



Get fit and healthy outside


2021

Autumn

In this issue | A healthy body | Mental health and men |
Culture post-Covid | Wonderful Zwolle | Helping others | Regional food |
International blogs | ACCESS helping for 35 years | **Free to pick up**

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Dear ACCESS readers



Steve Joyce

ACCESS Editor

editor@access-nl.org

Our fundamental principles remain the same

The new normal. We've all become used to such terminology over the last year or so. As the tide of pandemic restrictions drifts forward and backwards, I'm sure we have all changed our lifestyles in ways that may never go back to how they were before.

In this issue, we look at the different changes many have made in the ways we keep fit, physically and mentally, during this new normal. Kim van der Velden's excellent Cover Story looks at how personal fitness has developed historically and ways it has changed more recently. She spoke to two people involved in health and fitness and gained some fascinating personal insights.

Psychologist Katarina Gaborova writes, "most likely as you are reading this, a man near to you will be struggling alone with his mental health". While generally men seem to be paying more attention to their mental health, as Katarina's insightful article says there is still a lot of work to be done. Not least in the way that men—and those around them—historically, culturally and lately have dealt with expressing their feelings. Society will be a much better place for us all when all men feel open enough to let others enter their emotional worlds.

Elsewhere in this issue, Lynette and Richard Croxford visited Zwolle and Richard's brilliant photos make it look like a great place to visit—as do Lynette's words. And as summer fades into autumn, what better time to try some of the regional dishes from around the Netherlands in our Food article? Or spend some time on the sofa catching up on a movie? Giulia Quaresima watched *De Marathon*, a Dutch movie about four out-of-shape guys who decide to run a marathon, and she cannot recommend it more highly.

Over a year of lockdown, restrictions and isolation have quite rightly brought to the forefront a focus on mental health. Here at ACCESS we pride ourselves that we have always treated mental health seriously—in fact it was the reason why ACCESS was founded 35 years ago. Read Olivia van den Broek-Neri's Family article to see that while many things have changed during that time, our fundamental principles remain the same.



How ACCESS supports internationals

Our helpdesks respond to questions about coming to, as well as living and settling in the Netherlands.

This is free of charge. Consult the ACCESS website for days and times: access-nl.org.

Find our helpdesks in:

- The Hague, City Hall, Atrium
- Amsterdam, IN Amsterdam – World Trade Center I-Tower, ground floor
- Leiden, Stads Kantoor Leiden, Bargelaan 190
- Utrecht, IWCUR – International Welcome Center Utrecht Region, Stads Kantoor Utrecht, Stadsplateau 1, 2nd floor

ACCESS Counselling Service Network

We provide an on-call counselling service for referrals through our Counselling Service Network.

ACCESS Childbirth Courses

Our courses are designed for new parents and are offered either as a weekly class or as a one-day intensive course in The Hague, Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Utrecht, as well as online.

ACCESS Training Network

Our trainers provide coaching and consulting in areas such as, careers, behavioural change, ADHD, and writing, among others.

ACCESS Partners and Patrons

Our commercial and municipal partners and patrons invest in us, so we can support you—the international community.

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15



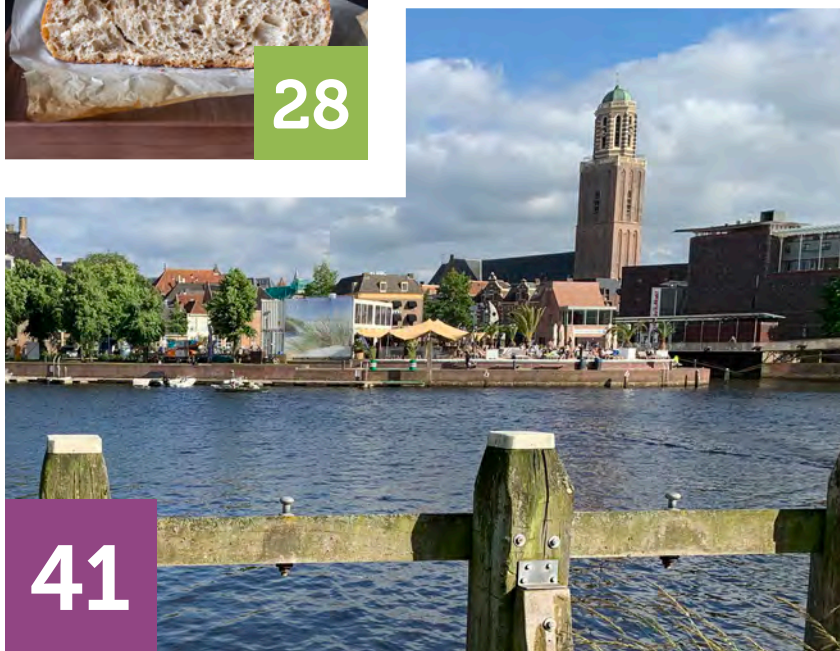
18



37



28



41

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Contents

- 6 **The ACCESS Family**
35th Anniversary
- 10 **Cover Story** A healthy mind
in a healthy body
- 15 **Health & Wellbeing** Men and
mental health
- 18 **Review** De Marathon
- 21 **Arts & Entertainment** Literary
festivals to lift our spirits
- 24 **Schools**
- 28 **Food** Lekker Nederland
- 31 **Dutch Lifestyle** People helping
people
- 34 **International Community**
Healthy is the best (out)fit
- 37 **Education** Strong school sports
- 41 **Travel** Zwolle

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ACCESS at 35!

ACCESS has successfully adapted over 35 years, remaining the preeminent resource of information and support for internationals in the Netherlands.

BY OLIVIA VAN
DEN BROEK-NERI

ILLUSTRATIONS
BY LILIANA
VARGAS-MELEZA

Mental health is of utmost importance

Moving abroad entails a lot. People may move for a job, but life abroad can be emotionally demanding. The added stress of living someplace new, and not having the support of extended family and friends, can create problems within relationships, and result in an unsuccessful placement.

If left untreated, stress can result in depression, substance abuse and divorce, which is why ACCESS has been at the forefront of acknowledging this problem and offering a solution: counselling.

ACCESS began by establishing a network of 'qualified and competent' English-speaking psychologists, including on-call counsellors to refer people to the support they need. ACCESS stood for: Administrative Committee to Co-ordinate English Speaking Services.

"Internationals still need help dealing with issues related to being away from their support network," says Genoveva Geppaart, an FAQ researcher at ACCESS. The organisation continues to provide support for the wellbeing of the English-speaking community in the Netherlands, but has grown to offer more.

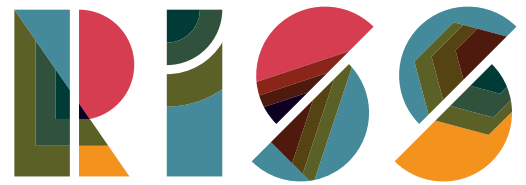
Reaching more Internationals

The ACCESS Helpdesk has always been an important tool in providing information, but it too has changed over the years. Resources have been transferred from a rolodex to an online database, and the Helpdesk is now available at expat centres in The Hague, Amsterdam, Utrecht, and Leiden.

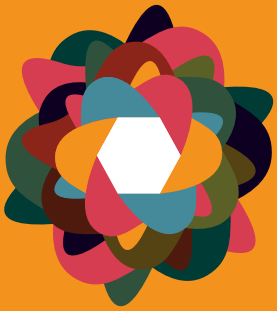
"Over the years, I've seen things change," says Genoveva. "At our external helpdesks we can meet internationals in person." ACCESS has further expanded its reach via its website, newsletter, magazine and social media.»

Listening to volunteers helps to ensure that ACCESS stays current





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Changes within the community

“New volunteers keep us updated on what is happening,” says Deborah Valentine, Executive Director of ACCESS. “Listening to them ensures that ACCESS stays current with the needs and the wants of the international community.”

