

Feel at home in The Hague

The International Community Fair 2008

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Feel at home in The Hague - International Community Fair - MUCH more than just information

This article, in my own voice as Project Manager for the Fair: Last year was my first year organising the event and though I felt I had seen all that was happening it was only while preparing this year's that I realised how much I had missed. While preparing the teaser for this year's website (www.FeelathomeinTheHague.com) I was somewhat miffed that I had missed the wine tasting last year! And even though I knew there was a sjoelbak (traditional Dutch game) – I do not recall actually seeing it.

What this proved to me is how activity based our event has become, and continues to be. The most obvious of the 'activity' oriented areas such as the Podium and the Children's Corner will be covered in other features. Today, a preview of what only some of our more than 180 participants will have on offer.

When I was informed that SwingAway (www.swingaway.nl) wanted to bring a golf simulator to the Fair and that this entailed the use of real golf balls – I held my breath. I am not (as you may surmise) a golfer, and all I could think of was ALL the glass in the Atrium, and all I wanted to say was, 'don't think so'. What I did not know, and golfers will, is that this can be done. You can hit a real ball in a simulator (and no matter how poorly you hit it), the ball will NOT go flying around. In fact you can do this AND receive an analysis of your swing. Amazing! So, whereas I may not have a chance to practice, sorry, develop my own golf swing, all golfers out there are invited to do so at the Feel at home in The Hague Fair on Sunday September 21st – from 11-5pm.

Another activity I am not wholly familiar with, I shamefully admit, is the inside of a fitness gym. However, in the interests of research – and the sad truth that I need to do something about my own fitness - I visited Active Club (www.activeclub.nl), one of the registered Fair participants. Ever wanted to know how old you actually are? Your date of birth may not be the most reliable indication. Active Club will have a body composition monitor available which, in taking several variables into consideration, can tell you how old your body is. Yes, not your actual age in years, but your age in terms of your fitness level. Do you dare? I did – and I am not telling! Active Club will also have a rowing machine (which I am grateful not to have had to test) and will be offering a month's free training to the person who rows in the fastest time the equivalent of 500m. Up for it?

Golfing and fitness are the two activities we know of, besides these rumour has it that FVB (www.fvbdeboer.nl) will offer a 'poffertjes' tasting; H&N Associates (www.hnassociates.nl) is raffling a good old fashion Dutch bicycle; Ortel Mobile (www.ortel.nl) has scratch cards for surprise goody bags and a FREE mobile phone; the massage corner of Hands at Work (www.handsatwork.nl) will be offering a variety of massages; Interdean (www.interdean.nl) will return with a sjoelbak and BMW, one of our Sponsors (www.bmw-den Haag.nl), will once more be bringing their own car simulators to test rather different skills. Added to these will be walking tours offered by Den Haag Greeters (www.denhaaggreeters.nl) at 12, 2 and 4pm. Greeters are residents of The Hague who volunteer their time to share with visitors their own pride and joy in the city. Each group will have a maximum of 6 people, so if you are interested in participating you can sign up via their website (citing that you will be at International Community Fair) or at their table on Sunday 21st.

Seriously, can you afford to miss this day out? On top of all the activities – and these are the only ones we are aware of (remember last year even I was surprised by a few) – you can also gather a tremendous amount of information about settling in and making this your new home – temporarily or not.

See you there, Deborah Valentine

