

Celebrating Diversity

By Kathy Cross, ASSE Area Representative in Glendive, Montana, USA

For a year, I and a friend had been planning an International Community Dinner to recognize and celebrate cultures of the world. It was held October 1, 2015 in Glendive, Montana and the turnout was staggering!

Over 150 people attended including 17 exchange students placed in area communities from 14 different countries! Countries represented included Germany, Spain, Moldova, Italy, Thailand, France, Brazil, Armenia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Taiwan, Georgia, Norway, and Tajikistan. Students made dishes from their countries, and over 20 additional dishes were brought from the community highlighting their culture and family origins! Some of the tasty student dishes included torilla de patata, arroz con leche, gazpacho, spaghetti al la carbonara, fleischpflanzl, apfelkuchen, chec moldovenesc, flatbrød, pelamushi with walnuts, satsivi, borsch, kompot, deruny, tolma, bubble tea, boosk, crème brule, brie amuze, brigadeiro, tiramisu, lelse, plus many more!

Students expressed enthusiasm in both the opportunity to share about their home culture and the response from the community. Leyli (Lily) Tadevosyan (*FLEX Armenia) said, "My host family and I were super excited! It was difficult to find all the ingredients for my dish 'Tolma' but I did it and it was really fun

and exciting to make it. The diversity was awesome and the food was FANTASTIC! After the dinner the people from my host town of Beach, North Dakota, USA asked me when the next dinner would be!"

ASSE Exchange Student Anjana Allende Fernandez (Spain) made tortilla de patata, arroz con leche and gazpacho saying, "I really liked the different cultures and everyone was interested and willing to try new things!"

Andriana Malko, ASSE Exchange Student (*FLEX Ukraine) said, "I really loved the idea of the dinner. I was so happy to see people who wanted to know more about us and our countries! It was a great opportunity to share our experience with others and to let them know about our culture. It was really successful and people were so excited and asked for more recipes!"

The students also gave short presentations about their countries and many dressed in their national dress. The students mingled spending the evening visiting with many, many people!

All who were privileged to attend the gathering said it was a very fun, entertaining, and educational experience!

[Editor's Note: New families have asked Kathy for information about hosting for the future and Kathy is planning for a Spring Tea giving students and the community a second

opportunity to learn from each other! Kuddos to Kathy for such a creative way to bring the world's diversity to Eastern Montana and Western North Dakota, USA.]



Kathy Cross, ASSE Area Representative and Leyli (Lily) Tadevosyan, ASSE Exchange Student (*FLEX Armenia) celebrate diversity!

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ASSE Exchange Students from left to right are: Mattis Rivard (France), Anastasiya Rudenko (* FLEX Ukraine), Ana Turcanu (*FLEX Moldova), Ketevan Chanturia (*FLEX Georgia), Andriana Malko (*FLEX Ukraine), Wei Ni Ku (Taiwan), Erkinai Tilekbek kzy (*FLEX Kyrgyzstan), Leyli Tadevosyan (*FLEX Armenia), Canissara Kaewkrajai (Thailand), Anjana Allende Fernandez (Spain), Veronika Huebner (* CBYX Germany), Maria Mattamira (Italy), Matteo Viacava (Italy), Henrique Zanchet (Brazil), Berkant Babahan (Germany).

Not pictured is Kamilla Osipova (* FLEX Tajikistan) and Solveig Mohr (Norway)

Editor's Box

Many thanks to all of you who have contributed your wonderful articles and photographs. Without you, there would not be any ASSE News! Tell us about yourself and you may possibly find yourself highlighted in the next newsletter or posted on the ASSE or World Heritage Facebook page. Pictures are encouraged to be sent by email. Let us know the fun things you are doing as a student, host family or Area Representative.

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Until next edition,
 Mary Loving ASSE News Editor

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ASSE Photo Gallery

ASSE is very grateful to receive so many photos from around the ASSE and World Heritage world! Enjoy the following examples of all of the fun!