ACCESS also provides a place for internationals to volunteer their time and knowledge. “Occasionally volunteers have found a job and negotiated so that they could still volunteer with us,” says Deborah. “That was truly special.”

Over the years, the backgrounds, ages and expectations of volunteers has also changed. “We do notice a higher turnover of people because they are finding jobs,” says Deborah. But this constant flow of volunteers contributes to ACCESS’ strength—by offering assistance during different stages of the international experience.

Helen Kirkwood has volunteered with ACCESS for two years, but first encountered ACCESS 25 years ago when she took a childbirth class. “ACCESS is an opportunity to meet people, whether by taking part in a course or volunteering,” says Helen. “I am still in touch with some of the expats that I met at the birthing class,” says Helen. “It was so lovely to meet a new set of international people who were at different stages of the culture shock of first arriving in a new country.”



Understanding their needs

More recently, ACCESS introduced its Patron Programme offering assistance to the international staff of companies. “A relocation is longer than four months; we have to be there for months five to 12,” says Deborah. “Our most recent Patron is the European Medicines Agency which is going well.” Although ACCESS does receive a financial contribution, patronship also benefits the company who can show present and future staff they offer support for their international staff, partners, spouses and families.

While a growing international community has seen a growth in English language service providers, ACCESS remains relevant amongst information sources, as there will always be a need for a personal connection with someone who understands the experience.

Crescence Martimort, who volunteers in the Funding Department and at the Helpdesk, credits the success of ACCESS to its training. “We put ourselves in the shoes of the client,” she explains. “We imagine ourselves on the other side and provide the best answer possible.”

“Volunteers come from every different location and we adapt to our clients in order to understand them,” says Crescence, who has lived in the Netherlands for 17 years, holds a French passport and whose parents were from Cameroon.

The next generation of volunteers

The motor behind ACCESS has always been its volunteers, and as some move on and others join. The international community continues to help each other, and leads to the continued success of ACCESS! «

About the author

California-native Olivia van den Broek-Neri works as Project Coordinator Communications & Events at Holland Expat Center South in Eindhoven, and was previously an ACCESS volunteer.

A healthy mind in a healthy body



PHOTO: KARSTEN WINEGEART

During a press conference in March 2021, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte stated that the population had gained millions of “coronakilos”, due to pandemic lockdown measures. Was he right? Did the pandemic affect our fitness and eating habits? Which changes will remain?

BY KIM VAN DER
VELDEN

Historically speaking

If you go to the gym, you're participating in an institution that dates back three thousand years. The word 'gymnasium' means a place to exercise naked, which is not very commonplace nowadays, but it remains a place where we work on our fitness and health.

Ancient Greeks and Romans believed that mental and physical exercise belonged together and even reinforced each other, summarised in the old Latin saying 'mens sana in corpore sano' (a healthy mind in a healthy body). Olympic sports of running, javelin and wrestling were practised at the gymnasium, so to our modern eyes it would most closely resemble an athletics venue.



PHOTO: GABIN VALLET

By the middle of the 19th century, the gym as a commercial enterprise emerged. Hippolyte Triat, vaudeville strongman turned fitness entrepreneur, is usually credited with being the first to open commercial gyms, first in Brussels and then in Paris in the late 1840s.

Joseph Pilates opened his first pilates studio in 1926 located in the vicinity of the New York Ballet, originally catering for dancers. Pilates practice has become mainstream nowadays, where it is part of almost every gym's class schedule.

After the World War Two, chains of health clubs emerged in the US with Vic Tanny Health Club (1946) and Gold's Gym (1965) as the precursors of the modern fitness chains, making fitness practice affordable and accessible to the masses in suburbs and cities.

To counter the 'mass product' approach of the large fitness chains, the late 90s and early 00s saw the emergence of boutique gym clubs—smaller scale, with an ultra-personalised approach, often at a higher cost to the gym member.

Pandemic effects on fitness practice

Due to the restrictive measures to contain the effects of the pandemic—closure of schools, offices, shops, cultural events, bars and restaurants and sports and gym clubs for much of 2020 and part of 2021, many of us have experienced disruption affecting us physically and mentally.

Samuel van Gelder, personal trainer and coach, based in Diemen near Amsterdam, observed a difference between behaviour during the first lockdown and as time went by. “At the start, the situation clearly had a disruptive effect. Due to stress and social isolation, people made unhealthy choices—less workouts and more unhealthy food. But over time you could see people started to find new fitness routines again in combination with working from home and making more healthy food choices” »



PHOTOS: GABIN VALLET

People found new fitness routines

Beste Dolanay, yoga and meditation mindfulness instructor based in Amsterdam, saw a similar trend, “at the start, as everyone felt stuck and had less mobility during the pandemic, people were overwhelmed with the situation and were looking into ways of coping with stress, uncertainty and anxiety.

A healthy mind and body

ACCESS Trainers are a diverse group of professionals offering a wide variety of support and courses that provide opportunities for personal growth, learning something new and preparing for a new direction.

Find out more at access-nl.org/what-we-do/meet-the-trainers

For more information about sport and physical activity in the Netherlands, go to the Dutch government’s website government.nl/topics/sports

Find more information about Samuel and Beste at: samuelvangelder.com and HolisticWellnessDivya.com

Then they started to be more interested in any kind of movement and doing some form of exercise at home.”

Was Mark Rutte right with his statement about us having gained millions of “coronakilos”? According to a report published by the RIVM (National Institute for Public Health and the Environment), 63% of the population stayed at their original weight, 17% gained on average 2.8 kilos per person and 13% lost on average 1.6 kilos, which is an additional five million kilos for the population. That the majority stayed at their original weight makes this figure feel less alarming.

More worrying is that more than half of the population have stopped or reduced physical exercise practice. As is often the case though, the pandemic also stirred creativity and some new fitness practices emerged.

Outdoor fitness

Outdoor fitness is not something new, but during the lockdown, many of us found it liberating to go out in the fresh air and get some exercise.

Van Gelder sees this as one of his favourite new trends. He admits he has a personal preference for training sessions outdoors, “although I do enjoy indoors too, outdoor sessions are given extra

energy due to the fresh air. It is too early to state whether this trend will stay, given the weather conditions in the Netherlands”. Dolanay has also observed that if the Dutch weather permits, “yoga in parks outdoors can be a wonderful experience”.

It seems that even after the opening of gyms in the Netherlands, the offer of outdoor bootcamps and Crossfit sessions in groups or on an individual basis are here to stay, at least whilst the clement weather conditions remain.

Online classes

Dolanay noticed very quickly during the pandemic that digital classes were providing a safe and practical environment for her students to continue their yoga and mindfulness practice. There are also benefits for herself, the teacher, too, as she now, “does not need to run from studio to studio for her classes anymore”. This allows her additional time to practice more yoga for herself too. Not only do online classes provide Dolanay’s students the freedom of location and time, but also for herself!

Van Gelder also sees the benefits of online classes “as people can chose their own time and place, have reduced travel time and use their own equipment in a safe setting”. But he wonders how the real contact with teacher /coach and fellow students can be maintained and whether the virtual contact will be motivating enough.

On demand platforms and fitness at home

While fitness practice from home has always existed, new technology possibilities allow a revival. The pandemic has caused the acceleration of technology usage in the fitness industry, with the rise of purely digital classes platforms and with some going as far as offering a fitness at home subscription, including equipment rental. Digital experiences are enhanced and refreshed regularly at high pace to keep users’ attention “always on”—similar in a way to online content providers like Netflix.



