



**schappo**

Hats off to Everyday Heroes



The 38th schappo goes to

## «Centrepont Basel»

The volunteers at «Centrepont Basel» have been making an important contribution to integration for over 20 years. The large variety of courses and free-time activities on offer promotes the social cohesion of members from over 50 nations.

Some of the 130 «Centrepont Basel» volunteers: Francesca Incocciati, Marina Neuburger, John Baker.



«Home is not a place, home is a feeling!»

Herbert Grönemeyer (1956), German musician, singer and actor

## People from Italy, South Africa, Egypt, Ukraine and Switzerland sit around a table – under guidance they read and discuss a text in Baseldytsch. Yet another way of interpreting integration!

**Centrepoint promotes rapid integration by offering a variety of courses. These are complemented by information evenings, group outings and other activities. Broad engagement, also with Swiss members, fosters a sense of community.**

For over 20 years Centrepoint's volunteers have been offering a variety of courses and activities: coffee mornings, conversation groups, photography, cultural excursions and much more. Everything relies on volunteer work. New members are encouraged from the start to become volunteers and provide mutual support for other members.

«Centrepoint Basel» mainly addresses English-speaking residents in the region, irrespective of age, race, gender, nationality or income. Although English is the common language, for many members this is their first or even second foreign language. Centrepoint sees itself as a place where people can meet and make friends. Members appreciate its openness and the all-round support it gives – socially,

in the learning of a new language and in the mastering of everyday life in a new environment. Many of Centrepoint's members are Swiss nationals, who enjoy meeting people from all over the world and practising their English.

Locals and new residents of all ages, irrespective of education and language ability, contribute by volunteering. Of the around 950 members from over 50 nations, about 130 act as volunteers. Many work behind the scenes, ensuring the smooth running of a wide variety of activities and events, the maintenance of the library and the publishing of the members' newsletter Horizon.

«Centrepoint Basel» is an important partner in integration and a place where locals and foreign residents can meet. In a pleasant, open and comfortable environment, Centrepoint's volunteers contribute to the improvement of the quality of life in Basel – schappo.

Whether on a walk through the town, on the Baseldytch course or during a coffee morning – Centrepoint members want to learn about local culture and enjoy exchanging ideas with like-minded people.



## A successful, comprehensive offering.

«Centrepoint Basel» is a meeting point in Basel for English-speaking people of all nationalities. It is used by very different people. A large group of volunteers offers a wide variety of conversation and reading groups in different languages. In addition, a comprehensive program encompasses group meetings for various activities (e.g. music, walking and modeling), coffee mornings, drinks and nibbles, and art exhibitions. New residents from outside Switzerland find support and get information about culture and everyday life in Basel and Switzerland.

Centrepoint fosters the networking of English-speaking people with one another and with local residents, thus supporting integration in Basel. For this we say thank you and schappo

**Dr. Rahel Heeg**, Member of the schappo expert commission.

Concrete support for «Centrepoint Basel» by schappo will be given in the following areas:

- Improving the IT environment
- Coaching to provide better support to members and help with the work of the Board
- Public relations work



## Project Description

**Objective.** «Centrepoint Basel» is a meeting point for speakers of English and brings local residents together with people of all nationalities. Support is multi-faceted, whether in learning to speak German, in mastering everyday life in a new environment or in finding one's feet in Switzerland.

**Organization.** With its open attitude, the club has been addressing the needs of English speakers in Basel for 21 years – irrespective of age, race, gender, nationality and income.

**Origins.** Launched in 1996 as an international club with the name ESCCB (English Speaking Community Center Basel) with 30 members, it was a platform for information, social engagement and the fostering of friendships. At the time of the move to the Lohnhof in 1999 the name was changed to «Centrepoint Basel».

**Target groups.** «Centrepoint Basel» volunteers offer activities aimed at newcomers and established residents, including Swiss nationals. In addition to friendly get-togethers, its program includes a rich daily offering of language, handicraft, art and culture groups.

**Motivation.** Engagement with «Centrepoint Basel» allows volunteers to pursue a rewarding activity in which they share their knowledge and skills with others. Their efforts are recognized and greatly appreciated by fellow members.

**Results.** Currently 130 adults have volunteered to help on the Board, in the office and with the many events and activities. Unpaid, they give more than 16,000 hours of their time per year for the benefit of around 950 members.

**Financing.** «Centrepoint Basel» is financed primarily through membership subscriptions. Participation in the various activities and events is either free of charge or a small sum is levied to cover expenses.

**Future.** Targets for the future are stronger networking, recruitment of more members, support of volunteer initiatives and the extension of the existing offering.

The pillars of «Centrepoint Basel» are the 130 members who volunteer. They contribute with enthusiasm and élan in conversation, art and handicraft groups, organize guided tours and excursions, produce the members' newsletter Horizon, run the library and are active on the Board.



**«Centrepoint helped me to find  
my home away from home.»**

Winnie Philippe originates from Singapore, is a Centrepoint volunteer, has lived for many years in Basel and is now a Swiss national.



Kanton Basel-Stadt

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**schappo** acknowledges and supports social commitment in everyday life – in its creation and its realization. If you live and work in Canton Basel Stadt, you can also apply for a **schappo**. The criteria and aims are described in detail in the brochure or on [www.schappo.ch](http://www.schappo.ch).

An initiative of Canton Basel Stadt with the support of partners from business, the media and charitable institutions.

**schappo. Hats off to Everyday Heroes.**

Kanton Basel-Stadt  
Kantons- und Stadtentwicklung  
Marktplatz 30a, 4001 Basel  
Phone +41 61 267 91 31  
Mail [schappo@bs.ch](mailto:schappo@bs.ch)

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