

## **SWAP with Artist as Family at The School of Applied Neopeasantry, Tree Elbow University**

Hello prospective volunteer! Before writing your letter of introduction, please read the following to see if what we are offering our volunteers suits what you are seeking.

We are particularly looking for volunteers who will not only take their learnings back into their household economy, but are passionate to share their knowledges in their community.

We take volunteers in the growing seasons, between October and May each year (except for those years we are travelling). Volunteers exchange their labour for learning. Please read the following notes before you apply to become a SWAP (a Social Warming Artist and/or Permaculturist).

Economic exchange. This is a non-monetary exchange. We barter 3 meals, accommodation and knowledge-sharing for a day of your diligent labour: preserving food to store in the cellar, propagating plants, raising seeds, composting, gardening, foraging, forest stewardship work, goat herding, firewood collection, community work, child caring, building and maintenance work.

Meals. At mealtimes you are cooking, preserving, general tidying and cleaning the kitchen, or hanging out with Woody (and sometimes his friends) while others cook and clean. We will establish a dinner roster for who cooks on what nights. There are always dishes to be done, which are all of our responsibility. If you see a stack of dishes please do not wait to be invited to do them.

Your accommodation will be in The Cumquat or The Yause. Both are tiny houses we've built from reclaimed materials. The Cumquat can accommodate two people. The Yause is single storey and is on the other side of the composting toilet and hand washing and teeth cleaning sink. This can house one person. Some SWAPs bring their tents and set them up in the forest nearby. We kindly ask that you do not use the toilet in the main house while you're with us.

We are water frugalists and also very careful what we put down the drain as it feeds the garden. Thus we shower very infrequently and encourage no or little soap use while at Tree Elbow. Our main place for washing is in Lake Daylesford or in the outdoor plunge tank, so feel free to start the day with a plunge or head to the lake in siesta time. We supply garden-safe soap. We also ask that you don't wear any fragrances while you're here. We are also a smoking and advertising-free zone, and ask that you refrain from wearing overtly branded clothing.

Our days. Brekky at 8am, clean up at 8.45, ready to start work at 9am sharp. Morning tea at 11am (15mins), lunch at 1pm. Lunch clean up at 1.45, then from 2pm - 4pm we have siesta (resting, reading, journaling, dreaming, swimming, op shopping, fishing, writing love letters to the bees). We come together again at 4pm and work until dinner, at approximately 6pm. After dinner and clean up (and playing music or talking, sharing, etc.), we depart company at 8pm. One of the things we have realised over the 12 years of having volunteers is that as social introverts we need quiet family time between 8pm and 8am and thus request that the main house be left to our family between those hours. Saturday afternoons and Sundays are non-work times. Weekend mealtimes are the same as mid-week and everyone pitches in (see below). Apart from mealtimes on the weekend please do not come into the main house. If you need to use the washing machine please put it on before lunch or dinner so it's ready to hang out after the meal. On hot summer days we usually start the workday early so we can all hang out at Lake Daylesford in the afternoon.

We treat all waste as precious material, particularly human waste and have a number of composting and recycling methods we'll take you through once you're here. Humanure is our soil's gold so if you're afraid of poo when you arrive, prepare to be converted!

We eat a mostly locavore diet, mainly vegetarian with some animal proteins as they come to us. (We fish, keep bees, hunt rabbits and butcher our own poultry and goats). We eat no abattoir-processed meat. We are passionate about eating probiotic-rich, wild fermented foods — kefir, kvass, sauerkraut, sourdough, cider, yoghurt, cheese etc. We make much of this from scratch,

some of which you will learn to make while you're with us. If you have any food intolerances or dietary requirements please let us know in your introduction.

Transport. We're a car-free, biking + walking family. Check the PTV website for (the limited) services to arrive here. If driving you can park your car outside our house for the duration of your stay. Feel free to bring your bike. We also have spare bikes.

Clothing. It may be very cold and wet while you're here, or baking hot. Please bring appropriate clothing eg gumboots, beanie and jacket as well as swimmers, hats and long sleeve shirts for sun protection as we'll be working outside regardless of the weather. All the dwellings are shoes-off zones so please feel free to bring your uggies or slippers. In summer we often swim and fish at the lake and have dinner there on hot nights. If you require extra items we have good op shops in the area to get what you need. But please come as prepared as you can be.

Participation. While you are at Tree Elbow it is an opportunity to learn. Please ask questions, we are here to impart our extensive knowledges. We are also willing students and will ask you loads of questions in return. Please see your time here as a permacultural-neopeasant immersive experience. We don't take many SWAPs these days, so please come with a spirit of inquiry and passionate exchange. We also ask you don't treat us as parent figures; we are expecting you are adults who take care of your belongings and don't leave them where you drop them. We are a well-organised household that requires all adult participants to use their foresight and anticipate what might be required for the various jobs at hand.

A note about devices: please feel free to take photos, footage and record whatever you need to. Please only be on your devices during the breaks or documenting a process. We have had SWAPs here before who were instagramming everything they did. While we love such enthusiasm and the desire to share alternative stories, it does disrupt the flow of our work days. Please ask permission to photograph or film Woody and his friends. Please do not show Woody or his friends anything on a screen without checking in with his parents first.

Health. If you have any medical, psychological or physical issues that may affect your time with us here, please let us know in your introduction email. Blackwood is in a childhood wonderland bubble, so please be aware of adult conversations and language in his presence.

Hopefully this helps with some of what to expect. We are a hard-working lively bunch and we've found over the past 12 years working with hundreds of volunteers that this very specific outline and our clear boundaries helps everyone enjoy our time together. We love having people come to stay, to learn and share what we've discovered, created and reclaimed, and we look forward to receiving your letter of introduction.

What to do to apply. Please email us at [we@artistasfamily.is](mailto:we@artistasfamily.is) and confirm that you have thoroughly read these notes and explain why you'd like to join us at the School of Applied Neopeasantry, Tree Elbow University, Djaara Country.