

Oxygen



**Giving young people the opportunity to discover and follow Jesus
Through: serving, building relationships and learning to rely on God.**

MIND THE GAP Mortlake WORKER

ONE YEAR THAT COULD CHANGE YOUR LIFE

"I prayed and asked God to reach
out to young people outside my church,
His response.....I will if you will"



Youth for Christ taking good news relevantly to every young person in the royal borough of Kingston




We live in an increasingly globalised, multi cultural world and nowhere is that more evident than here in one of the worlds great and historic cities, London England, a city where over 300 languages are spoken, where more than 25% of the population are under 18 years of age, of which just under half are non white.

Just as the world is coming to London to live, work and play we too at Oxygen, Kingston YFC are looking to do the same. Each year we seek to bring together local, national and international volunteers into a team that can serve, build relationships and rely on God both together and with the young people we work with.

Through this scheme, we call Mind the Gap we offer people a chance to respond to Jesus instruction to be involved in the work of the Kingdom. Mind the Gap is not about people coming to serve us, but more about us going on a journey together to discover what God's will is for ourselves and the young people that we meet. As team leader my hope is that through Oxygen and Mind the GAP both young people and workers draw closer to God and to each other.

So if you are wanting to find out God's plan and pattern for your life, if you love God and love young people and are willing to travel to another place and culture that will challenge, train and support you through something that will affect you not only for a year but for the rest of your life then read on and maybe we will see you at Oxygen in the near future!

Shalom

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the name.

Rich, Oxygen Team Leader

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Why London, why Oxygen

To best understand our own culture, attitudes and behaviour we need to be able to step outside our daily experiences and work somewhere where we are exposed to a different way of working and a living.

London as a city holds many attractions, as one of the world's most historic cities, working in London provides a unique cultural, historical and practical opportunity. Situated in South West London, Kingston has a history that dates back over 1,000 years. It was in Kingston that the ancient Kings of England were crowned and within a few miles of the Oxygen office is Hampton Court the palace of the Kings and Queens of England for many centuries.

By coming to London and Kingston you will have a chance to explore and appreciate the culture and historicity of the city, but you will also gain an exciting opportunity to engage in mission in a secular and post modern culture, where over 95% of young people are not involved in church. You will be able to deepen your relationship with God, explore and use your skills and have chances to test and develop skills that you didn't know you had! Our prayer is that returning home after your time in Oxygen, Kingston and London you will find yourself better equipped for a missional lifestyle, challenged to a deeper relationship with God and given a real hunger for seeing change in your home country.

So if you are willing to step outside your comfort zone, willing to test and stretch yourself and deepen your relationship and understanding of God then read on!

What is Oxygen

Oxygen was established in 2001 when 20 churches across Kingston Borough, South West London came together with the support of the local youth service and Youth for Christ to establish a work whose vision was to give young people in that area the opportunity to discover and follow Jesus. Since that time Oxygen and its workers have been hard at work establishing relationships with some of the most difficult young people in the Borough. This has resulted in Oxygen being well established amongst the local young people as being a credible and reliable organisation.

What is the Mortlake Youth Project

The Mortlake Youth Project was launched in 2007 by the churches in that area who came together with the support of Oxygen to develop a new work. The plan is to use the Oxygen model of church, Christian, community partnership to develop a new work that both engages and reaches out to young people in Mortlake and East Sheen.

The work in its initial year was staffed by two gap year workers and now in 2008-9 it is to be staffed by one part time senior project worker and one full time Oxygen Gap Year Worker. The job of this small team of workers is to work at engaging with young people both inside and outside the church, as well as continuing to train, develop and encourage the church on what implications the youth ministry options are bringing.

Who are the Churches involved?

The Mortlake with East Sheen Team Ministry are all based in the Church of England parish that serves an area of South West London between the Thames and Richmond Park. The three churches work closely together to celebrate the Christian faith through worship, pastoral care, education,

community action and outreach. Much of our ministry is undertaken jointly, but each church also has its own distinctive contribution to make. The churches have a middle to high tradition of worship, as well as a strong emphasis on community and youth engagement. You can read more about the churches themselves at: www.mortlakeparish.org.uk

What is Mind the GAP scheme?

The MIND THE GAP scheme is not a year out scheme, but rather a testing and training ground for people who both love God and love young people. Through the opportunities that we offer ourselves and in partnership with other Mission in London agencies (see information below) we hope to be able to put together a team of local, national and international people who can work full time at being a mission community of faith in and around non Christian and non Church young people. As they do so we know that they will also grow individually exploring and understanding Gods calling and gifting for themselves as individuals, and thus start to understand some more of where God is directing and calling them in the future.

To achieve this each year we invite and request applications from people around the world who both love God and love young people. Ability is not important, what we look for is people are willing and wanting to be involved. We believe that God will equip us with what we need as we move through the year. For those wishing to draw in an international experience there is also the option to be involved in the Enc ounter option (see below) at the end of the year. Anyone can take a year to work with Oxygen, we are simply looking for people that both love God and love young people.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS FOR TAKING PART?

If you are joining this scheme from outside the UK **then you only need to find the cost of your flights and Visa**. Once here there are no costs for taking part; it is our desire to release people to serve God without them having to worry about where the money should come from.

