

Jane's Borneo Blog

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Hi! I'm Jane Callaghan from Killarney, Ireland. I studied English Literature, but somehow found myself working in an office. My income was fairly good, but I wasn't satisfied. I had long working hours and my job was stressful. One day, I had enough so I made the decision to take a career break and do something I would enjoy. That's when I learned about the volunteer programs in Borneo, and I was willing to try. So here I am, in Borneo, trying to make a difference in the lives of these people as a volunteer teacher. So far, it's been rewarding, and I've made plenty of friends along the way! If you wish to sponsor me, you should subscribe to this blog.



At last, I got an Internet connection and I can write about my experience in Tawau, where I'm teaching English to 24 local teens. They must have really needed me at the school here because, as soon as I got off the bumpy bus from Kota Kinabalu, the principal put me in a classroom! "You can't be serious," I said to him, but he was.

After a sleepless night on a crowded bus, teaching was the last thing on my mind, but I made an effort to do my best. In return, the students immediately made me feel at home. "Welcome, Miss Janel You are our family now," they sang together. You should have seen the smiles on their faces. They made me feel so important!

When they greeted me into their "family," they sure meant it! We are all one big family here as we study, cook, eat, clean, play sports and share happy moments together even when not in school. Also, because we interact in English, they're benefiting even more. These young cheerful teens are great teachers as well as enthusiastic students. They are always so eager to teach me about their culture and customs.



Being in a classroom with students who are so motivated to learn is a wonderful experience. It's not all work, work, work, though. A few days ago, the principal encouraged me to take a trip to Sepilok Orangutan Sanctuary. I was delighted! Orangutans are fascinating creatures, and I was allowed to feed a baby orangutan!

My first two weeks in Tawau have passed by quickly, and I'm sure the next three will fly by. I really shouldn't have arranged to leave so soon. I'm going to try to make the most of my short stay, but when I leave, I'm going to miss the school, the students, the other teachers, and the wonderful sounds of the mynah birds singing when the sun rises in the morning. I still don't know my plans for next year, so hopefully I may be able to come back again soon.

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B. Read the blog quickly. What is the purpose of the text?

- a. To inform people about Borneo and its people.
- b. To encourage people to visit Borneo.
- c. To explain what it's like to be a volunteer in Borneo.
- d. To advise people who are planning to travel to Borneo.

C. Read again and answer the questions. Choose a, b or c.

1. Why did Jane decide to volunteer?
 - a. To get teaching experience.
 - b. To make money from a blog.
 - c. To help people in need.
2. Why did Jane feel that they must have really needed her at the school?
 - a. The principal didn't waste time putting her in a class.
 - b. They welcomed her so cheerfully into their "family."
 - c. They made her come on an overnight bus in a hurry.
3. Why does Jane feel that the school is a "family"?
 - a. She lives with some of the students.
 - b. Everybody is always happy together, like a "family."
 - c. Apart from teaching, teachers take part in other daily activities.

- 4. What does Jane think of her trip to the sanctuary?**
 - a. It can't be compared to her teaching experience.**
 - b. It was fun and enjoyable.**
 - c. Both of the above.**
- 5. How long will Jane's stay in Tawau last?**
 - a. Two weeks.**
 - b. Three weeks.**
 - c. Five weeks.**
- 6. What is true about Jane?**
 - a. She regrets not staying longer.**
 - b. She's planning to participate in another volunteer program.**
 - c. She has to leave earlier than planned.**