PHOTOS: HUMPHREY MULEBA

Many of us have been affected physically and mentally

Connection of body and mind

Continued lockdowns have led to many people still experiencing isolation, and mental health remains a major area of concern across the world, during and beyond the pandemic. Staying physically active can be a real aid to maintaining good mental health. According to online reports Glofox and ClassPass, yoga was the top digital workout of 2020, which shows that mental and physical health still go hand in hand like the ancient Greeks and Romans already knew. *Mens sana in corpore sano.* «

About the author

During the pandemic, Kim van der Velden has gone on many walks outdoors and followed online yoga classes regularly, but despite all efforts, has unfortunately contributed to the five million “coronakilos”.

Why call a lawyer?

Many people hesitate before getting legal advice – not because they are unsure if they need it, but because they are uncertain if they ought to involve a lawyer. Legal Expat Desk explains why calling a lawyer can be the right thing to do.

Expert advice

If you are facing a legal problem, it can be better to “hire” subject matter expertise, rather than attempt to learn it all yourself.

This is the most common reason to hire a lawyer.

It takes years to learn all of the applicable laws, recent rulings and case law (jurisprudence), and gain the necessary experience to apply that knowledge in an expert manner in a specific situation – and most problems do not wait that long.

Someone in your corner

Your lawyer’s main priority is representing your interests. In any situation where there is disagreement, dispute or conflict, this protection can be invaluable.

Having a lawyer who is looking out for your interests can prevent you from being bullied, tricked, misled, guilt-tripped or distracted during the legal process.

This support is not just about emotions; it is practical. A lawyer can warn you in advance of potential pitfalls, advise you if your rights are being violated, and

endure tough negotiations on your behalf to achieve a good result. Your lawyer can tell you not only when to take action, but how to do so in practice.

Filter emotion

A lawyer can filter out a lot of the emotion that comes with a serious problem, and this benefits you in several ways:

- A lawyer can act as a middleman, so you can avoid the emotion of dealing directly with the opposing party.
- No matter how tough the situation, a lawyer can represent you and your interests in a professional manner, which will portray you in the best possible light.
- Your lawyer filters emotion from the information they receive, then communicates only the facts to you. This allows you to make more objective decisions.
- As an expert and third party, a lawyer can find new facts to help your case by asking the right questions, so that you can proceed according to the most advantageous strategy.

Did you know? ‘Lawyer’ is not a dirty word.

Keep it honourable

Contrary to some jokes, “lawyer” is not a dirty word. In fact, by filtering out the emotion and focussing on the facts, you will be more able to act honourably throughout your situation and bring it to the best possible solution.

Do you need a lawyer?

Legal Expat Desk connects internationals with English-speaking lawyers who are experts in international employment law, family law, property law, business law and liability law.

Call us on +31 (0) 70 361 50 48 or visit legalexpatdesk.nl for assistance. «



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gmw.nl/en

Men and mental health

Similar rather than different

BY KATARINA
GABOROVA

Most likely as you are reading this, a man near to you will be struggling alone with his mental health—a concern often undiscussed and unaddressed. Here's how we can all help.

It's been strange year-and-a-half. We are still adjusting to the changes brought on by the pandemic. Some of us remain very cautious, while others not at all. One thing for sure though is it has touched our lives in different ways and certainly has had an impact on our mental health.

A big question

Recently I've been asked to deliver many online workshops, including coping with change, taking care of our mental health during a pandemic, or how to support ourselves through grief.

At the end of one of my workshops, a male participant electronically raised his hand and said, "it's all great this information but I personally have been having trouble even recognising when I feel stressed. I only realise it because I act angry. Even if I am occasionally aware of it, I certainly do not want to talk about it, »



PHOTO: TOA HEFTIBA



PHOTO: NATHAN DURLAO

because as a man I am supposed to deal with it, not be a burden to anyone or appear weak. What are your thoughts on that?”

I was left with this huge question, and hundreds of thoughts racing through my mind.

Increased awareness

The Priory Group in the UK delivers a range of mental health care services, and back in 2015 and 2018 they conducted a survey on 1000 males’ attitudes towards

their own mental health. The man from the workshop was in line with their findings. According to the survey, 40% of men will not talk about their own mental health.

I was happy that this man decided to raise this issue openly and publicly, as statistically speaking, it’s a topic that benefits from an increased awareness. Especially, because according to this survey, it often takes suicidal thoughts or thoughts related to self-harm for men to talk and seek professional help.

Of the 1,000 polled men, 77% indicated suffering from anxiety, stress or depression. When asked about the biggest pressure on them, work scored as number one as the most significant source of stress, followed by finance and health.

Work is the most significant source of stress for men

Why don’t men talk about their mental health?

The survey also explored some of the most important reasons why men may not feel comfortable talking about their mental health. If I conducted a similar survey, I would explore some of the points further.

- 40% of those asked said, “I have learnt to deal with it.” My follow up question would be, “is that really so? or is that felt because of certain expectations of men by society?”
- 29% of the men asked felt too embarrassed to bring up mental health issues
- 20% felt the stigma related to the topic
- 17% did not even want to admit that they needed support
- 16% did not want to appear as “weak”
- 14% of them did not have a person to talk to in their surroundings

- 36% of men also indicated the burden factor on others, mentioned by the workshop participant. I would ask, “Have you ever checked with your loved ones whether it is like that or whether these are just assumptions that we were taught to believe for so long? Maybe it’s time to try a different approach and test it out?”

Society and stereotypes

The man expressed what very likely many others feel. It’s often unspoken about, and most likely a man you know may be struggling by himself with his mental health. I discussed the survey in the workshop, which would hopefully normalise some of his own feelings, as well as connecting concerns of other males in the virtual room that day.

There were, however, two other parts to his question. “How can a man recognise when he feels stressed, anxious, overwhelmed, sad, etc.? And why does it come out in a form of anger?” I felt the urgency and expectation from his side to clear this up and provide some answers.

To start, I answered, “for centuries culturally men were taught, point-by-point, not to feel, cry, or even find words to express themselves.” According to *Psychology Today* magazine, some of the stereotypically “feminine feelings” such as sadness or vulnerability may get converted into more “socially acceptable” feelings that can come out as anger or pride. These feelings may also get converted into physical complaints of headaches or backaches, and within society men can be judged as not being able to emotionally adjust.

How can every one of us, as part of society, help to change these narrow points of view?

Simply, by recognising that men too have feelings, and once they feel open enough to let us others enter their world, mind and heart, our role is to listen and validate them rather than judge or view these as signs of weakness.

The brave initial step to finally openly talk about it

Silenced but not silent

Why did this man feel challenged by even getting in touch, naming, interpreting or understanding some of the feelings that he may have been sifting through? Partly it could be because of cultural or societal expectations, or stem from his family’s way of emotional expression, or a lack of individual opportunities and experiences of expressing them freely. When feelings are silenced for way too long, there may have not even been opportunities to develop resources on how to handle them. Especially when they feel too overwhelming. For men, often the feelings get tucked right back where they actually wanted to come out from.

I talked with the man about the roles of sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, and how to read our bodily signals because our bodies literally talk to us. What he was looking for was how to apply remedies if these feelings became too overwhelming—the logical, rational part of a ‘man’s world’ coming through as he needed to know how to fix it.

Taking the first step

I keep coming back to that workshop, as I think about his question and asking myself if my answers were sufficient to bring on a personal change. Perhaps I need to be satisfied that the most important change that happened in that room was his brave initial step to finally openly talk about it. «



About the author

Katarina Gaborova is a founder of K.G. Psychological Services (psychologistinthehague.com, katarinagaborova.com) in The Hague, where she works as a psychologist and coach and is a member of the ACCESS Counselling Service Network (CSN).

Movie review

De Marathon

Can the Rotterdam Marathon be run by four out-of-shape and lazy guys? This pretty improbable task is told brilliantly in Diederick Koopal's movie *De Marathon*, available on DVD and Prime Video with English subtitles.

