



ANDERSON CENTER FOR AUTISM
<http://www.andersoncenterforautism.org>

INTERNATIONAL FELLOWS PROGRAM (IFP)
PROGRAM DOCUMENT



Contact Information

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ANDERSON CENTER FOR AUTISM

“Anderson Center for Autism is dedicated to providing the highest quality programs to individuals on the autism spectrum, their families and community.” – Mission statement

The Anderson Center for Autism is a social services agency dedicated to provide services to children and adults in the autism spectrum. Located on a picturesque and sprawling campus in Staatsburg, NY, with additional adult homes situated throughout the community, Anderson Center for Autism, a not for profit organization, offers the highest quality year round day and residential programs to children and adults who have been diagnosed on the autism spectrum. Our curriculum features educational, cultural and recreational opportunities specifically designed to challenge each individual to the limits of his or her own abilities.

Backed with a longstanding tradition and history of support that spans more than 80 years, Anderson Center relies on its expert team, evidence-based approach to treatment, and compassionate care to provide a safe, comfortable and enriching environment that promotes countless opportunities for **LIFELONG LEARNINGSM**.

As an organization, we will always provide an enriched and positive climate filled with educational, cultural and recreational activities designed to foster continuous growth, independence and social interaction. We provide comprehensive services to children and adults which encompass their educational, life-skills developmental, clinical, health and residential needs. We are dedicated to being a results-oriented forerunner of agencies by offering the most current program opportunities. ACA has been awarded several accolades by local and state governments as well as by several institutions of repute within the broader community as a leader in the autism services space in NY state. Here are some noteworthy accolades received

*In the fall of 2009, Anderson Center for Autism received the prestigious **Eleanor Roosevelt Award** for embodying the public service values that Eleanor Roosevelt demonstrated in her life. Recipients are recognized for their dedication to helping those in need, inspiring the next generation, encouraging those in power and being a light to those experiencing personal darkness.*



*The **Computerworld Honors Program** recognized Anderson Center for Autism as a 2009 Computerworld Honors Program Laureate for providing speed and reliability for backup and archiving in the category of nonprofit organizations. The Computerworld Honors Program formally includes Anderson Center for Autism's case studies as part of the Global Program Archives on six continents and will be included in the permanent research collections distinguished national archives, museums and institutions of higher learning.*

*Anderson Center for Autism has recently been chosen to receive the **2012 Marist College Intern Employer of the Year Award** for its dedication to the Field Experience program at Marist.*

THE INTERNATIONAL FELLOWS PROGRAM (IFP) AT ANDERSON

Founded in 1924, The Anderson Center for Autism (ACA) in Staatsburg, NY is a social services agency providing quality programs and services to children and adults with autism and related developmental disabilities.

ACA has been providing opportunities for international exchange professionals (fellows) in the social services industry for over two decades. We encourage candidates with at least a Bachelor's degree in social service disciplines i.e. social services work, mental health, special education, psychology, and related studies to apply. Inductees are also required to have work experience in the aforementioned areas in order to be considered.

ACA provides 12 month opportunities and works with identified candidates (fellows) throughout the process. This includes all steps in the process from initial discussions and screening, visa processing (J1 visa program), logistics handling and ensuring that the candidates are provided with adequate accommodation and facilities in the US. Fellows get the opportunity to participate in this learn and work program with experienced Anderson professionals in the social services space: contribute new ideas, learn new methods and best practices, and then return back to their countries to adopt effective approaches in their chosen fields within the social services arena.

Based on their qualifications and experience, fellows work in a myriad of direct care roles that provide coverage and support to existing direct care staff, social workers, support or case workers, special educators, etc. They work with children and adults across the autism spectrum.

ACA provides fellows a monthly stipend, on-campus accommodation, health insurance and other support services to ensure a smooth immersion and acclimatization into the program and the country in general.

Since Anderson enjoys great relationships with several local and private universities of international repute in and around New York, we also intend to facilitate and/or provide academic learning opportunities and certificate programs in the social services spectrum to augment the experiential learning process of the fellows.

Most of our former exchange fellows have gone on to very successful careers in their home countries and speak fondly in their testimonials about Anderson and their experience here. Here are some testimonials.

"I had a good overall experience and enjoyed my time at Anderson. Definitely worthwhile for any young professional in the social services space to spend some time, get great exposure to an important social services institution and learn via the exchange program"

- Paola M from Italy

"The experience at Anderson was one of the best experiences in my life. I learnt a lot and still miss the people there. Give them my best."

