



## INFORMATION FOR RAPHAEL VOLUNTEERS

We look forward to welcoming you to Raphael and hope that this document will help you to get the most out of your time with us and answer some of the queries that you might have.

Please explore the Raphael website to get an understanding of our work across all key areas: special needs education, lifelong care and Outpatient department Clinic (OPD)

You will also find out more about our activities by following our social media channels:

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/raphaeldehradun/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/raphaelddn>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@raphaeldehradun>

### Volunteering at Raphael

Volunteers have played a key role in the life of Raphael throughout our history. They join us from across India – and the world – and bring invaluable skills and richness to our work.

You don't need special experience – just enthusiasm, kindness, an open mind and a willing pair of hands. And you will need to be aged 18 or over.

However, many of our volunteers do come to us with related professional experience. This could be in a wide range of areas including occupational therapy, physiotherapy, special needs teaching, fundraising, filmmaking and social media.

We benefit from the knowledge, energy and support that all volunteers bring. You will hopefully also benefit by learning from our teams and community.

For international volunteers visiting India for the first time, Raphael can help provide you with a rich introduction to the country, creating friendships and offering a deeper insight into life in India than is usually possible for most tourists.

The 23-acre Raphael grounds offer a wonderful retreat from the noisy city. It is surrounded by a Sal Forest to the east; the Himalayan foothills can be seen to the north and there are extensive gardens full of trees, flowers and wildlife.

We would recommend that first time Raphael volunteers spend a minimum of 4 weeks with us so that you can make the most of your experience. If it is your first-time volunteering with us, you may find a longer period of 10-12 weeks to be more rewarding.

All volunteers will be required to adhere to Raphael's Child Protection Policy.

If you have any specific access needs, please make sure you discuss them with us before confirming your stay.

### Induction

All volunteers will be introduced to Raphael's key staff and its activities over the first couple of days. You will then be placed to work in a class/ a project based on your preference and our needs.

All volunteers are part of our community. As such, you should behave and interact as you would in any other professional environment. Remember, too, that outside of the Raphael gates you will be perceived as ambassadors for the charity.

Information for Raphael volunteers,

We also ask you to be aware of cultural sensitivities. There are many online guides to culture and etiquette in India that we recommend that first-time visitors read. India is more conservative than much of the West and Dehradun is more so than Mumbai or Delhi. Cultural sensitivities are reflected in dress, language, and manners and when followed will help to ensure that your time with us is happy and harmonious.

### **Arriving at Raphael**

Please advise us of the date and time that you will be arriving in Dehradun. If you are arriving at Dehradun's Jolly Grant Airport, we can arrange a taxi pick-up (approx. cost Rs 1500).

The main office is open from 09.00- 16.30 Monday to Friday and from 09.00 – 13.00 on Saturday. If possible, please try to arrive at Raphael during these hours. Someone will be present to meet you and show you your room. If you arrive in the day, you will be able to meet the CEO, the Director Administration and the Public Relations Officer (PRO). If you have arrived late in the day, please come to the main office the next morning and we will guide you from thereon.

You will find Raphael to be a very friendly place and there will be lots of people around to help you find your way around the first few days!

International volunteers will need to bring their passport and Indian visa to the office so that we can complete the required Foreigners' Registration. Please carry a recent passport photograph.

### **Your work at Raphael**

The volunteers' typical working week is Monday to Friday 09.00 -16.00; Saturday 09.00 -12.30. We expect volunteers who are resident at Raphael to commit to working these hours. The students at the Day School finish at 15.00, but volunteers will stay on to help the teachers with preparations and also participate in post-class activities for residents that run later in the afternoon.

We will always try to ensure that we find work that you will find rewarding. However, flexibility is important as we need to ensure that we are using your support and skills where it will best benefit both you and Raphael.

