

# *Raphael Foundation, Dehradun*



## **What?**

Raphael has an amazing team of dedicated teachers providing a supportive learning environment for disabled children of all ages. You can help with classroom activities, sports and games, or spend time in the early intervention unit helping the physiotherapist and other professionals. You can also support young adults learn independent living skills.

## **Where?**

Raphael is nestled in the foothills of the Himalayas, on the outskirts of Dehra Dun in Uttarakhand, about six hours north of Delhi. Most volunteers work in the school alongside disabled children, but there is also a TB hospital, leper colony, early intervention centre and mobile outreach team.

## **When?**

Typical placement length is 3 months but some people choose to go for longer.

## **Who?**

It is recommended that volunteers come in pairs, although you are welcome to come alone.

## **How much?**

The only expense for this trip is the Rs350 payment for board and lodging per day (approx. £3.50), but don't forget you will need to pay for a visa, vaccinations and of course return flights to Delhi and transport to Dehra Dun (this can be done by train). There is no need to spend any other money on a normal day but travelling into town costs around Rs100 by rickshaw.

## **Is it safe?**

If you haven't visited India before, it is a fantastically friendly and furiously frantic place! Raphael represents a haven of calm where you can enjoy the beautiful scenery in peace. There is also security on site.

## **Do volunteers work every day?**

No. Usually volunteers work Monday to Friday and Saturday morning, but you can also take time off for a bit of travelling at the weekends, with lots of places to visit nearby. Mussouri is a beautiful hill station further up the mountains, or you can catch a train to Rishikesh (where the Beatles found their guru) or Haridwar, both on the Ganges.

## **What is the accommodation and catering like?**

There is a guest house on the campus with four rooms that can house up to 8 volunteers comfortably. Meals are provided and cooked on site – there is plenty of food. Lunch tends to be rice, dahl and salad, while the evening meal may include a range of curries or sometimes more Western dishes.

## What is a typical day for a volunteer?

The school day starts at 8.30 with prayers/songs and a walk. After this, children attend classes for the morning – you may like to support the same class every day so that you can get to know the students and teacher, or you may like to spend time in a range of classes.

There is a break for lunch and afternoon classes finish at 3.30.

Some days you may spend time in the Early Intervention Centre instead, or you may go out occasionally with the outreach team to visit our Early Intervention projects in the villages.

There are a number of adult residents who have lived at Raphael a very long time, who have either physical or learning disabilities, or perhaps both. Many volunteers befriend these residents and may spend time with them at Raphael, or even take them out on trips to the shops etc.

There is plenty of free time in the evenings to relax or to socialise with staff or residents.

## Volunteers Experience

(Sam, volunteer 1990, 1992, 1995, 2000, 2008, 2023) I first visited Raphael for five months when I was 18 and it changed my life. I had no idea what to expect. I was made very welcome and loved meeting volunteers from all over the world. I made lasting friendships with residents and staff that have endured for 30+ years. India taught me not to rush, not to fret, and to enjoy the moment. I loved feeling that I was making a difference to the lives of the people I supported, but in fact I am sure I gained more from the experience than I could possibly have given!



(Emma, volunteer 2023) This was my first-time visiting India, and I was blown away. I fell in love with the country and especially with the people. I thought all the teachers at Raphael were so welcoming and easy to get along with. My favourite part of my stay was spending time with the adult residents. I was surprised how well we could communicate and build such a good bond despite the language barrier. I am making sure to keep in touch with the people at Raphael and hope to make another visit in the near future.



Click this link to register your interest in becoming a volunteer and we will be in touch with you shortly <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfA-6ogaE6OgMIosPEoOeoteaNnpBvB-LBLbCVbYLTHgGgA3A/viewform?usp=sharing>