To support you during your year we will place you in accommodation (which we cover the cost of) around Kingston (unless you live locally and wanted to stay at home) on top of which you will receive £250 per month that should cover your expenses such as food, phone and travel to and from Oxygen, etc. Finally you would also receive training from Youth for Christ and Mission and London as well as all expenses to cover the cost of your work with young people.

So that you can be a blessing to others following your time at Oxygen we will ask you during your year to undertake a couple of fundraising challenges so that the blessing that you have received working for Oxygen can be passed onto others in years to come.

Please contact us for more information on flight and visa costs.

WHEN DOES THE MIND THE GAP YEAR START AND FINISH?

Should you decide to take part for a full year then you would start in the first week of either September or January and then finish in the middle of July at a similar residential. During the year you will have 4 weeks holiday to take in addition to public holidays, as well as extra time over Christmas.

It is possible to join the MIND THE GAP scheme for less than a year, please speak to us to explore this option further.

Mind the Gap Year Elements

The Mind the Gap year is comprised of various elements that combine to ensure that your time working with Oxygen is wide ranging, challenging and fun.

HOW THE WEEK WORKS

Oxygen would take your week and split it into sessions (a session is a morning, afternoon or evening). Of those sessions we would give you:

- 5-6 sessions involved in face to face with young people including a role at the Sunday Church
- 2 in meetings with the rest of the GAP team and your Mentor
- 1 planning and preparation for your work
- 1-2 sessions a week in training programme

Your work would be split between a range of church and youth work activities and programmes, some of which would help you develop gifts and talents you already have whilst others will be there to challenge you to adapt to new environments.

MENTORING

Each person on the team has a mentor, someone who they can meet with to talk through the pressures and difficulties they face. As an international worker you will be allocated a mentor who will be able to help you reflect on your cross cultural reflections on how best to understand the UK, its young people and culture.

Just as you are mentored so we will ask you to consider mentoring. There are a number of young people who have come to faith through contact with Oxygen and are keen to grow and develop in that faith. We would

ask you to work alongside 1-2 of these young people as someone (training and advice will be provided) who can encourage, challenge and support them in their new found faith. Experience shows us that as you mentor someone else you are forced to think through issues of faith and life that you may never have considered before.

TRAINING

The MIND THE GAP year starts with a basic training period. This training covers a range of issues from child protection to detached youthwork and serves to provide a basic grounding in youthwork.

Once this basic training is completed you will continue to meet as a team at least 2 times per week. These meetings will be structured so as to build us closer to each other, closer to God and closer to the young people we work. These meeting times will involve: /

- **Bible & theology Study:** You will be involved in a weekly Bible and theology study that will include an overview of how and why the Bible was put together, an exploration of key biblical themes, in depth analysis of several books / texts. In addition this study will help you in developing tools for ongoing study and scriptural reflection.
- **Youthwork Skills:** Working with Oxygen will give you a chance to encounter work in a range of settings including after schools clubs, street work, youthclubs, church groups, big events, mentoring, etc. A weekly youthwork training study will encourage you to think about how you can best understand the work that you are undertaking as well as how you can maximise the opportunities you have with young people

MISSION IN LONDON

Oxygen is also one of the partner agencies involved in Mission in London, a new training and resourcing network aims to bring together people from across London who are involved in reaching out to their communities through a range of different schemes and projects. Through central training and social events, Mission in London hopes to generate a group of people and agencies engaged in work right across London who can support, challenge and have fun together.

It hoped that Mission in London can be used as a template for churches and community groups who wish to recruit, release and resource people to be involved in mission shaped lives in their community, not just for a week, but for their whole lives. Should you decide to be a part of the MIND THE GAP team next year then you will be the first part of that future and you will help shape and direct this scheme though it's first few years.

How to apply?

As you look to next year we would encourage you to spend time thinking about what you are looking to achieve during the forthcoming year as well as praying and asking God to guide and inspire you with his plans and purposes for you.

Then, if having prayed and read through this short booklet you are interested in joining Oxygen and the MIND THE GAP scheme then we would encourage you to complete an international MIND THE GAP Application form, which can be obtained from tel 020 8547 0566, email info@oxygen-online.org or via the Oxygen website www.oxygen-online.org/downloads

Once we have received your application we will then arrange a time to speak to you on the phone during which we will have a chat where you can ask us questions and we can also get a chance to get to know you a little better.

WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID ABOUT WORKING WITH OXYGEN

"If you are sitting there reading this and thinking about working with Oxygen I would say go for it. You have to be prepared to do things you will not be comfortable with, or feel scared about, but with a supportive team around you, and an almighty God there is no better opportunity. you will find new skills you didn't know you had, deepen your relationship with God, and be committed to sharing God's love and the message of Jesus with the young people around you."

"This year has changed my plan about future. I want to do similar thing like Oxygen in all my life from now on - If you haven't decided yet, just do it! You can help the kids and even yourself as well!!"

"Oxygen has changed my life I have developed, grown, tested and found myself working in ways I never thought possible before. I have grown in my relationship with God and found that youth work is bold, exciting and the thing I want to do for the rest of my life"