Volunteers typically offer support to Raphael staff, students and residents in our special education departments. This could include the following:

- Supporting teachers in their classes at the early intervention/day care centre.
- Assisting at the vocational centre, helping students learn tasks such as food preparation, printing and candle production.
- Supporting Raphael staff with our older residents in lifelong care and engaging them in a range of activities.
- Assisting staff at the therapy centre, physiotherapy and speech and language therapy.
- Helping in preparations for major events and festivals such as Founders' Day, Sports Day and Diwali.
- Visiting the outreach programme.
- If you have professional skills (special education, occupational/ physio/ speech therapy, or interests in website maintenance, documentation, archiving, film-making etc), we will find work that is well suited to you.

Language and communication will not be a problem as almost everyone understands if not speaks English.

### **The Guest House**

Most of our volunteers stay in the on-site Guest House. There are 4 simple rooms, each with its own bathroom. There is a veranda/balcony with sitting area outside the rooms and Wi-Fi throughout the building. The Wi-Fi password is on the notice board in the dining room.

Each room comprises twin beds, wardrobe, bedside tables, desk, chairs and overhead fan. Furnishing is basic but adequate. Bathrooms comprise sink, western-style lavatory, shower. Hot water is obtained through the geyser. You will need to leave it on for 20 minutes to get a hot shower. Please remember not to leave the heater on all day and be careful not to touch electrical switches with wet hands. The bathroom floor is slippery when wet.

In most cases you will have your room to yourself. At busier times we might ask volunteers to share their room with another volunteer of the same sex. If you do not wish to share your room, please make this clear at the time you confirm your stay with us. Presently, the Guest House is not wheelchair accessible. There are 2 steps up to the ground floor rooms and a further 17 steps to the first-floor rooms.

A padlock and key will be provided for your room. Although the site is very safe, we advise that you keep your room locked when you're not inside.

Your bedroom and bathroom will be cleaned weekly on Monday mornings. If you require more regular cleaning, please let staff know.

New bed and bath linen will be supplied weekly on Monday mornings and left in the Guest House sitting room or on the verandas. Please leave your used bed linen (complete set) and towels on the veranda chairs. There is also a washing machine for you to use and you may prefer to wash your own linen.

The Guest House also has a sitting room/dining room (with TV) and attached kitchen (including toaster, kettle and microwave)

Three vegetarian meals a day are provided for volunteers. Typically, lunch and supper comprise north Indian staples such as dal, rice, vegetable, roti and yoghurt, though we try to vary the menu as much as possible. We are unable to cater to special dietary requirements. Should you want to have a western meal occasionally please discuss this with the cook.

Please try to be on time for meals. If you are likely to be late, please let the cook or one of your co-volunteers know so that something can be kept for you. If you are planning to eat elsewhere, please let the cook know in advance so that a meal isn't prepared for you.

Breakfast – 08.00 a.m

Lunch – 1.00 p.m -1.30 p.m

Supper – 19.00 p.m

Safe drinking water is readily available from the filter machine in the kitchen. Please don't drink the tap water!

Clothes can be dried on racks in the Guest House Garden or on the verandas. There is an iron and ironing board in the sitting/dining room. There is also a 'dhobi' who can do your washing and ironing for you and a nominal cost.

**Accommodation and meals at the Guest House are charged at a subsidised rate of Rs 600/- per day. Please settle your accounts every week. We cannot accept cards or foreign currency. The rate per day remains the same even if you don't eat some meals.**

## **Other key information**

### **Dogs**

Stray dogs are a part of life in India and we are not immune to them at Raphael. Expect to find dogs in the Raphael grounds and to hear them barking at night. Please don't feed or touch them.

### **Drugs and alcohol**

Raphael operates a zero tolerance to drugs policy. Anyone found using or in possession of drugs will be asked to leave immediately. Excessive drinking by volunteers on site is unacceptable.

### **Feedback**

Before you leave Raphael, please can you fill out one of our feedback forms. If there are things about your experience that you think we could improve, please let us know. It's also very useful to hear what you enjoyed, found rewarding or learned.

