy working with it. But it's not a very special kind of cake with lots of gold, cream and decorations. You can add whatever you want to and most times, it fits quite well.

I would explain myself as the typical stereotype of a German 19 year old guy.. but now with a little bit of British in me. So maybe I'd be a German pancake with a few British chocolate bits in it.

Finally I just want to say thank you to all of you. To all the people I met here and who have made this year become such a important part of my life, it has been a life changing year!

Elise's final words:

I had three goals when I came to Act 4.

I wanted to have a break from school and studying, and since I am now at a point where I am missing maths classes (weird, right?), I think I got all the break I needed!

Secondly, I wanted to improve my English skills, and as people are always telling me now that they can't guess where I am from since they can't place/hear my accent, I think I achieved that as well.

Last but not least, I wanted to find out what I wanted to do with my life. And Act 4 helped me to recognise my real skills and strengths so that I now know where I am heading and what I want to do with my life! Act 4 made me realise that I really want to work with children in the future, so I am going to go to university and I am going to study primary school teaching! And since the teachers in Germany don't teach all the subjects to one class, but rather have one or two subjects that they teach to all the classes, I am going to become an English teacher. I can't tell you, how excited I am about that!

To just name one highlight is really hard. Impossible even. It is been such an amazing year. Maybe even the best year of my life so far. But I think my highlight are the children. Both the girl guides' rainbows and brownies and the children that I got to work with through the assemblies, holiday clubs, activities and projects! And last but not least: what kind of cake do I see myself as and why?

I thought long about this and I have changed my mind several times, but I think I would be a chocolate chip cookie. Because it is a biscuit that children love but that also can be found at grown up gatherings.

Also a big thank you to Sam S. and Nikki, without whom all my texts would have been full of grammatical mistakes and wrongly spelt words (and a big thanks because they are just so lovely and nice!)

Dadka's final words:

First of all I am enormously grateful that it has been possible for me to work alongside all of these wonderful people, friendly atmosphere and in such a pleasant place.

1. What did I get out of my time with Act 4? /What am I taking with me?

I've been inspired not to just share the values of "forgiveness, freedom, equality, happiness and your voice" with children during the assemblies, but also putting them into practice.

Working with schools has been a great experience for me and I was positively surprised how smart and full of ideas and energy all these children are.

2. What are my future plans?

Now is the time for me to put all the values into practice, LIGHTS, CAMARA, ACTION!

Thank you very much for having me and I hope to meet you in the future!



See you later, Beatrice

I can't believe how fast time flies! Has it really been 6 months? So many things have happened! Not only did the new Act 4 project start in Aylesbury allowing the charity to recruit two new Act 4 volunteers and by doing so expanding the amazing work and mission of the charity with children and kids all over Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire, but it also granted us the possibility to share beautiful moments with the entire Act 4 team throughout the 3 school terms. From 'R Rights' to 'Moving-on-Days', we all experienced beautiful moments with the children and we've had loads of fun preparing for these programmes. I really think that the last training we had for our last assemblies triggered the "gluing" process for the Act 4 volunteers and the Potters Bar Carnival was an excellent opportunity to spend our days not only working but chilling together. I loved it!

OK, I won't reinvent the wheel now guys...but look, do you believe me when I tell you that I will absolutely miss you?! Oh gosh...I am so lucky to have met you all: Dadka, Elise and Johann! I learned loads of things from you, truly! And all of you contributed to my personal development which is one of the most beautiful gifts that someone could ever give me...because what you contribute to one's development is something you'll never ever forget! And this is how gratefulness is born. I am so grateful to God that I have met you all! I am limited in my writing now, but to make it very short: Guys, I owe you a HUGE and SINCERE: THANK YOU!!!

God bless you on your personal Journey in Life!