ASSE American CBYX (Congress Bundestag Youth Exchange) scholarship Exchange Students gathered in Washington D.C., August 3-5, 2015 prior to departing to Germany. During the preparation meetings, students visited the office of Senators / Representatives from their home state and district; visited and learned about the U.S. Supreme Court and National Monuments; met with U.S. Department of State CBYX Program Officers and had discussion sessions to prepare for the new cultural experience awaiting them in Germany.
ASSE American Congress Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX) scholarship students pause in front of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington D.C. USA



Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA ASSE Exchange Students were enthusiastic about their weekend visit to historic Mackinac Island. They rode bikes around the island stopping to see Arch Rock and the island school as well as walking to see the Grand Hotel and church on the island.

Left to right: Elene Dzabiradze (*FLEX Georgia), Anhelina Kulakivska (*FLEX Ukraine), Purim Santiphannarak (Thailand), Nino Gabelashvili (*FLEX Georgia), Mahina Abdullojonova (*FLEX Tajikistan), Julius Kerlin (Germany) Brooklyn Gustaf (ASSE host sister of Anhelina Kulakivska), Ines Alcon Saez (Spain), Audrey Henault (Quebec, Canada), Juliette Maury (France), Diana Abdimalikova (*FLEX Kyrgyzstan) and Madina Ismailova (*FLEX Kazakhstan).



ASSE Exchange Student Melissa Lauder from Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec, Canada spending her year in Castellon de la Plana Spain says, "I am always doing something during the weekend – meeting friends, visiting family, or going to the beach house. Andrea, my host sister and Sandra my host cousin and I went to Benicàssim to see the torero (bull fighting). The girls told me it is 'typical Spanish' and a very cool sport."
"In the photo my host sister Andrea on the left, host cousin Sandra and I carry on a family tradition photo pose."



ASSE Exchange Student Ayla Antón (Spain) spending her exchange year in Nokesville, Virginia, USA and Justine Venne (Quebec, Canada) living her exchange year in Alexandria, Virginia, USA visit Washington D.C. USA with their ASSE Area Representative Dinorah Isenberg.

Ayla Antón, ASSE Exchange Student (Spain) says "We had a lot of fun visiting Washington D.C., it was an special day with special people. This experience is awesome. Thank you ASSE, Dinorah and all the people that I'm meeting this year, you will always on my heart!!!"



ASSE Exchange Students Allure Brean, Prescott, Arizona, USA spending her exchange year in Civitavecchia Italy and Miriam Miyuki Yanagui Garcia from Cabo San Lucas, Mexico staying in Maddaloni, Italy

Miriam says, "We had a great time during the first days in Milano enjoying some gelato and visiting the 'Duomo', the beautiful cathedral of the 'bella' city!"



World Heritage Exchange Students joined Area Representatives Ann Johnson and Christine Burbach for an outing to Como Park Zoo in St. Paul, Minnesota, USA.

Students left to right:
Back Row: Gabriel Chau (Hong Kong), Alessia Haeckl (Germany) and host sister Willow, Hannah Ingrid (Germany), Gianmarco Tirelli (Italy), Eleonora Valioni (Italy), Elin Ronquist (Sweden), Diego Bonilla Salvador (Spain), Julien Caste (France), Coline Merlet (France), Bruna Faria (Brazil), Ondrej Rausa (Czech Republic)

Front Row: Enzo Beduz (France), Lissan Wittenberg (Germany), Maria Castaneda Perez (Mexico)



Ana Salazar Diaz Couder, ASSE Exchange Student (Mexico) and host sister Lindsay Boleen enjoy one of the 10,000 Minnesota lakes!

*FLEX – Future Leaders Exchange, U.S. State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs sponsored Exchange Student
*CBYX – Congress Bundestag Youth Exchange, U.S. State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs sponsored Exchange Student
*YES – Kennedy Lugar Youth Exchange and Study, U.S. State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs sponsored Exchange Student

Feeling So Lucky!

By Giulia Rossi, ASSE Exchange Student (Italy) spending her exchange year in Hurst, Texas, USA

I am Giulia Rossi and I am an ASSE Italian Exchange Student. I am living in Hurst, Texas, USA with the Weller family.

Before I arrived, my host family and I discussed their special needs daughter, Meagan who has an IQ of a 7 year old. I have had never been disturbed by this fact but of course I did not know what to expect.

