



#3 – Games for everyone

Nacer Zorgani: Hi, this is Nacer Zorgani, I work at Paris 2024 for the volunteer program. What is the volunteer program? What do the volunteers do? What is their role, what are their objectives? To answer these questions, to talk about the program, volunteer experience, meet me with those who have done, are doing and will do the Games. Welcome to “In the uniform of a volunteer”.

In the Uniform of a Volunteer is a podcast that aims to inform and introduce you to the program, tell you about the volunteer experience and describe the atmosphere of the Games, thanks to the volunteers. But who better to talk about it than volunteers? Well, today I have not one, not two, but four former volunteers who have come to describe experience. Accompanied, as usual, by a member of Paris 2024, in this case, one of the program managers. Thank you for being with us. Hello everyone!

All together: Hello!

Nacer Zorgani: First of all, I would like to turn to you, Julie Toussaint, thank you very much for being with us. You are the manager in charge of the identification and commitment of the volunteers program and the uniforms. This is a topic that we are going to talk about in the podcast but today I would like to ask you a first question for Paris 2024, what does it mean to be a volunteer?

Julie Toussaint: Being a volunteer is simply living the biggest sporting event in the world, which is in France only happens every 100 years. It's living an incredible collective emotion because we're going to welcome the whole planet, in France. Being a volunteer also means being the face of the Games, being an ambassador of the values of Olympism and Paralympism. To pass on all this transmits all of this to all the people who will come experience these Games with us. It also brings diversity to our territory. France is indeed rich of this diversity. We have in fact different profiles here with us today, whether they differ by age, obviously, or by the different passions that each person may have. We are all going to come together to experience these Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Nacer Zorgani: Thank you very much Julie for this description. And then I turn to you, Andromaque, Andromaque Galatopoulou, you were a volunteer in Athens, 2004, do you recognize yourself in this description of the volunteer that Julie has just given us?

Andromaque Galatopoulou: Yes, I can relate to that. I'm not particularly sporty, but I was very proud to be able to participate in a major sporting event. It's also a great pride to host the Games in your hometown, and it's been expected since 1996. So, when I turned 25 in 2004, it was really a great memory.

Nacer Zorgani: Thank you Andromaque. I would like now to turn to Jeremy White, thank you for being with us as well. You were a volunteer in Rio in 2016, an assistant to the Olympic and Paralympic family, and as a reminder, I invite those who are listening to us today to listen to the podcast with Eva Baldessin and Marine Petit dedicated to that Family. You were a volunteer for a certain Tony Estanguet. That's a big one! What brought you to participate?

Jeremy White: I do not want to exaggerate, but it was a great experience both on a human and professional level. First of all, on a human level, it allowed me to meet the family of assistants, some of whom I am still in contact with, seven years later. Some of them have become real friends. On a professional level, as I always wanted to work in the sport's world and having been passionate about it since I was a child, it allowed me to see an event of this size from the inside, to follow its players in their daily lives. Finally, it confirmed my idea of wanting to work in this sector.

Nacer Zorgani: If you had a definition of what it means to be a volunteer, what would it be?

Jeremy White : For me, in a word, being a volunteer is a commitment. You're about to give your time and energy to an event, so it requires a bit of sacrifice, but if you've done it previously, if you know what it means, if you've applied, it's because you want to do it, and that you will have the will to do it. Definitely, you must not hesitate to fully invest yourself as you will get a lot of pleasure from it.

Nacer Zorgani: Thank you very much Jeremy, you were talking about commitment, and I am now turning to talk to Jean-Jacques N'Ginn. Thank you for being with us! You are someone for whom commitment means something, because you have volunteering under your skin, I would like to say. Why do you like volunteering so much Jean-Jacques?

Jean-Jacques N'Ginn: Well, I was a volunteer for more than 20 years in an association in the town where I live and when I retired, not a long time ago, I swapped the sport club's volunteer uniform for the sport events' volunteer uniform.

Nacer Zorgani: You've had quite a few volunteer experiences. This is different, it's at home, it's in France, what does it inspire you?

Jean-Jacques N'Ginn: The Olympics are a dream for all of us. They are on our doorstep. I think it would be a mistake not to want to participate, at least as a volunteer. My sporting talents being what they are.

Nacer Zorgani: Thank you very much Jean Jacques, I now turn to Emeline Fraysse. Thank you for being with us. You were a volunteer in Rio 2016, assistant to the National Olympic and Paralympic Committee of Montenegro. Do you have an anecdote, an outstanding memory, something that marked you to share?

Emeline Fraysse: Yes, I think the best memory was to meet Rafaela Silva, a judoka from one of the most dangerous favelas in Brazil who became an Olympic champion in Rio 2016. Being able to exchange a few words with her was really important to me. It also shows that sport really does change lives.

Nacer Zorgani: It's not just a slogan indeed. And have you kept a sort of legacy/heritage, something special, 7 years later?

Emeline Fraysse: From a professional point of view, it confirmed that I really wanted to work in the world of sport and Olympism. So here I am today, I had the chance to join the staff of Paris 2024.

Nacer Zorgani: For two weeks and welcome, thank you very much. Julie, these stories, these testimonies, really inspire us. I hope that those who are listening to us want to do it, because personally, I want to be a volunteer. So what do I have to do to be a volunteer? Which behavior do I need to have to be a volunteer?

Julie Toussaint: It's having a positive state of mind because the volunteer will really be the face of the Games. They will be the first people we meet when we arrive for this incredible show. So we expect people who are motivated, people who are involved, people who want to participate actively in the smooth running of the Games and obviously to create this celebration that we will experience during the summer of 2024.

Nacer Zorgani: Julie, among those who are listening to us, there are certainly people who are very interested, who are already very committed, I guess. But there may also be people who don't feel concerned. What do we want to say to these people?

Julie Toussaint: I want to tell them... come! Jump into the deep end, come and join us and maybe test an adventure which is unique and which I think will be unforgettable. We have heard this through the experiences that have been shared today. It can bring you a lot of things, open doors for you. The program was designed to be accessible to a very wide range of people: people with disabilities, people from all over France, people who are perhaps far from employment, people who have not done any voluntary work before. It can also be people who have done voluntary work people from the cultural background, or just because they would like to join us. I would like to say to them, join us and finally take advantage-of this experience which, I am sure, will bring you a lot after this summer of 2024.

Nacer Zorgani: Very quickly, to conclude, in order to make those who are listening to us want to apply for the volunteers' program, I am going to ask you, not for a sentence, but for a word that comes to mind making our listeners want to apply?

Emeline Fraysse: Together!

Jean-Jacques: Come!

Andromaque: Pride!

Nacer Zorgani: Well, I would like to say: get involved to keep the memories together, come and you will be proud. Thank you very much to everyone for being with us. As for those who are listening to us, I will see you in March 2023 at the launch of the program and we hope that you will be just as motivated as our volunteers of the day, and that you will perhaps have, like them, many memories. Thank you very much for being with us and see you soon, friends.

All in favor: Thank you!