In other news:

Dalesdown

In April, Johann and Elise got the chance to go to Sussex to help with a holiday club for autistic children and their families. "Through The Roof", the organisation that ran the holiday club, was kind enough to not just have Elise and Johann as volunteers, but also gave them the chance to lead the evening worship session. While Johann was helping with the dishes, parents sessions and games, Elise got to be a one-to-one helper for a little four year old autistic boy, with whom she played more trains with than in all her 19 years of life! (But she still loved it and wanted to take the boy home with her!) It was a once in a lifetime experience (or maybe not – who knows what the future holds) and both Johann and Elise enjoyed it very, very much.

Carnival

On the 7th June 2015 the annual Potters Bar Carnival took place and this time Act 4 had a stall! On the warmest day of the year (so far) we played Rollerball, Hole-In-One and the Human Fruit Machine with a lot of people and got the chance to talk about Act 4 and the work that we are doing. Since we were one of the charity organisations that applied for a grant from the carnival (that's the reason why everyone had to pay in order to get in!), we were very thankful to be given a grant towards updating our computers for the office and the performances.

To put it in a nutshell: it was an awesome day and since Carnival is celebrated differently in countries around the world, it was interesting for Beatrice, Dadka, Johann and Elise to see how the Brits celebrate their version. (And we enjoyed it!)

Moving on days

This term the Act 4 team have been working in a number of schools to deliver their 'Moving On Day' programmes. Our 'Moving On Day' is an interactive programme for year 6 children, to aid them with their transition from primary school to secondary school.

This is often a worrying and uncertain time for many children, and we give them the time and space to express their feelings, to face their concerns, and to reflect on their memories from primary school.

At the beginning of the day, when asked how they are feeling about moving to secondary school, the children often give answers like: scared, worried and afraid. However, by the end of the day they go away with much more positive feelings about this transition, with feedback like:

"I learnt not to worry or be afraid because there will be someone there to help."

"Even though you are leaving your friends, you will make new friends."

"It is all right to feel scared at first because you have got friends and family to support you."

We have really enjoyed working with the year 6 children this term and supporting them through this daunting time. It is fantastic to see them growing in confidence throughout the day and becoming more excited about moving on!

The important stuff!

What's coming up

The summer holidays are coming up, so there will be an Act 4 Holiday club in Shrewsbury, from the 21st–24th July. The theme is “Lights, Camera, Action!”

Otherwise, Act 4 will be back in September with 3 new volunteers and new assemblies, programmes and other exciting things!

Assembly, ‘R’ Rights, Moving on Day: If you would like to make use of any of these programmes, or know of someone who might, then please get in touch.

What does it take to be a volunteer driver?

An area where supporters can make a big difference is in ferrying the volunteers to and from school assemblies as otherwise Act 4 would have to spend a considerable amount on taxis. We asked one volunteer driver to tell us about it.

‘Act 4 have worked to reduce the equipment required to a minimum but it helps if you have a hatchback to take the two plastic boxes, speakers and the rolled up screen.

For a local school where you can leave Elise and Johann, all you need is two periods of up to 30 minutes each. For more distant schools, where it’s not worth returning to Potters Bar in between, you should allow up to one and three quarter hours in all; however you do then have the joy of sitting in on the assembly and sharing the children’s enthusiasm for the performance.

Clearly it helps if you know where you are going but Elise and Johann do all the rest as they have their well oiled routine for setting up and then packing away afterwards.’

- Alastair Maclean, Volunteer Driver

Get involved

Act 4 is only a small organisation, so we depend on your help! If you would like to help us continuing our work, then why don’t you get involved? Here are some ways of how you could make a difference:

Volunteer Drivers:

We need drivers to help transport the team to local schools.

Host a Volunteer:

If you like company and getting to know a new culture, then why don’t you become a host for a volunteer for any length of time, from a few days, to up to a year? For more details, please contact Act4!

Become a Trustee:

Get involved in the strategic direction of the charity.

Regular Givers:

We must increase our regular givers, if you can support us in this way, please let us know.



**equipping
children to
make a
difference**

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Our website has been updated, take a look!

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