

Children's Hospital 'Baca Ortiz'



Baca Ortiz is a very large public children's hospital in Quito treating children aged from 0 to 15 years old. The hospital was founded in 1948 and has been saving children's lives for over 60 years. Children from all over Ecuador come here to receive medical treatment and according to recent statistics over 140,000 patients are treated every year. The hospital attends to medical emergencies as well as providing long-term care for those who are extremely ill.

As it is a public hospital, most of the children who receive treatment come from poor families and although it is state-funded there is not enough money to provide free treatment for all and parents have to find a way of covering their child's medical costs.

When patients have travelled a long distance for treatment, one of the parents is allowed to stay in the hospital in the same room with their child. The hospital offers lunch to some parents, but unfortunately there isn't enough food for all of them. The hospital also has some private rooms but as there aren't enough social workers have to decide which parents can stay there.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

The hospital is extremely lacking in not only funding but also personnel who are often extremely overworked, so the help of volunteers is extremely appreciated. The main area that you will be working in is the "Ludoteca" or play area. Children who are well enough are allowed to go to the play area after the morning rounds to play games and carry out other recreational activities. They enjoy being able to go somewhere else and not be in their beds on the wards all day.

There are also children who are too sick to move from their beds, are on special wards or are not able to walk independently, so you will also be able to help by visiting these patients on the wards with another person from the hospital staff. In November 2013 Ecole donated a playcart to the hospital to take up to the wards.

Your main task is to play, motivate and get to know these children, make them smile and forget about their worries. As some of these children are long-term patients at the hospital, they miss a large part of their school education. Volunteers are more than welcome to take the initiative to give English, Maths, Music lessons or any educational activity to the children and/or parents. Speak to the volunteer coordinator if you have some ideas but the more hard work you put into the project the more reward you get! Show initiative, work independently and don't be afraid of working hard. They need all the help you can give them.

WORK SCHEDULE

You will work every day from Monday to Friday between the hours of 10:00am to 4:30pm. It is possible to work for 3 or 4 hours a day or the whole day, depending on which is more suitable for you. However, you have to decide with the volunteer coordinator the hours that you want to help and be responsible for maintaining this. The minimum stay in this project is two weeks, but the longer you stay the better.