BY GIULIA
QUARESIMA

What happens when sport and cinema meet each other?

Often in movies, sport has a strong social value—bringing to screens social redemption, rigour, effort and dedication. The message of sport spread through cinema is a counteraction to discrimination and violence—to promote fair play, respect for others, legality, and team spirit.

And sport, like cinema, brings fun of course! A movie can get us to laugh, cry, scream, cheer, push to renew a gym membership or even finally leave the couch and participate in a sport ourselves. This is what happens in *De Marathon*.

Run for your life

De Marathon, directed by Diederick Koopal. Running time 1h 47min. Available to buy or download.

Koos van Staveren is the owner of the garage Garvak where they shot the movie. In January 2017 the movie became reality when Koos van Staveren was diagnosed with cancer and his garage was threatened with bankruptcy. Instead of running a marathon, the makers and cast of *De Marathon* organised a benefit evening to raise money for Koos. They raised almost €9,500 for the garage.

Once you've watched *De Marathon*, you might be curious about other Dutch movies featuring sport. If so, there are some other great ones to choose from. Why not check out *All Stars*, *Black Meteor*, and *In Orange*.

The story

De Marathon is a movie about a group of four underdogs who decide to participate in an apparently impossible sporting event and get further than expected. The plot takes place in Rotterdam where the four friends have a small and close to bankrupt garage. Leo, Nico, Kees and the owner Gerard formulate a crazy plan to make money by being sponsored to run the Rotterdam Marathon.

There is of course an obstacle—they are all out of shape, lazy, smoking, beer-drinking and cake-eating idlers who get no more exercise than opening the fridge. They must push themselves to train for six months to finish the 42 kms. Their sponsor put in a condition—all four must finish or Gerard will lose the garage.

Youssef, the garage's employee, has the difficult daily task of training the four men. At first unsuccessful, he persists and manages to motivate them to feel part of a common project.

The film

De Marathon was Diederick Koopal's debut in 2012 for Kaap Holland Film BV. In 2013, at the Netherlands Film Festival (De Gouden Kalf) the film received the Audience Award and the Prize of Dutch Film Criticism.

In 2017 the movie was adapted for theatre as a musical, directed by Job Gosschalk and premiered in Rotterdam's new Luxor Theatre, followed by performances across the country.

Koopal balances the movie between comedic and dramatic aspects—a socially realistic spirit combined with smiles and tears. At first, the movie portrays the main characters as rude racist, misogynist, misfit, slackers—definitely not the heroes of a classic sport movie!

But here the film stands out—it digs deep into their darkness, revealing how difficult and uncomfortable their private lives are. The challenge brings them to



They are idlers who get no more exercise than opening the fridge

explore their weaknesses, to push themselves way beyond their physical and mostly mindset limits, until they learn to respect the others, to build a team spirit, to reconnect with their true relationship and much more. Which I don't want to spoil.

These transformations originate in sport, from its characteristics and strengths—fatigue, dedication, purpose, forcing you to pull yourself back, to improve your self-esteem, and to enhance social and community bonds.

So, at the end, it is an enjoyable movie where you'll be pleasantly surprised by the focus on characterisation rather than achievements. *De Marathon* shows how

complex subjects such as integration, family issues, self-acceptance, and illness can be well-handled even in a comedic sport movie. Recommended! «

About the author

Italian native Giulia Quaresima lives in The Hague and has been writing for ACCESS since 2019.

Continued sports opportunities for ISH students

Like all schools around the world, the International School of The Hague (ISH) has had to make many adjustments to school life during the pandemic.

Fortunately, it looks like we are getting back to life as it was before but it's great to look back on some of the initiatives that were born of the lockdown as a way of keeping each other going, many of which are set to stay.



During the summer term, our sports department maintained an engaging and varied programme for students to enjoy sports and exercise, taking full advantage of The Hague's versatile environment.

070 328 14 50
ishthehague.nl

Surf's up

In June, students were able to take a surfing course with trained instructors just a stone's throw from our campus at Kijkduin beach—one of the many advantages of being situated so close to a wide stretch of beach with unique characteristics, as well as the beautiful dunes.

Challenges

Teachers at ISH also regularly organise challenges where the students and staff compete to add an element of gamification to exercises they can incorporate into their daily lives. In primary, we have the Daily K where twice a week, students and staff run on the fields behind the school and the total number of kilometres run by everyone is accumulated to see where in the world they could have reached. In the past, they have got as far as Iceland. This promotes a sense of achievement and having reached a goal together.

**The kilometres run
are accumulated.
In the past, they have
got as far as Iceland**

Healthy living

In Secondary, the sports department organises a variety of challenges for students and staff. The latest was a cycling challenge, where students could earn points for their house by accumulating km's. The competition was fierce with some of the seasoned staff cyclists clocking up around 400km's in a day. It's not all about the headline grabbers though – to promote everyday good health and fitness students were also able to earn points simply for cycling to school instead of taking the tram.

Find out more about the ISH at ishthehague.nl



Literary festivals to lift our spirits

The Netherlands' top cultural festivals get creative to provide engaging, relevant, entertaining content, despite continuing social restrictions.



BY HANNAH BEHRENS
PHOTOS CROSSING
BORDER

With many big festivals forced to cancel events last year and restrictions still in place, 2021 festival organisers were faced with creative challenges to attract interested and diversion-seeking visitors. To maintain a cultural or musical event which normally draws hundreds or even thousands of visitors annually, but now with limited in-person attendance, organisers have created virtual broadcasts and live feeds.

We look at two literary events in the Netherlands, and how organisers have used their creativity to keep the integrity and momentum of a much-needed social and cultural engagement.

Annual Poetry Festival

Even though the 51st Annual Poetry International Festival has already taken place 11-13 June, interviews and reading performances are available for free viewing on the festival website, poetry.nl/en/festival

This year's theme *What You Will Hear is True* goes beyond entertainment. It is not just a passive experience—there is a presentational aspect—poets read live alongside digital translations, sometimes in multiple languages.

Literature in general and poetry in particular acts as a special medium for capturing and expressing what is happening in the world. The dozens of poets showcasing their work at the festival provided a real and cathartic opportunity to reflect artistically and intellectually on experiences of the past year and a half. The purpose of this event was not just to entertain, but to bring people together both in person and virtually.

While a small audience onsite in Rotterdam was in attendance, festival goers could purchase a virtual ticket for the entire weekend with a series of live stream broadcast events, performances, interviews, and panel discussions, all in both English and Dutch. In addition to the main broadcast, there were other elective individual workshops with poets on Zoom.

Cultural significance

One of the poets featured at Poetry International Festival was Vanessa Kisuulen, based in Bristol, UK. Her poem *Hollow*, which went viral on Twitter in »

Crossing Border

Tickets for the Crossing Border Festival are already available at crossingborder.nl. The fully detailed schedule of evening and day programmes will be announced in September.

The Crossing Border Festival is anticipating a 100% live event but should it be impossible to go ahead with this because of new Covid-19 restrictions, all ticket costs (including service costs) will be refunded in full.

June 2020, was a response to the statue of Edward Colston—whose legacy and wealth was built on the slave trade—being torn down and thrown into Bristol harbour. KISSUULEN says, “I love the idea that history and art could belong in the parts of our environment that we don’t consider very picturesque.”

South African Poet Ronelda Kamfer describes how she “wants to include everything in my life. Learning Afrikaans literature in school—I didn’t see myself in the stereotypical portrayals of the community.” Festival participants see translations of her work into Dutch and English, as well as an artistic video version of one of her poems.

Performing poetry from his collection *The Perseverance*, British/Jamaican, hearing-impaired performer and educator Raymond Antrobus describes himself as “An Investigator of Missing Sounds” and his work focuses on hyphenated identity. Antrobus describes poetry as “music from the places and circumstances of birth.” Alongside two Dutch poets Selena Waas and Isle Jobse performing their work in sign language as well as a sign language interpreted interview, the poetry explores hearing loss and impairment, and expands the horizons of poetic expression.