### **Gifts**

Please do not buy any equipment or resources without discussing with Raphael's CEO first. We are unable to reimburse the cost of any purchases that have not been previously agreed.

### **Guests**

Due to the importance of keeping the site safe and secure, please don't invite external guests to Raphael without prior agreement from the PR Officer and, if necessary, the CEO.

### **Meditation Centre**

There is a small Meditation Centre next to the Guest House. It is for use by anyone working at or visiting Raphael and is open during work hours and at weekends. Please feel free to use the Centre whenever it is open – for meditation, prayer, or just as a quiet space.

### **Mosquitoes**

If you are sitting outside from late afternoon in the warmer weather it is recommended that you cover up and use mosquito repellent. Plug-in mosquito repellent liquid vaporisers are provided in Guest House rooms.

### **Passports**

We suggest that you don't carry your passport around with you. For safety, it's best to leave it in your room or with the Raphael office.

### **Sickness**

Please let us know if you are feeling unwell – don't suffer in silence or put off speaking to us! We usually have a doctor on the premises during working hours and we will make sure that we look after you. There are details of a good local chemist in the 'Essentials' section below.

### **Social media**

We are always keen for volunteers to share their experiences of Raphael via social media – please tag us as it's a great way to help a wider range of people discover about our work. However, you need to ensure that posts adhere to our policies about showing students and residents. Generally, we are only able to endorse photos and videos of people in group activities – otherwise we would need to seek permissions from parents and guardians. If you are planning to share photos and/or videos, please can you discuss with the PR Officer first.

### **Staying away or out late**

If you are planning to be away from Raphael overnight, please send an email to the office - [raphaelcentre@gmail.com](mailto:raphaelcentre@gmail.com).

The gates to Raphael are locked at 22.00. If you plan to be back after this time, please let us know in advance otherwise it can involve waking someone up if your late return isn't planned!

## Telephones

Although there is good, reliable Wi-Fi in the Guest House, you may find it useful to get a SIM card for your stay in India. Obtaining them is sometimes easier said than done, but you are likely to need your passport for ID and a passport-style photo.

### What should I bring?

You are likely to find the following items useful. Many will be available to buy locally, but you may not get the brand you are used to at home.

- Plug adaptor. We recommend bringing an adaptor especially designed for 3-pin Indian sockets - they are more stable than the 'universal' international adaptors. Some of them also have USB connections that are particularly useful (these are hard to find in Dehradun).
- Reusable water bottle.
- Small torch (safer to use on the streets than a mobile phone torch).
- Flip-flops/sandals for wearing in your room/bathroom.
- Earplugs (the site is usually quiet, but some people are bothered by dogs barking at night).
- Folding umbrella (if you're here during the monsoon).
- Sunglasses.
- Sunscreen.
- Mosquito repellent (strong, deet-based repellents are hard to find locally).
- Diarrhoea-relief tablets and rehydration salts (just in case). And, at the opposite extreme, some people find constipation relief tablets useful.
- Your prescription medicines and a copy of your prescription.
- Photocopies of the main page of your passport; your Indian visa and your insurance policy. It's also worth carrying images of them on your phone.
- It's useful for non-Hindi speakers to learn some basic vocabulary. The Hindi-English Bilingual Visual Dictionary (DK, 2019) is good and fun.

## Clothing

We would recommend smart, loose casual clothing. Legs, shoulders and midribs should be covered. Shorts, short skirts and vests are not appropriate.

Late spring/summer (late March -June)

It is hot and dry – and gets hotter throughout the season.

Summer – monsoon season (June - September)

It's hot and humid during the monsoon season. Loose, lightweight breathable fabrics are recommended. It can also be very wet.

Autumn/winter (mid-November - mid-March)

There can be a marked difference between daytime and night-time temperatures. The key to staying both cool and warm is layering! In December – February it can get especially cold at night. Remember that most Indian buildings are designed to keep the heat out – not in! If you're here for the cold months we would recommend that you bring:

- Wool sweater/cardigan
- Fleece
- Down jacket or vest
- Warm pyjamas.

