The Music Therapy Charity

26 Fitzroy Square

London

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2nd September 2018

Dear Music Therapy Charity trustees,

I am writing to thank you for your valuable £500 bursary which I used to help fund my third year university placement in Sabah, Borneo. This money covered my return flight and my first few nights of accommodation.

The placement provided an incredible opportunity for me, as a trainee, to experience working as a music therapist in a different culture. I found myself learning local songs to build connections with clients, and speaking basic Malay to aid communication with staff. My weekly timetable involved travelling around Sabah to work in seven different settings with individuals and groups. One morning a week I assisted my supervisor in a women’s shelter, and the rest of the week I ventured on my own to: a residential home for people with learning and physical disabilities, the paediatric wards of a hospital, a centre for children with special needs, a home for abandoned and vulnerable people, a clinic for people with dementia, and a clinic for people recovering from a stroke. This placement provided many more hours and a much wider variety of practical work than if I had stayed in the UK this year, and as such I am immensely grateful to have had this opportunity.

Thinking about the future, the experience has developed my confidence to work in a variety of settings and I hope it will open up many doors for my work in the music therapy profession. I also hope that my supportive UWE peers have been able to learn something about music therapy in different contexts and in a different culture from my presentations and general conversations with them about the placement. I am still processing the intense and immersive experience of living and providing music therapy in Borneo for three months, and I know that my understanding of the work will continue to grow as I continue to learn about music therapy.

The placement has both helped me develop my skills as a music therapist and increased awareness of music therapy amongst people living in Sabah. Some of these settings had never had music therapy before and some are now looking into having a local music therapist work with them. Hopefully the clients I worked with continue to hold something positive with them from their music therapy experience. Thank you so much for contributing to my placement in Borneo.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Morgan

Music therapy trainee at the University of the West of England