Since I have arrived in Texas, I have had the opportunity to take part in volunteer programs, watch Rangers

games and assist in all the practices Meagan is doing. It is amazing to see how much energy is spent to involve people with special needs in different and several things, to make them feel equal and useful in this world.

I am building a strong relationship with Meagan and I feel blessed to take part in her life. She is giving me the opportunity to find out how awesome it is when people work hard just to make special needs kids happy and feel successful. I had fun raising money for her Special Olympics team and felt part of a very big family. We worked hard for the same goal

and we reached that goal together.

My exchange experience would never be the same without Meagan, her life is part of mine and I thank her for all the things I am learning from her.

It is not always easy as a busy life requires sacrifices but all the things my family has always been doing are worth it and I feel so lucky to take part of this.

ASSE Host Sister Meagan and ASSE Exchange Student Giulia Rossi (Italy)



Infectious & Fun Loving

By Brenda McNallan, ASSE Host Mom, Coon Rapids, Minnesota, USA



Rosalina Manata,
ASSE Exchange Student (France)
delights in a Minnesota adventure!

I am a teacher, and have been teaching for over 30 years. Much of that time I have taught teenagers. I have known and cared about so many young people over the years. Many of these students have overcome difficult situations and learned to cope and even thrive in our world.

Rosalinda Manata is a young woman from France whom I have been blessed to get to know and love. She had barely turned thirteen when she set her sights

on coming to the United States as an exchange student with ASSE. At this same time she began taking the subway from her school in Paris each day to her home. She loves to sing and run and she is very good at both of these activities. When she plays the piano, people stop to listen. She loves watching movies with me and going to new, beautiful places, commenting on how pretty it is in these Minnesota locations. Rosalinda is already so accomplished and independent and she is only fifteen. She is also blind. She lost her eyesight before she became a toddler.

Rosalinda is amazing, not because she is blind, but because of her adventurous, fun loving spirit that is infectious to all who are lucky enough to get to know her. She continually demonstrates an

insight that goes way beyond her years. Rosalinda pushes herself to learn and know so many things. Her English is excellent and it is her third language! She uses her electronic devices with ease and she almost begged me to show her how to clean the floor in her bedroom because she had never done that before. Now that is unusual behavior for a teenager!

I am so grateful that I get to be her American mother, to help guide her and to assist her in becoming the wonderful woman she is already destined to be. She is now a member of my family adding joy and a new perspective to me and to the lives of my family.

Thank you to all who helped make this experience happen for Rosalinda and myself. Our lives are forever changed as we live and learn together this school year

Hosting - Paying It Forward

By Marie-Claire Aubin, ASSE host sister living in
Notre-Dame de L'Île Perrot near Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Seven years ago, my parents Lynne and Yves Aubin did something which forever changed my life for the better. My parents told me that I was getting a sister, though my sister would be 17 years old, and come from another country; Italy to be precise. They told me that taking in a foreign exchange student would only be temporary, but we would try it out since I was an only child, and they wished me to be a bit more sociable.

The foreign exchange students filled up a part of my life that would never be

empty again and we became addicted. To this day, we have hosted 6 foreign exchange students and currently we are hosting a seventh student, Yeh Chueh Ching "Nini" (Taiwan). Our students have learned our language and culture and we do not regret taking in any of them!

Sure we have had our ups and downs, but that is normal in a family, which is what we have become; my parents, the foreign exchange students and I. They have taught me to be more a confident, friendly and cultured human being. Because of my

sisters, I have learned 6 foreign languages, become a world traveler, and will hopefully become an English teacher, so that I can pay it forward, and give others education about my culture and language.

Thank you to: ASSE, Cecilia (Italy), Sigrid (Austria), Teresa (Italy), Kate (Thailand), Laura (Mexico) and Rachele (Taiwan).



Yeh Chueh Ching 'Nini' ASSE Exchange Student
(Taiwan) and ASSE host sister
Marie-Claire Aubin enjoy 'sister' time!

Living the Dream

By Enver Kejeradze, ASSE FLEX Exchange Student (Georgia)
spending his exchange year in Ellsworth, Wisconsin, USA

Before I came to the USA, I investigated what other exchange students did during their exchange year and always liked how they played music at the football games. So when I arrived, I joined Ellsworth High School concert band. Because I have played piano for 9

years, they quickly involved me in the group of percussionists.

