

Feel at home in The Hague

The International Community Fair 2008

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Is Getting a Life Worth 5 Euro?

This coming Sunday TheHagueOnline is organising our third annual 'Feel At Home in The Hague' fair – the international community get-together at city hall. Having trouble knowing where you fit here? Wondering if there is intelligent life out there? I have been an international resident of The Hague for over 14 years and feel comfortable enough to call the city home. However, it took several years to feel at home. In the beginning I would have gladly paid 5 euros for help in kick-starting my social life.

I thought initially The Hague was a boring place, because I did not know where to find information about goings-on and I preferred to be somewhere else. Also I thought that I could weather the boredom until I was posted out again. Sound familiar??

Then totally by coincidence, I stumbled across a squash club whilst taking a stroll at lunch and my life was transformed. I met friends –both Dutch and foreign – who shared a common passion. I was introduced to some quaint Dutch customs like bitterballen and herring. These friends then introduced me to other friends and so my social life grew and I began to really feel at home.

However, I still didn't realise how tiny my world was. I started TheHagueOnLine over 4 years ago because I felt that there was a need for information in English about what is happening in the both the local and international communities. In the beginning I was amazed by the numbers of different international clubs in The Hague. I had lived in The Hague for 10 years and hadn't realised that there was an annual English-language pantomime, an expat cricket team or an international food fair. Every year different organisations or clubs spring up. You can now play indoor golf and there's a local branch of the Red Hat Society, among many other organisations. The Hague – like any city – is continuously changing.

On Sunday 21 September in the Atrium of the city hall, there will be 185 organisations ready to help kick-start your social life. Is a social life worth 5 euros? As our American cousins would say, 'that's a no-brainer'!

I look forward to seeing you Sunday!

Billy Allwood
Founder - TheHagueOnLine