Woollen scarves, shawls, dupattas and hats are readily available to buy locally.

## Local shopping, eating, entertainment and travel

### Paying for things

Although India is more cash-based than most western countries, contactless payment is increasingly available in many places. Make sure that you have a card that doesn't charge you every time you make a payment. ATM machines are plentiful in Dehradun but not so in small villages.

Information for Raphael volunteers,

Try to keep a good range of smaller notes (Rs 100 and smaller) handy as autorickshaw drivers and some small shops/stalls often can't offer change for large denomination notes and do not take cards.

## ESSENTIALS CLOSE TO RAPHAEL

### **Hari Store**

11A Mohini Road.

A small shop with a large stock of provisions from food to toiletries to washing liquid. Good range of western brands. Closes at 1pm on Sundays.

### **Gracious Grocery**

45/15 Balbir Road.

Wide range of grocery items and household goods including cleaning equipment that you might find useful. Good selection of packaged spices and spice mixes.

### **State Bank of India ATM**

65/7 Mohini Road.

About 100 m past the Mohini Road bridge - when you're walking from Raphael it is on your right. Keep your eyes peeled as it is set back from the road and easy to miss.

### **Post Office**

Dalanwala Branch, Laxmi Road.

It's between Nemi and Chander Roads – look for the unpaved track next to the Directorate of Treasury, Pensions and Entitlement. You feel like you're stepping back in time. Closes at 17.30.

### **Kumar Sons - Chemist and Grocery Store**

1 Municipal Road (on corner with Eastern Canal Road).

WhatsApp/phone: +918057331000

This is a bit of a walk from Raphael, but comes recommended. Owner is friendly and speaks good English. Can advise regarding drugs to sort minor ailments. If you have a regular prescription and run out, he can dispense many of the more common prescription drugs. Ideally, bring your prescription with you.

## **Travel**

For travelling around Dehradun, you have a number of options:

1. Autorickshaw/auto. There is an auto stand on the Mohini Road bridge at the end of the Raphael driveway. Expect to pay Rs 100 for a single journey to the centre of town. Be prepared to negotiate. Sometimes drivers will request more than this. The price is roughly the same as Ola/Uber.
2. Shared Auto. These leave from the Mohini Road stand, through the shops beyond the Mohini Road bridge, and the fixed route finishes at Tehsil, which is near Paltan Bazaar, Dehradun's main market (you can ask the driver to stop anywhere along the route but the price remains the same – currently Rs 20).
3. Ola Cabs. Uber-like cab service widely used in India. We recommend downloading the app. A single fare from Raphael to the centre of town is approx. Rs150. You can also book autorickshaws. Drivers often have difficulty in finding the entrance to Raphael so you might find it easier to arrange pick-up from the end of Mohini Road bridge.
4. Uber. As above, but with fewer local drivers.

You can walk to/from the centre of Dehradun, but remember that the roads are designed for vehicles, not pedestrians – and drivers rarely give way to pedestrians. Pavements are only available in short stretches and can still be hazardous. If you are walking at night, make sure that you are easily visible and carry a torch (you may not wish to be carrying your mobile phone as a torch at night) – not all streets are fully lit. Torches are also useful for ensuring that you don't step in something unpleasant!

## **Shopping**

There is a vast range of shops in and around Dehradun. Previous volunteers' favourites have included:

### **Fabindia**

59 Rajpur Road. Also at Krishna Tower, Ballupur Road.

India-wide chain of quality traditional clothes (with strong contemporary designs and colours) for men, women and children as well as home furnishings.

Information for Raphael volunteers,

**The English Book Depot**

15 Rajpur Road.

The choice of bookshops in Dehradun is not great, but this is the best – and central. Also sells lovely hand-printed cards. There is a café at the front.

