

SVA UPDATE

Student Volunteers Abroad Newsletter: Christmas Issue

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If you're reading this chances are that you've received *SVA Update* by email from SVA. However, if this is not the case and you wish to receive our new monthly newsletter by email then sign up on our website by clicking [here](#).

Thanks for taking the time to read this special edition of our newsletter. As usual some articles have had to be amended. Clicking on the title of the article will then take you to the full article on our website.

A word from the editor...

Season's greetings to all of you who have joined the Alumni Network recently and all the new volunteers selected in November!

In this mini-issue we just want to say Merry Christmas and give you all bite size update on projects, our partners and developments in the world of international development. In the meantime new volunteers can get thinking about fundraising over a few mulled wines and maybe even do a little around your home time while everyone is feeling festive and generous. Meanwhile our new Alumni Members can kick up their heels in your Christmas jumpers and take a well-earned rest. *Alan-James Mahon*

The information evenings

Tuesday 6th of November saw the first of two of SVA's information evenings. By five minutes to six people were queuing up outside the lecture theatre with a buzz of excitement in the air waiting to hear what SVA's 2013 projects had to offer. The nights, which had been advertised during the weeks running up to the information nights, attracted a wide range of people from students who were just settling into University life to students who were facing graduation by the end of the academic year. Despite a difference in age and interests of the possible applicants, all of the students had one thing in common- they all wanted to use their time and



The Malawi Bangwe Coordinators delivering their presentation

ability in order to make a difference to the world and to those whom are less fortunate than us.

After an inspiring speech by SVA's president Colin Reilly ([click here to watch it on youtube](#)), each of the six projects stood up in front of the aspiring volunteers and presented them with a presentation which described their own project and what it entailed. With the projector screens lit up with

heart-warming photos of Cambodian children and breath taking African landscapes the excited buzz in the lecture hall seemed to escalate in tune with the SVA coordinators' nostalgia. Once all of the projects had been presented enthusiastically the crowd erupted in excited conversation and coordinators were approached by animated hopefuls hoping to find out a bit more about their projects.



President's Christmas thanks

The New Year marks the end of a very successful year for SVA and all of our projects across the globe. The start of 2013 takes SVA into our 15th year and a new year of project planning, fundraising and a summer's volunteering. With 6 continuing projects and 2 pilot projects our 15th year is set to be one of the best yet. We have over £40,000 to raise for this years' summer projects and we have over 60 new SVA volunteers to help us achieve this goal. SVA gets bigger and better every year, we're constantly growing and improving and this year will be no different. This continued growth of SVA is built on the dedication of its returning members and the enthusiasm of its new ones. So, as we embark on a new year I would like to thank all the members of the SVA board who are giving us their 2nd or 3rd year of hard work and commitment and to those former members of SVA who are continuing to show their enthusiasm for our work through their support of our new Alumni Network. Thanks also to our partner NGO's and to those who assist us with training. Finally, to our new volunteers taking part in the 2013 projects, welcome, you are now SVA. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Colin Reilly

Volunteer selection days

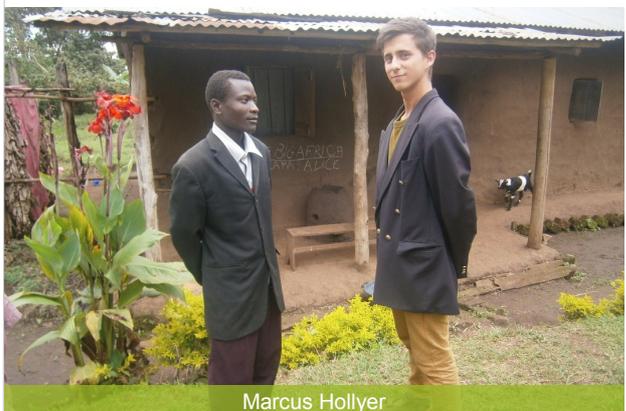
SVA's selection days on the Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 November attracted a large number of enthusiastic students to the Queen Margaret Union's Food Factory looking to make a positive impression and secure their place on their chosen Student Volunteers Abroad projects.

While some were not successful, the standard of applicants was incredibly high leaving the coordinators incredibly positive about the prospects for 2013's projects. The days were full of rigorous challenges for prospective volunteers including improvised lessons based on English, environmental awareness, water purification and malaria prevention. This gave would-be volunteers the chance to see what it would be like on many of our teaching projects, as well as being fun and informal, helping to break the ice with other hopefuls.

There were also group discussions during which

volunteers were encouraged to express their opinions on various hot topics in international development and constructive scenario questions from coordinators who have encountered problems on previous projects. The selection days concluded with one-on-one interviews where the candidates got the chance to ask their own questions to coordinators.

Craig Reilly, SVA's IT Coordinator said "Applicants were informed within the week and to all those who were successful we say a huge congratulations, and for those who were unsuccessful we can hope that you get the opportunity to volunteer abroad in the future."



Marcus Hollyer

Junior Treasurer

Profile:

Marcus Hollyer

What's your position on the SVA Board?

I'm the junior treasurer for SVA .

What project were you on and what did you get up to?

I was on the Uganda project last year which focuses on clean water, sanitation and hygiene. We lived in a rural Ugandan village for six weeks teaching in the primary school, building a water tank, protecting a water source and teaching the villagers how to build fuel efficient stoves.

Do you have any festive traditions?

I wouldn't say I have any festive tradition. A lot of my family are a cynical bunch so I suppose our tradition is to don our paper hats and mutter the occasional "bah humbug".

In 3 words describe your ideal Christmas jumper?

3 words is not enough! My ideal Christmas jumper would have to be violently tacky. Perhaps a chunky bit of knitwear emblazoned with the faces of the cast of the Muppets Christmas Carol. Maybe throw on some glitter, just for good measure.

Mulled Wine or Gingerbread White Russian?

I've never tried a Gingerbread White Russian so will have to keep it simple with a [vat of] mulled wine.

Merry Christmas guys!
(bah humbug)