First, I tried Bass Drum. That was great experience, because I had never ever touched drums before. I learned how to read sheet music for drum. Then I tried the Marimba, which is closer to piano. We played at 4 volleyball and football matches. We played almost 10 compositions at every match and we sounded better and better each try.

I am in both concert band and jazz band. In concert band I play bass drums and marimba. In jazz band I play piano (keyboard). I enjoy it so much.

Besides music, I am a member of the stage crew moving the props between acts for the school drama club performing the musical "Grease" in November

I have been volunteering at the Pierce County History Association where I helped as a guide for a very old cabin and sorted old letters. I also volunteered for "Clean and Sweep" event, which was organized by Pierce County Recycling Center and helped to hand out pamphlets, collected boxes of medications from cars and gave it to other volunteers to sort.

I like the school spirit here and I like how people cheer the band at football and volleyball games. So far being in the band is the best experience I've ever had.



Enver Kejeradze, ASSE Exchange Student
(*FLEX Georgia) follows his exchange year dream
to play music at his American high school
football games.

Experiencing a Ton

By Julia Wallace, ASSE Exchange Student
(Raleigh, North Carolina, USA)
placed in Saint Vincent de Mercuze, France.

I have learned and experienced a ton already! The saying "the best way to learn a language is by fully immersing yourself" is 100% true.

I am living in a small town in the south east, not far from the border of Italy. I can even see Mont Blanc from my window on a clear day! One thing that is great about France is that the food never disappoints. My host parents are great cooks and I've learned how to make many different French meals and desserts.

Some of the highlights of my

exchange experience so far are going to visit different castles, hiking the Chartreuse mountain range, and visiting Grenoble. My favorite part about visiting all of these different places is thinking about how much history has been made there. It's so crazy that I have stood in the same place as many historical figures, such as Napoleon or Rousseau once stood!

I am so glad I decided to take this opportunity and I am already thinking about my next trip to France! :)



Julia Wallace, ASSE Exchange Student (Raleigh, North Carolina, USA) hikes the Chartreuse Mountains in her host country of France.

Thank You, ASSE!

By Suzanne and Larry Wangberg of Mosinee, Wisconsin, USA, ASSE Host Family 2014-15

On August 31, 2014 (Ked) Metakarn Raksanawes entered our lives. My wife and I knew as soon as we met Ked she wasn't just an exchange student, we instead just met our new daughter. Throughout Ked's stay with us there were many wonderful times and a lot of love shared, she accepted us as her 2nd family and we always introduced her as our daughter. To be honest there were times our cultures clashed but we always worked it out. My wife and I learned as much from Ked as she did from us. At the end of Ked's stay my wife and I were invited to Thailand by Ked's parents.

We jumped at the offer. My wife and I had only flown once before, but we had never been out of the country. June 13, 2015 we arrived in Bangkok, Thailand. Ked's family was so gracious and caring.

Ked's aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, and even friends came to meet us. Mr. and Mrs. Raksanawes took us to see many sites and towns. We tried all types of Thai food. My wife and I enjoyed every moment of our stay.

Sadly the day we had to depart arrived. Mr. Raksanawes accepted us into their family. What an honor! The hardest thing of hosting was trying to say goodbye. Ked and I refused. Ked said, "Goodbye means never see each other again, but we will, so see you soon" Through many hugs and tears, we made our way to security. I stopped and looked at my new family, Ked, Got (her brother), Mr. and Mrs. Raksanawes, and gave one last wave.

We still e-mail and 'skype'. Ked we miss and love you so much. Thank you ASSE. Without you we wouldn't have a daughter from Thailand, and this year a daughter from China, whom we love as well.



Left to right: Ked Raksanawes, ASSE Exchange Student 2014-15, Got (Ked's brother), Sue and Larry Wangberg, ASSE Host Family, Oud and Karn (Ked's parents).

One Year Makes A World Of Difference

By Laura Bussey, parent of John Henry Bussey, ASSE Exchange Student (California, USA)



John Henry Bussey, ASSE Exchange Student 2010-11 in Paris with his host family.