The festival organisers went to great lengths to create an interactive experience within current limitations, while maintaining the discussion and examination of how we are functioning as a culture. The poets featured at the festival were very tuned into these cultural and social reflections, which made the experience even more impactful.



Crossing Border Festival

Tickets are now on sale for the Crossing Border Festival 2021, set to take place between 4 and 6 November at new venues in and around the Hofkwartier—the historic heart of Den Haag—including the Korzo Theatre, the hidden church De Parochie HH Jacobus en Augustinus and the Lutheran Church.

The three days of the festival have a full schedule of writers, musical performances and include a special event on 5 November with two-time Pulitzer Prize winning Colson Whitehead, author of *The Underground Railroad* and *The Nickel Boys*, discussing his new novel *Harlem Shuffle*.

Another confirmed writer on the programme is Douglas Stuart who will talk about his Man Booker Prize winning debut *Shuggie Bain*, a “blistering and heart-breaking” novel that takes place in 1980s Glasgow.

British rock band Primal Scream’s frontman Bobby Gillespie will also be discussing his memoir *Tenement Kid*, based on his early life in the tenements of Glasgow.

Additional authors confirmed for the festival are Jesús Carrasco, Patricia Lockwood, Maxim Osipov, Willy Vlautin, Agustín Fernández Mallo, Eva van Manen, Sasha Filipenko, Hassan Blasim, Claire Keegan, Alejandro Zambra, Olivia Wenzel, Natasha Brown, Marta Barone, Lale Gül and Jens Meijen.

Musical features at the festival include performances by the feminist postpunk band Big Joanie—described as “black feminist sistah punk band, whose passionate live shows and punk rock ethos have led them to become one of the most talked about bands on the UK live scene,” and Stuart A. Staples of British band the Tindersticks performing an acoustic set. Additional musical acts also scheduled to perform are Froukje, CMAT, Adrian Crowley, Sophie Hunger, Billie Marten, Ghostpoet, ME REX, Theon Cross, Anthony Joseph, and Eva van Manen.



Challenged to attract interested and diversion-seeking visitors

The future of culture

As the pandemic continues to alter our daily lives, it’s fascinating to see how cultural event organisers in the Netherlands are using their creativity to adapt and engage their audiences. «

About the author

Hannah Behrens is a freelance writer, editor, poet and writing coach. She writes a blog, weedsandwilderness.com, leads Weeds and Wilderness Creative Writing Meetup in Amsterdam, and is currently working towards her PhD in Expressive Arts Therapy.

Schools: heart of the community

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The Hague

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In creative partnership with the Rijksmuseum

Eerde's partnership with the Rijksmuseum offers students an Enriching Educational Experience.

Eerde students benefit from its ongoing partnership through workshops, engaging with artists, exclusive exhibits and exchanges. This experience is enjoyed by students of all grade levels but it is especially beneficial for the International Baccalaureate (IBDP) Visual Arts students.

Since the partnership was established in 2017, Eerde International Boarding School and the Rijksmuseum have collaborated to develop educational programmes which can be integrated into the international curriculum, serving for both IBDP and international middle school programmes.

The curriculum development work done by the Eerde Visual Arts instructor and the educational experts at the Rijksmuseum is of high quality. The collaboration originally produced three curriculum guided tours. These tours focused on a special combination of Netherlands artwork and history, as seen through an international perspective and dialogue. As the partnership progressed, it has broadened to include other subjects in an integrative, inquiry-based learning approach.

Over the years, students from Eerde have enriched their educational experiences through visits to the Rijksmuseum and participating in several workshops.

Even in these recent times involving COVID measures, Eerde and the Rijksmuseum have found a way to maintain the connection and engagement with students in the form of online workshops during the lockdown period. Through the dedication of the Rijksmuseum educators, Eerde students have just completed a variety of stimulating and interactive workshops featuring Dutch Design and Photography. A wide selection of captivating artworks resulted from these workshops.

Stimulating and interactive workshops

Eerde looks forward to continuing this partnership with the Rijksmuseum for the benefit of its international students and enriching their educational experience. «



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Lekker Nederland

BY TRACEY TAYLOR



PHOTO: NASTYA DULHIER

In 1885, Dutch artist Vincent van Gogh painted his masterpiece *De Aardappeleters* (The Potato Eaters) which depicted peasants gathered around a table eating potatoes, a staple of the diet at the time. Although the average Dutch person still consumes about 65 kilos of potatoes a year, the composition of Dutch cuisine today paints rather a different picture.

With summer behind us, it's time to start thinking of autumnal foods, and traditional Dutch cuisine certainly offers a myriad of "comfort foods" that are perfect for the colder, darker evenings—think *appeltaart* (apple tart), *ertwensoep* (pea soup), *stamppot* (a potato veggie mash) and the *kapsalon* (see 'Did you know').

Delve into the twelve

These traditional dishes aside, the food scene in the Netherlands has grown in stature over the past number of years, and the innovation coming to food and sustainability spotlights Dutch cuisine more and more on the world stage. With a focus on local produce recognised internationally for its quality, the Netherlands has fast become home to many top restaurants and Michelin-starred chefs.

These gems of culinary magic and invention are not just centred in one city or region but are dotted throughout the country. Additionally, many parts of the Netherlands have wonderful regional dishes and if you look across the twelve provinces of the country, the Dutch have it pretty much covered from A to Z.

Go west

Starting with the provinces in the west (North and South Holland and Zeeland), we find the most famous Dutch cheeses (e.g. Gouda and Edam) along with the freshest of seafood direct from the North Sea which make up delights like *Zeeuwse mosselen* (mussels) and Dutch haring (herring).

Out at sea

Moving away from the mainland, the stunning Wadden Islands (also called the Frisian Islands) offer up a glorious mix from craft beers and local honey on Texel, to smoked fish (mackerel and salmon) on Terschelling and sustainable fruit and vegetables on Schiermonikoog. What a wealth of high-quality produce from the largest tidal flats system in the world!

East end

Turning east and moving back inland, Flevoland, Gelderland, Overijssel and Utrecht host all things yummy. From the fruit and vegetable gardens of Flevoland to Gelderland's *stimpstamp* (mashed endive) and *speculaashart* (spiced cookies). From the various dairy products of Overijssel to the chocolate *domtorentjes* (chocolate bonbons) and *botersprits* (butter biscuits) of Utrecht.

Northern lights

Further north are the provinces of Drenthe and Groningen—regions known for their game meats and various types of dried sausage. There is also the *Drentse turf* (a type of cake) and a special mustard from Groningen to get your teeth into. And not forgetting Friesland which is famous for another staple of the Dutch diet, bread. The rye bread *Friesland Fries roggebrood* is known all across the Netherlands.

Down south

Heading south, Limburg and North Brabant are the regions known for their vineyards (the vineyards of Maastricht being some of the oldest in the country), *Limburgse vlaai* (pie), pastries—the *moorkop* (a type of profiterole) being particularly popular, *blanche dael* coffee, the *Brabantse* sausage roll and asparagus!



PHOTO: ALPER ÇUĞUN

Asparagus is a pretty big thing in the southern provinces and even though the season only lasts about two months each year, white asparagus from Limburg and North Brabant is world famous and is lovingly referred to as “white gold” by the Dutch.

Lekker Nederland

Back in 2014, Oxfam's “Good Enough to Eat” index already saw potential in the Dutch approach to food and ranked the Netherlands as the number one country in the world for having the most plentiful, affordable, and nutritious diet. It seems they were spot on! Over the past year and a half, many individuals have realised that the more important things in life are the simple ones, particularly when it comes to food. There is a renewed hunger for fresh and sustainable produce, regional ingredients, and the desire to ‘support local’.