- Rita P from Portugal

“I loved the program and the opportunity Anderson provided me. Working with great staff, students and service, I built a lifelong connection and will make visits as I can, even years after the program.”
- Gerome W from Holland

“It was truly a wonderful experience at Anderson. I was pretty young, only 23, at the time but I learnt a lot and it gave me a sense of direction, as to what specifically I wanted to do within the social services space. Here in Holland, the mode of delivering and caring for afflicted individuals is a bit different, but the experience at Anderson really taught me a lot and gave me the exposure to make the right career choice. I also made friends that I’m in touch with even now although they live in different countries.”
- Eva Wurth from Holland

ANDERSON HISTORY

On a wooded estate overlooking the Hudson River, Dr. Victor V. Anderson founded Anderson School in 1924. He believed that children with special needs would benefit from an integrated program that comprehensively addressed their educational, emotional and social needs. He began with one student. More than 88 years later, Anderson Center for Autism continues Dr. Anderson’s work; currently serving more than 200 children and adults with a primary diagnosis of autism.

Through the years, Anderson Center has transformed from a school for emotionally and developmentally challenged students, to an agency dedicated to providing people on the autism spectrum with the highest quality programs; integrated support networks for families and guardians; and an enriched and positive climate for the children and adults.

Anderson Center’s campus has transformed dramatically as well. With the original mission and focus having evolved throughout the years, the school buildings and residences were designed with a different population in mind. This, in addition to many of the buildings being over 70 years old, meant they didn’t support the environmental needs of individuals with autism. In order for Anderson Center to provide the best in educational and residential facilities, in 2003 a comprehensive, multi-phase Master Site Plan was formulated as a blueprint for progress and revitalization of our picturesque 150 acre campus.

Now, nearly 10 years later, backed with the dedication of the staff, and the financial support of our generous donors, the great majority of the elements contained in the Master Site Plan have been completed, including new and renovated campus homes, new community adult homes, upgrades to support service buildings, a new Recreation Center, Village Center and more. The final elements are expected to be completed by the end of 2012. Anderson Center is now able to offer state-of-the-art facilities complementing a dynamic organization that promotes opportunities for children and adults with autism to learn and thrive.

As a scroll found in a time capsule from the class of 1934 stated, “This is the firm rock on which we stand. All others are but shifting sand.” These words still ring true and continue to define the Anderson Center tradition of commitment and dedication.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OFFERED

ACA provides the following programs and services:

Children's Services: Our Education Program incorporates teaching and learning methodologies that are based in a Positive Behavioral Supports model, utilizing proactive and support strategies to assist students as they learn and grow. In addition, behavioral analytic teaching strategies, interventions and evaluative data review are embedded into the school's infrastructure. We utilize direct instruction, discrete trial teaching, visual, environmental, sensory and communication supports. Individualized goals and objectives are identified for each student and target pivotal skill areas such as communication, social interaction, organization, and vocational and independent life skills training. Our Residential Program incorporates behavioral teaching methods and structured learning experiences to increase and enhance skill development in areas such as personal care, communication, social interaction, recreation/play, and community integration.

Adult Services: Our **LifeLong LearningSM** Center provides adults with a variety of skill-building activities which foster individual independence, productivity and enhance each person's overall quality of life. Our seamless program of educational, social and vocational opportunities encompasses the individual's preferences and choices while promoting self-esteem and overall wellbeing. Anderson's LifeLong LearningSM Center offers community involvement through volunteer training programs and placements. Our Residential Program promotes the success of our adults in homes, known as Individual Residential Alternatives (IRAs).

Support Services: We provide a full complement of the highest quality support services designed to meet the diverse needs of our students and adults.

Health Services: Our Health Services department provides evidence-based, best practice medical care. Staff serves as part of each individual's treatment team collaborating with all staff and his/her family. We provide on-site nursing services and collaborate with community providers.

Clinical Services: Our Clinical Department addresses the unique social, emotional and behavioral needs of our children and adults. Behavioral strategies are developed to teach new skills, enhance the quality of life and ensure the safety of each individual in our care.

Case Management: A case manager acts as the primary advocate for our students. He/she acts as the voice, eyes and ears for a family regarding a person's overall care and quality of life.

Related Services: Our Related Services are designed to meet the individual needs of our students and adults. We offer:

- Speech and language services
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy

Consulting: Our Consulting Department provides support to individuals and families affected by autism spectrum disorders. We also consult with school districts and community agencies to provide individual consultation, training, program design, problem solving, and professional development.