**Ellora's Melting Moments**

29 Rajpur Road.

Longstanding Dehradun institution selling biscuits (great for presents), cakes and takeaway snacks. The butter pista biscuits are recommended. There is a smaller branch a few doors down.

**Kumar Sweet Shop**

MDDA Complex, No R1, Rajpur Road (near Clock Tower) – look for the large, illuminated sign announcing 'Work, Food and Entertainment City'.

Another Dehradun institution, this is probably the best place to buy traditional Indian sweets (mithai).

**Kumar Stores**

33 Rajpur Road.

Small, but well stocked general store with food on lower ground floor and household goods on upper floors.

**Fresh N Easy**

Crossroad Mall, 1 Old Survey Road.

Probably the best grocery/household goods shop around. Upmarket western supermarket-style with reasonable prices. Also includes a wine/spirits shop and bakery. Good for foodie presents to take home.

**Himalayan Weavers**

Old Rajpur, Rajpur.

Excellent, high-quality scarves, shawls etc, hand spun and woven locally. Great for presents. The shop is an Uber/Ola ride north of Dehradun (approx. Rs 375), but it is in a spectacular location. Old Rajpur is fascinating with old buildings and some good cafes including those higher up the road like Café Marigold and La Pause (excellent coffee).

2 large malls have recently opened that can be useful if you're looking for more familiar brands of clothing and eating. Expect to pay similar prices for western brand shoes and clothes as you would at home.

**Pacific Mall**

Rajpur Road, Jakhan. Brands include: Asics, Adidas, Birkenstock, Calvin Klein, Gap, M&S Lingerie, Nike, Superdry, Burger King, Domino's, Subway, Taco Bell.

**Unison Centrio**

108/84, Rabindra Nath Tagore Marg – off New Cantonment Road. Brands include: Marks and Spencer, Levi's, French Connection, Skechers, Reebok, Guess, Samsonite, Domino's, McDonalds, KFC, Starbucks.

**Online**

If you're shopping online, make sure that you leave clear delivery instructions – drivers sometimes have difficulty finding Raphael.

**Cafes and Restaurants**

The range of eating options in Dehradun is huge. To get you started...

**Raazmaataaz Café**

5 Pritam Road. Relaxed and attractive outdoor garden seating (less interesting inside) and close to Raphael. Relatively expensive and not the greatest quality, but it can offer a laid-back bolt-hole - and it has Wi-Fi.

**Café Aahista**

Pritam Road (near junction with Acharya Narendra Dev Marg) - Also in walking distance from Raphael, we haven't tried this yet, but it's in a garden setting and appears to be worth exploring! Open 14.00 - 22.00.

**Coco Love**

Information for Raphael volunteers,

10 Chander Road. Good coffee in relaxing environment. Cakes are the sort with lots of buttercream/icing. Some savoury snacks, too. Has Wi-Fi.

#### **Yellow Marigold**

6 Cross Road. Café situated in small, chic shop. Good coffee and (quite expensive) pan-Asian food available. No Wi-Fi.

#### **L'Opera**

46 Eastern Canal Road. French bakery/patisserie for tea and cake.

#### **Sunset Kitchen Wine and Beer**

3 Old Survey Road. This relaxed friendly place is opposite Crossroads Mall and divided into two parts. The first floor is a café with big comfy chairs and an open-air relaxed atmosphere. Upstairs serves alcohol and a good range of Indian and western food.

#### **South Indian Vibes**

3 Astley Hall, Rajpur Road. Excellent, good value South Indian vegetarian restaurant.

#### **Kumar Vegetarian**

15B Rajpur Road (next to English Book Depot). Old school, largely north Indian veg menu. South Indian and Chinese options available, too.

#### **Cinema**

There are a large number of cinemas in Dehradun. You are most likely to find English language films at the PVR cinemas at the Unison Centrio and Pacific malls.

### **LOCAL PLACES TO VISIT**

#### **Mindrolling Monastery** aka Buddha Temple Complex

3 Buddha Temple Road, Clement Town, Dehradun. Vast, extraordinary Tibetan monastery complex featuring the world's tallest stupa.