So why not join the growing trend and grab a spoon because *lekker Nederland* has all you need! «

Did you know...
The Kapsalon came about when a hair salon in Rotterdam asked a cafe to make an all-in-one dish with their favourite ingredients (French fries, shoarma and Gouda) mixed-together and topped with salad and a garlic sauce!

About the author

Tracey Taylor lives in Maastricht with Dave and their cat, Little Tubbs. Tracey is Irish and an aspiring photographer. She also writes a blog and hosts a weekly expat talk show.
[@traceytaylor_nl](#) | [@taylormade.theblog](#) | [@littletubbs_thecat](#) | [@themaastrichtedition](#)



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1

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2

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3

Reduce stress

Exercise is one of the best ways to reduce symptoms of stress. Not only does exercise release endorphins in the brain, but it focuses the mind on the task at hand, allowing children to relax and forget about worries and pressures.

4

Improve sleep

Sleep is known to reduce stress and anxiety, improve our mood and boost our ability to concentrate. One of the best ways children can get the sleep they need is by tiring out their bodies in physical education classes and sport.

5

Develop team and leadership skills

Teamwork is a vital skill in the working world, and sport is often the earliest exposure children have to it. As they develop, they may also be exposed to leadership positions, such as Team Captain. Decision making is key to being a good leader and sport is an excellent channel for improving this skill.

6

Instil patience, discipline and perseverance

Failure is an undervalued part of sport. It takes perseverance and hard work to succeed in life, and sport is one of the best channels to display these virtues. Perseverance and a never-give-up attitude will be needed to succeed in all walks of life.

**Through sport,
children learn that hard
work pays off**

To see how Nord Anglia International School Rotterdam harnesses the benefits of physical education and sport to nurture your child, visit our school's website naisr.nl <

People helping people

BY ABBIE MARSH
PUMAREJO

Why volunteer? According to *volunteeringsolutions.com* the number one reason you should consider volunteering is because you are needed.

No work is small, and volunteers are extremely valuable resources for an organisation. Whether it's about financial, mental or physical contribution—everything together matters a lot. Volunteers have the chance to get directly involved in noble work, serving those who need your care and affection.

I have always volunteered because the return on my investment of time and talents has been a positive reinforcement in my life in so many ways. I've met amazing people, learned new skills, visited interesting and diverse communities to name a few. I remember as a pre-teen I was admitted to a programme for Candy Strippers (hospital volunteers) at a hospital in my town. I was thrilled. Being a Candy Stripper so long ago paved the way for me to seek volunteer opportunities in every country we have lived in.

Great to volunteer

Sytske Geertsma is an Advisor for PEP Den Haag, the city she has called home since 2011, and advises civil organisations in The Hague on ways to recruit volunteers, how to better manage and how to create volunteer policies. Recently PEP Den Haag and the Municipality of The Hague created the campaign *Mensen Maken Den Haag* (People Make The Hague). This campaign is designed to shine a light on all 185,000 volunteers in the city. "By showing how great it is to volunteer, we hope others will join. During the year, the municipality and PEP Den Haag will create a monthly themed video and podcast," says Geertsma. For example, May's theme was 'Greener' with the spotlight on volunteers working in green roles.

Year of the volunteer

2021 has been designated as the *Nationaal Jaar Vrijwillige Inzet* (National Year of Voluntary Service). According to Geertsma, NOV (the Dutch platform for voluntary commitment) has decided that every »

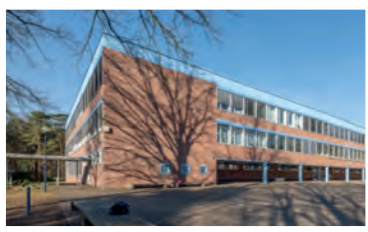


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10 years, volunteers need to be given extra attention. In 2001 it was the International Year of the Volunteer and in 2011 it was the European Year of the Volunteer. So, it was obvious that 2021 had to be the National Year of the Volunteer.

It's an appropriate time to acknowledge all the volunteers who make things possible throughout the country. "Without them a lot of things like festivals, activities and sports events could not be organised. In this year all volunteers are given the recognition they deserve and to show how rewarding and fun volunteering actually is," says Geertsma.

There are resources for internationals to find volunteer opportunities throughout the Netherlands—see sidebar for details. One such, Volunteer The Hague, is a platform specifically designed for the non-Dutch speaking population to find suitable volunteer opportunities. "It's truly heart-warming that so many internationals are part of the volunteer community in The Hague. They all come together through the platform. They also deserve recognition for their efforts."

This year volunteers are given the recognition they deserve

In the campaign, August will focus on culture, September on sports, October emancipation and November on healthcare. They focus on two organisations, and videos and podcasts will help to show others how much fun it is to volunteer and hopefully the organisations will get more applications and interest.

While it is still too early to see the results of this national campaign, the end goal is to see an increase in volunteers and opportunities from organisations. Geertsma says that regular Mix & Match events are organised and it's easy to connect with organisations that suit individual needs. She reminds us that through this platform, it is not necessary to speak Dutch.

Volunteer in the Netherlands

Check out the current videos here —pepdenhaag.nl
Volunteer The Hague volunteerthehague.nl
Mensen Maken Den Haag denhaagdoet.nl/mensenmakendenhaag
Vrijwilligers Centrale Amsterdam vca.nu
Volunteer opportunities in Utrecht nlcares.nl/en/utrecht
Volunteer work in Leiden deedmob.com
Discover volunteer work in the Netherlands volunteering.nl

Has she noticed if people are more eager to help out or more reticent after Covid-19? "During the lockdown lots of new volunteering energy popped up. People spontaneously started helping others and organising things. Also, people were looking for something to do outside of their homes."

"Unfortunately the more vulnerable volunteers were unable to volunteer due to Covid and still can't, and many regular volunteer jobs stopped all together due to the restrictions.

But overall, I think that the eagerness of people to help out and help others has been great during the last year. Hopefully people have learned how rewarding it is and will keep on volunteering."

Geertsma is hopeful that the more susceptible volunteers will soon be able to return to some kind of normal where everyone can join in again.

While *Mensen Maken Den Haag* (People Make The Hague) recognises all volunteers, the city also wants to feature internationals who volunteer, by including them in the videos and podcasts, to show the enormous variety in volunteering. «

About the author

Abbie Marsh Pumarejo is a writer and editor based in Europe, who enjoys travel, reading, entertaining and spending time at the beach in Spain.

Healthy is the best (out)fit



PHOTO: WIM VAN T'ENDE

Many of the most popular international blogs in the Netherlands give great pointers about outdoor activities, parks in Amsterdam, Dutch cycling culture and healthy tips.

BY SANDRA SILVA

International bloggers in the Netherlands

Blogs can be not only a great source of information about fitness, health and sports but also an inspiration when moving to a new country, by helping with integration and improving social life.

Start your own blog

Inspired to write about your international experience in the Netherlands, share discoveries and tips, or give support, laughs and friendship? Give a blog a go!

It can also be a way to meet like-minded people, create bridges and make new friends, highlight your own hidden talents or even find a new career in your adoptive land.



PHOTO: COEN VAN DE-BROEK

Amsterdam parks

Dana Marian, a Romanian writer and photographer, is the author of the photography and lifestyle blog *Amsterdamian*. Her article “Hiking in the Netherlands: The Amsterdamse Bos” is specially dedicated to those who enjoy hiking, or are just beginning and would like to do it in Amsterdam. Dana describes the Amsterdamse Bos as “a popular spot for outdoor activities for Amsterdammers of all ages” and as “a beautiful nature area that covers 1000 hectares and provides 4 to 15 kilometres walk in the forest, where you can admire plants, birds and animals,” as well as a place for other outdoor sport activities, like horseback riding, canoeing, cycling and swimming.

