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Nursing and vacation work in Estonia

I am a trained nurse and have worked in education related to nursing for many years in Scotland which is my home.

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My vocation to Opus Dei adds opportunity, or maybe the stronger impulse to go further than just my professional dedication to nursing and teaching, and carry out other projects in vacation time which

continue on from my professional work as a nurse.

For seven consecutive years in the summer recess at University I have taken groups of students from both Scotland and England to Estonia with me to give them the opportunity to work in a hospice tending the sick and helping them in their basic needs for daily living.

The students are not all necessarily medical students, but they are bright, generous and good, and have the wonderful adventurous spirit which is so proper and refreshing in young people. One of the students who had never done this sort of work before commented “We came to give ourselves – time, energy and enthusiasm - and help in some way, but we have received so much in return”.

We later diversified and ran simultaneous projects working in the

hospice and helping to run a summer camp for girls. The Summer Camps were a great youth exchange of culture and fun, we produced our own Harry Potter plays, did great adventure excursions and lots of sports. We also got to visit Finland and St Petersburg, which we really loved.

As the years passed and the country began to develop itself more after the Soviets left, we encouraged the young Estonians to visit the sick and to prepare some entertainment for them. This was a new venture for most of them and helped them to give to others in a different way which they found extremely rewarding.

I certainly found trips with the students and the interaction with the Estonians a fantastic and worthwhile experience. I'll tell you about Africa another time!

Christine Gowney

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