#### **Tapkeshwar Mandir**

Tapkeshwar Road, Birpur, Dehradun. Atmospheric cave temple dedicated to Shiva on the banks of an attractive river.

#### **Guru Ram Rai Darbar Sahib**

Tilak Road, Jhanda Bazar, Dehradun. Historic gurudwara with remarkable murals. A tranquil, beautiful series of buildings and gardens not far from Paltan Bazaar.

#### **Mussoorie and Landour**

The hill stations offer spectacular views of the high Himalayas on a clear day. Mussoorie is now an extremely popular tourist destination and the centre of town can be very busy. If you want to get away from the crowds, a walk along Camel's Back Road is recommended – the Raj-era cemetery on a precipitous hillside is fascinating. Similarly, Happy Valley is good to visit with some spectacular views from the Buddha Temple/Dalai Hill. Happy Valley is where Tibetan refugees first settled in India. Neighbouring Landour is much more laid back than Mussoorie and gives a better sense of how life used to be lived in the hills. There are some great walks and a nature reserve nearby.

Getting there: bus; Ola/Uber (approx. Rs 2000 one way).

#### **Haridwar**

A major pilgrimage centre, Haridwar is one of the locations where the Kumbh Mela takes place – the largest gathering of people on earth. On a more modest level, thousands of pilgrims visit every day to pray and bathe in the Ganges. Arrive in the afternoon and stay for the arti (prayers/ritual) at dusk. It's spectacular and unforgettable.

Getting there: train; bus; Ola/Uber.

#### **Rishikesh**

A destination for pilgrims for centuries, the 'yoga capital of the world' achieved international fame after the Beatles stayed there in 1968. The town is beautifully situated on the banks of the Ganges and there are numerous ashrams, yoga and meditation centres.

Getting there: train; bus; Ola/Uber.

## **Raja Ji National Park**

Rajaji National Park is situated along the hills and foothills of Shivalik ranges in the Himalayan foothills and represent the Shivalik eco-system. Rajaji National Park of India spreads over an area of 820.42 sq km and is open to visitors only from Mid-November to Mid-June.

Combining three sanctuaries, namely Chilla, Motichur and Rajaji - Rajaji National Park is spread over the Pauri Garwal, Dehradun and Saharanpur districts of Uttarakhand. The picturesque beauty and rich biodiversity of the park serve as its major attractions for both nature lovers as well as wildlife enthusiasts.

Rajaji is home to avian species which are found in forested foothills and in open grassland. It's location in a transition zone between temperate western Himalaya and central Himalaya enhances the species diversity and consequently the viewing prospects. Rajaji's checklist has about 400 birds species and includes good birds like Greater Scaup, White-naped Woodpecker, Great Hornbill, Black-bellied Tern, Pallas's Fish Eagle, Northern Goshawk, Black-necked Stork, Yellow-billed Blue Magpie, Scaly Thrush, Snowy-browed Flycatcher, Rusty-flanked Treecreeper, Pale-footed Bush Warbler, Tytler's Leaf Warbler, Green Avadavat and Reed Bunting.

The staff at Raphael will help you if you need information on where to go and how to get there.

## **Raphael Staff**

There are over 120 people working at Raphael. Some of the key people you will get to know will include:

- Ms Priyo Lall, CEO.
- Lt Col (Rtd) Pasha Biswas, Director Administration
- Dr Anoop Kumar Dimri, Director Medical
- Ms Lata Chamoli, Director Education
- Ms. Megha Bisht, Principal
- Ms Surabhi Khanduri, Public Relations Officer.
- Mr Himanshu Sharma, Office Superintendent (Admin)
- Mr Sanjeev Sharma, Accounts Officer.

**Please fill the Volunteer Emergency Form on arrival at the admin office.**

**Please fill the feedback form before your final departure in the PRO's office.**