Fifteen years old, John Henry went to Lille, France in 2010 as an ASSE Exchange Student to live with the Duffosez family for the year. His only foreign language instruction was the year of Spanish he took during his freshman year. With four host brothers and sisters, John Henry enjoyed an active family life, learned to ski in the French Alps, went to Germany, England, Belgium and all over France.

The novelty had worn off in October as he understood too little of the language. But a few weeks later after Christmas,

something clicked and his language took off. By the end of the year, he sat for the French Baccalaureate.

Besides becoming fluent in French, an interest in global affairs and foreign language was ignited. John went on to receive a National Security Language Initiative for Youth Scholarship (NSLY-I) to study Hindi in India for the summer of 2013, the summer after he graduated from high school.

His sophomore year at McDaniel College in Maryland, he was awarded a Critical Language Scholarship to study in Malang, Indonesia summer of 2015. He lived with a local family, engaged in intensive language study for five

hours each weekday and studied Gamalan two afternoons a week. He then enrolled at the University of Indonesia outside Jakarta as an independent student in their BIPA (Bahasa Indonesia for non-native speakers) Program to continue his language study for the 2015/2016 academic year.

As a parent, we're extremely proud of all he has accomplished and have no doubt that that first step to France through ASSE has led to all his other adventures and accomplishments.

Best,
Laura Bussey

Wonderful and Unforgettable!

By Francesca Bacchin, ASSE Exchange Student (Udine, Italy) who spent her exchange year with the Gillman Family, Bellflower, California, USA and attended Brethren Christian High School.

Everything started at that right moment Saturday, August 23rd 2014 at 6.18 when my flight took off for the USA. At the beginning it was not easy. It is hard to build up a new life, to be integrated in a new family, to make friends and to communicate in a new language.

The first few months passed quickly and before I realized it, the family I got to know from a piece of paper became MY family. The school crowded by unknown people became a place full of fun, meals in the garden with some friends and lessons with classmates who pretended not to see me during the first days of school. Above all, the language which was

initially incomprehensible became easy, automatic and, in particular, mine.

What I got from this experience is indescribable. To be an exchange student has taught me so much and I am not just talking about the English language. I have learned new values that have changed me deeply; I have understood who I am and what kind of person I would like to be. It has taught me that eventually one can survive anything and become stronger. It has taught me that ten months seems like a second if you are in the right place. And above all it has taught me the real meaning of the word "family". Family is not just a blood issue. It is not important where you come from, which language you speak or who your parents are. It is important who

you are and what you can offer. I learned that family means sweetness, respect, confidence, tolerance and, most of all, love. In the USA I found a family who welcomed me. I have found a family in my schoolmates, who helped me during hard times. I have found a family in my teammates, where a team wins and loses together.

I would use two words to describe my experience: wonderful and unforgettable. To live ten months in another country has made me a mature, responsible and HAPPY person. Though I left the USA on June 17th 2015, I am quite sure my heart is still in Huntington Beach, California, USA.



Francesca Bacchin, ASSE Exchange Student (Italy) and her ASSE Host Family celebrate the end of a memorable year in Huntington Beach, California, USA



Düsseldorf :D

By Dana Baughman, ASSE CBYX Exchange Student (Oregon, USA)

ASSE American CBYX Students enjoying a photo op with Düsseldorf's iconic ":D" symbol at the Düsseldorf Rathaus (city hall) in Western Germany. As part of a group language camp assignment, this photo was taken to

create a German Wikipedia style entry about the city of Düsseldorf. The :D symbol refers to an emoticon of a big smiling face, yet also is the first letter of the city's name. The smiling :D contributes to a friendly image of Düsseldorf.

ASSE Exchange Students spending their CBYX scholarship exchange year in Germany left to right: Haley Rasmussen (Alaska, USA), Dana Baughman (Oregon, USA), Kieron Crossley (Washington, USA), Arynn Collins (Montana, USA), Alida Melsa (Washington, USA), Madison Wiczorek (South Dakota, USA) and in the 'D' sits Jonathan Gutmann (California, USA). Their smiles are just as big!