Dana also writes about other parks in Amsterdam such as the Vondelpark—where ice skating is very common in the winter, the Rembrandtpark—with its lakes, ponds and open fields, the Beatrixpark—a romantic and English style park with a kids pool, and the Westerpark—a must-see when the cherry trees are in full bloom in the spring. amsterdamaian.com

Biking in Amsterdam

Sean and Jessica, a couple from the United States, are currently based in Amsterdam and have been travelling around Europe. Their is dedicated to their expat life in the Netherlands, like the article “How to cycle in Amsterdam” that gives pointers for bicycle purchase, the different kind of bikes available, safety behaviour tips when cycling in the capital and how bikes are a mean of transportation for almost everything in the country. awanderlustforlife.com

No tourist blog

The blog’s unnamed author lived until 2019 in Amsterdam and is currently based in The Hague. While the “My Experience as a Cyclist in Amsterdam” article dates from 2014, it still reflects the blog’s tagline, “Real Life in Amsterdam”. The post focuses on the city’s infrastructure (from cycle paths to traffic lights for cyclists), drivers’ attitude, relation with pedestrians, bike thefts, bike market, and parking and bike repair costs. A series of bike decorations photos taken in Amsterdam called “How to Pimp my Bike” shows how the bike culture is such a significant part of Dutch society in general and in the life of the capital in particular. notourist.wordpress.com

Dutch cycling projects

Since February 2007, DJ and event planner Natasha Cloutier (aka Orangemaster) and tech-savvy Branko Collin are writing their well-known blog “24 Oranges”.

The Dutch project *De blauwe loper* (The Blue Carpet), the longest bike bridge in Europe, or the posts about the world’s biggest bike garage, located in Utrecht Central Station, also show how cycling is so important for Dutch society. 24oranges.nl

Food healthy choices to help those who suffer from gut dysbiosis

Tracey Ingram is a New Zealander living in Amsterdam. She suffers from gut dysbiosis, a near complete lack of beneficial intestinal flora. Tracy’s goal is to help others suffering from the same condition. As her gut has stabilised, Tracy has moved towards a way of eating that is whole-food oriented, seasonal, largely vegetarian and filled with fermented foods that feed good bacteria in the gut.

Her website/blog features breakfast, lunch and dinner recipes that have been helping her. However, as Tracy says, “this is just my experience and yours may be completely different; do find a health professional to guide you on your journey.” Tracy’s blog also has articles about female hormonal balance, restorative yoga and Ayurveda. cookingwithnothing.com

They are inspirational and help with integration and improving social lives

Dealing with fibromyalgia

Sarah Chetrit shares with her readers posts about the way she deals and fights fibromyalgia (a condition that causes widespread pain throughout the body, and can also cause sleep problems, fatigue and mental or emotional distress) like the “7 Personal Tips for Travelling with Fibromyalgia or Chronic Pain” and “My Home Tools Used for Fibromyalgia Pain Management”. Sarah also posts articles regarding dust allergies, lactose intolerance, collagen boosters, among other topics. fromlusttilldawn.com «

About the author

Sandra Silva, a Portuguese teacher and city guide living in Almere, is passionate about photography, travels, art, history and storytelling. Find more at her website sandrastours.nl and Instagram [@sandrastoursnl](https://www.instagram.com/sandrastoursnl)



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▲ Ages 3 – 18

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Strong school sports

By combining extracurriculars with academics, children and teens can benefit from higher self-esteem, be more productive and are likely to succeed at school. This is an essential offering from international schools in the Netherlands.

BY ABBIE MARSH
PUMAREJO

Small but committed

“Being active is an important part of our curriculum, it has a positive impact on the emotional wellbeing of children, giving self-confidence and self-esteem,” states Manon Blaxland, head of PR and Communications at [Optimist International School](#) (OIS).

OIS does not have large facilities on school grounds, or a specific athletic programme, so they make great use of their play yard with many games and play activities, utilise a gym hall next to the school and swimming is part of their curriculum.

“We partner with Team Sport Service Haarlemmermeer to provide after-school sport. Sport is a great way for children to learn lifelong skills and make new friends in a safe environment,” assures Blaxland.

OIS are part of the DIPS–Dutch International Primary Schools (subsidised by the Dutch government)—which might organise tournaments among international subsidised schools in the future.

Competition builds character

The [International School of The Hague](#) (ISH), according to Ian Ward, Co-Curricular Sports Director, “offers a pathway for sporting development from Year 7 to Year 13 in a wide range of individual and team sports.”

Competitive and recreational sport “play a key part in developing an ISH student’s potential. All students are welcome to get involved, and only need to be willing to commit to the training and event schedule.” ISH participates in competitions with local and European international schools and the senior teams’ season culminates in an International School Sports Tournament ([ISST](#)) against European teams.

Partnering with external basketball and hockey clubs in the local area extends ISH students’ opportunities year-round. “We plan to expand our club link programme to include rugby and swimming,” states Ward.

Something for every student

The [British School in the Netherlands](#) (BSN) is an international school with five campuses in and around The Hague. Tom Archer, Head of Co-Curricular Sports at the Senior School, Voorschoten Campus, notes that they are a founding member of the [International Schools Athletics Association](#) (ISAA)—including schools from across Europe and the Middle East—and host tournaments every year. »



PHOTO: PHILIPPA ROSE

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Education | Strong school sports

BSN students compete in an expanding selection of sports competitions. Additional activities include recreational, development and competitive teams such as fencing, table tennis and even rock climbing. Younger students, have Movement clubs including Little Kickers, playball and dancing. “From seven years old students can take part in team games, and join competitive teams,” says David Collins, Head of Physical Education (ages 3-18) at the Junior and Senior School, Leidschenveen. Students are encouraged to lead a healthy, active lifestyle and to get involved with sport clubs.

Liaising with local schools

Rotterdam International Secondary School's Clint Marshall, Curriculum Leader for Sports Science and Extra-Curricular Activities, says “for our extracurricular sports club programme there are no requirements, and all students can join the team of their choice.” They also play against local international schools in the neighbourhood, “in the yearly Dutch International Secondary School (DISS) sports event. Furthermore, we have developed an interschool sports competition between our group of six other schools, held three times a year.” Students must be up to date with course work and meet school requirements to represent the school in these competitions.

School spirit is contagious

At *Nord Anglia International School Rotterdam* (NAISR), the athletic programme coincides with the school philosophy. According to Kristen McLeod, Extra-Curricular Activities Coordinator, “it has been developed to meet the needs of and include all our students. Our sports activities range from the afterschool club for youngest students, through the Northwest European Council of International Schools (NECIS) Sports Council Team Programme.”

Students have two weeks to try out for their chosen sports, then they indicate if they want to continue on the team and coaches advise students their status. Students have to keep up with their academics when participating in the sports programme.



PHOTO: NIK SHULIAHIN

Learning cooperation and challenging oneself physically

NAISR also compete against teams across northwest Europe, participating in regular games and attending NECIS inter-school tournaments towards the end of the season.

Cooperation, handling disappointment and success, challenging oneself physically and developing mental fortitude are life skills we would desire for our children to develop during school years. See the centre spread of this issue for international schools, which besides taking their sports programmes seriously, also support ACCESS. «

About the author

Abbie Marsh Pumarejo is a writer and editor based in Europe, who enjoys travel, reading, entertaining and spending time at the beach in Spain.



Eurythmy at Waldorf schools

The name eurythmy means beautiful rhythm.



It is a form of movement that is based on rhythm, narrative or music, used in Waldorf schools to help the growing child develop physically in harmony with his/her mind.