THE FELLOWSHIP PROCESS

APPLICATION & PRESCREENING

- Submit your resume and other application documents to Andersonintprogram@acenterforautism.org or through a referral to the international program office/manager.
- Your application will be pre-screened which will include a phone conversation and/or email interaction

ANDERSON INTERVIEW 2 - 4 WEEKS

- If your candidature is selected for further processing, there will be an Anderson interview for about 30-60 mins. This may be a phone or an in-person interview depending on your candidature.
- Reference checks, if required
- You will be selected/deselected within 1-2 weeks of the interview/check

VISA & INTERVIEW 2 - 4 WEEKS

- If you are selected, you will be required to submit all necessary documents as requested for J1 visa processing
- Anderson will work with their partners (lawyer and visa sponsoring agency) to apply for your J1 visa in the appropriate category
- The visa sponsoring agency will have a short video interview (via Skype) to validate your English speaking skills and interest in social services

VISA PROCESSING & APPROVAL Variable (country dependent)

- Upon Visa processing and approval, you will be sent documents for the visa stamping on your passport
- You are required to coordinate with your local US consulate/embassy for their visa stamping/interview scheduling
- Inform us of the visa stamping once completed

ARRIVAL & LOGISTICS 2 - 4 weeks

- Anderson will work with you to schedule your arrival dates and work out logistics and transportation/accommodation at Anderson
- We will share a document that includes a list of resources and a detailed Q&A to answer your questions, streamline the process and make it very convenient to access coordinators at Anderson prior to boarding

ORIENTATION & INCEPTION Day after arrival

- An Orientation package will be provided to you at the start of the program which will include program details, contact information, guidelines, rules of conduct and other necessary details
- You will be assigned a supervisor in a specific area based on your experience, qualifications and as discussed earlier in the process

ACA will provide the following to the fellows selected to the IFP program:

- A generous monthly stipend depending on experience and credentials.
- Living accommodations in or near the Anderson center campus.
- Health insurance as required by the Department of State J1 visa guidelines.
- Optional seminar based educational learning opportunities (These may or may not be certificate based courses with renowned universities in the greater NY area).
- A certificate/letter of completion of the ***Anderson International Fellows Program***.
- Membership to the Anderson International Alumni network which will provide opportunities to connect with and learn from other alums across the world (Being built currently).
- Tickets to attend one or more events such as the Anderson Center gala, appreciation dinner, Anderson parties, golf tournament and other fun-filled events, Anderson's Autism Tomorrow conference.
- Supportive team members and experienced professionals at Anderson and a cohort based exchange program format which includes other fellows from different countries.
- A supportive learning and work environment nestled in the picturesque upstate NY hamlet of Staatsburg and on a property that sits on the banks of the Hudson river.
- Close proximity to New York City (2 hours) which provides unparalleled opportunities for cultural and educational exchange.

Program Application Requirements

In order to be eligible for the program, you must:

- Have completed and obtained at a minimum Bachelors Degree directly related to the human service field such as, psychology, social work or social pedagogy (or related studies).
- Be able to speak, read and write English.
- Have a valid passport.
- Have the ability to obtain an International Drivers License.
- Have enough resources to purchase a car and insurance for the car.
- Have references from your school or workplace.
- Be available to work in different shifts (day, afternoon, weekend) as required.
- Be open-minded with a willingness to learn and exchange information.
- Must have a PC/laptop or access to one with skype installed (www.skype.com) for the interview
- Fellows are responsible for the visa stamping fees (J1 visa stamping fees) and their own airfare to and back from the US. Anderson will arrange to receive and help with ground transportation of fellows arriving at the airports in the NY area (JFK, LGA or EWR) to the Anderson campus.

Appendix:

1. Application for J1- Trainee visa document
2. List of documents required for visa/application processing

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. Please check the Anderson web-site for additional information and media packages - <http://www.andersoncenterforautism.org>
2. Anderson Newsletters, photo gallery, recent videos and other resources can be found at <http://www.andersoncenterforautism.org/media/>
3. Testimonials for Anderson can be found at <http://www.andersoncenterforautism.org/about-us/testimonials/>
4. Exchange Visitor Program – J1 visa program on the US Dept of State website <http://j1visa.state.gov/participants/>
5. An orientation kit/adequate information with emergency contact details will be provided to the selected fellows well in advance of their arrival so that they can acclimatize themselves with the guidelines and information for stress free travel.