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Movement in this way is believed to have a positive influence on the concentration skills of the young child or adult. As we move together as a group of classmates, eurythmy brings us together as a community at the same time that it strengthens us as individuals.

Movement in this way has a positive influence

Each of us holds our own position, yet we are moving together as many parts of a whole. We practise listening to the sounds of rhythm. This act of listening centres the child and holds their mind in place, all while keeping the body in movement.

Inspiring and joyful

We move in geometrical forms in response to the space surrounding us or inspired by our own choices. Through this, we coordinate head, heart, hands and feet, recognising the spirituality of our whole being.

Why is this spiritual? While practising eurythmy, we let go of fear and self-consciousness, and all that weighs us down in daily life. We touch base with the joyful frequencies that run through us, collectively and individually.

An act of discovery

Fear causes negativity or a sickness of sorts in the body, while the acknowledgement and enjoyment of our environment and relationships with all things living, makes us healthy. We become healthy individuals and on a broader level, members of our world and communities.

The children move amongst each other; as if in a game, they react to each other's movements and respond to each other's energies. It's an act of discovery—to ask the question, “What moves you? Me? Us?” we can go and look for answers. By finding answers to that question, a whole world appears to be filled with many surprises.

So, let's ask ourselves this question frequently and let ourselves be surprised with what we will find. «



Zwolle

a sweet surprise in the north-east

BY LYNETTE CROXFORD

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD CROXFORD

The charming town of Zwolle, capital of Overijssel province, is a pleasant surprise. Nestled in the north-east of the Netherlands, not far from Amsterdam and the beautiful lakes of the Veluwe, Zwolle sits in a prime spot for nature- and city-lovers alike. The residents are nicknamed the '*blauwevingers*'* (blue fingers).



City origins

The city dates back to the Middle Ages, but no exact date has been pinpointed. The name Zwolle came about as a variant of the Latin word *suolle*, meaning a high-lying area that stays dry during floods. But again, there is no complete agreement among historians. Zwolle is one of the Hansa cities, referring to the Hanseatic League formed in the Middle Ages to foster the expansion and protection of trade activities. The League eventually included more than 200 cities across northern Europe but became less important from the middle of the 15th century.

The city centre, the ancient heart of the city, is circled by the *Stadsgracht* (City Canal). Many bridges cross to the wider city area and out to the suburbs. The canal brings much activity with boats, stand-up paddling »

Kind of blue

*There are a number of known explanations for 'blue fingers' nickname. The most popular is that the city sold the its bells to arch-rivals Kampen, and grossly over-charged them. To spite the people of Zwolle, the 'Kampenaars' paid by producing wagons full of coins. Having to count that much coinage gave the counters 'blue fingers'. Hence the name.

and canoes. It's possible to rent a small boat known as a 'sloep' by the hour or sail around the canals on larger organised tour boats. Zwolle even has a city beach with sandy terraces and deck chairs to make the most of the sun.

Heritage

As you enter the city centre from the south you cross over the Sassenpoortenbrug (bridge). There you find the beautiful and ancient Sassenpoort city gate, well worth a visit. This gate was built in 1409 and is included in the list of [Top 100 Dutch Heritage sites](#).



At the base of the 75-metre-tall tower is an entrance to a winding spiral staircase leading to beautiful rooms showcasing a visual history of the area. Up another flight is a set of rooms, now used for weddings and events.





Friendly people and casual ambiance

Just a short walk away is the Museum de Fundatie, housed in the Paleis aan de Blijmarkt. A huge, Roman-like building with statuesque pillars and a grand façade it once served as the home of the Town Planning Department, and was converted into the museum in 2005 and renovated in 2012. Sitting on the roof is what looks like a giant light blue egg which has been tiled to lend a distinctive texture to the feature. Above the front entrance is an enormous octagonal window. And that's just the outside. The museum houses an astonishing array of over 11,000 breathtaking art pieces from masters such as Van Gogh and Picasso to Piet Mondrian and Isaac Israëls.

Striking

Closer to the centre is the *Peperbus* (Pepper Pot) tower. It's the bell tower of the Basilica 'Onze Lieve Vrouw Tenhemelopname' and stands out among the city centre buildings. Consisting of three rectangular sections, an octagonal lantern and a domed roof with copper fittings, the tower is something to behold. Inside the bell tower are a set of 47 bells

with the oldest dating back to 1484. These can be heard being rung at various times by one of the 18 volunteer bell ringers.

On the central square surrounded by activity you'll find St. Michael's Church. The origins of the church go back to 785 when the first church building was constructed on the site. Since then, it has undergone a number of transformations but still stands proudly in the heart of the city. Not far from the entrance is a striking, layered-glass sculpture by artist Herman Lamers, depicting the Archangel Michael, the patron saint of Zwolle.

Zwolle has many attractions, not least its atmosphere and café society. The many bars and restaurants lining the cobbled streets almost makes it feel like a mini-Amsterdam. There really is a restaurant to everyone's taste in this city. A big part of the city's charm stems from the friendly people and casual ambiance, and there is a welcoming atmosphere in even the smallest local taverns. «

About the author

Richard and Lynette Croxford were born in South Africa and moved to South Holland 10 years ago. They have two daughters and enjoy photography, running and exploring cities on foot.

Thank you for helping ACCESS

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We thank and acknowledge the following for their support and trust.

- City of Delft • European Medicines Agency (EMA)
- The Hague International Centre • Expat Centre Leiden
- IN Amsterdam • International Welcome Centre Utrecht Region
- Sapienza Consulting • TU Delft (Coming to Delft Services)

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- Toastmasters of The Hague • Veena Joseph • Volunteer The Hague • Women's Business Initiative International

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- Prijsvergelijken

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- Big Ben Kids • Johanne Bade • Kinderopvang 2SAMEN
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Healthcare

Another category which speaks for itself, and includes members of our ACCESS Trainers Network.

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Acknowledging our Partners, Counsellors, Trainers & Volunteer Managers
ACCESS is grateful for many things, not the least, the work of our strong and diverse volunteer community. They do the work – but the partners invest in us so that we are able to carry out our mission to serve the international community. Should you make use of them, do mention ACCESS referred you. Should you wish to help us serve the international community and include you in our acknowledgements, get in touch with prd@access-nl.org.

24 September, Friday

Welcome to Delft

Discover your new city, what to do and how we can help.

 access-nl.org/what-we-do/helpdesk/welcome-events

September/October

CSN Chats

The pandemic has been a challenge for many. Sign up for informal, informative online chats by the ACCESS Counselling Network on a variety of subjects relevant to your mental well-being.

 access-nl.org/counselling

September-December

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Recently relocated to the Netherlands? Curious about different relocation related topics ranging from finding a job to raising multi-lingual families? Employees and their significant others of our Patron Programme members are invited to regular online information & discussion sessions which can help. Is your employer a Patron? If not, recommend they become one and have them contact prd@access-nl.org for more information.

Looking for additional information?

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iamsterdam.com/en/our-network/in-amsterdam
- **Expat Centre Leiden**
expatcentreleiden.nl/en
- **The Hague International Centre**
thehagueinternationalcentre.nl
- **International Welcome Centre Utrecht Region**
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For additional information, please visit: access-nl.org

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Celebrations

The year ahead will be exciting for ACCESS. We celebrate 35 years of service and commitment to the international community. Since the Covid-19 period keeps us vigilant of our teams' health and well-being, as well as that of the community, organising an

event will be a challenge. Instead, we will take the months ahead to find innovative ways of commemorating our service, celebrating our past achievements, and exploring how we can continue to serve internationals making their home in the Netherlands.

Keep eyes on our social media and website for updates and stories. And, if we have had the honour of helping you, take a moment to share your appreciation with our team: it means the world to us.

Community & Media Partners

Our community partner groups and initiatives are listed below for additional support and information. Looking for something else, missing your community?

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