

A Great Big Thank You for an Unforgettable Experience

By Alice and Elle, ASSE Exchange Students from Italy and Finland. They finished their exchange year in Orange County, California.

“A heartfelt thank you from us. Our names are Alice, I’m from Italy and Elle, I’m from Finland, and we wanted to write this letter to thank the Communities of San Clemente and Laguna Niguel for all that you have given us in the past ten months. An exchange year is not just two students coming to America to study but it involves lots of other people who helped make this year the most magical for us.

So first, we would like to thank our extraordinary host family. Without Mike and Eve, what we accomplished this year would not have been possible; their extreme kindness and generosity gave us the opportunity to explore America and to do everything we could have ever imagined. From meeting their beautiful families in Chicago and here in California to

traveling to Hawaii and Las Vegas. Mike and Eve always made sure we had everything we needed and a little more, they always supported us in every possible way, and encouraged us to try new things while we were here. They have been a second family; two people we could talk to, confide in, and trust. We are forever grateful for you and everything you did for us!

Another thank you goes to our magnificent Dana Hills High School that embraced us in its classrooms and activities. We thank from the bottom of our hearts all our teachers that helped us give our best during this crazy, beautiful year. Our participation in sports and performing arts activities gave us the opportunity to gain a lot of experience and make lifetime friendships. We will forever cherish coming to school every morning

and feeling like dolphins! Also, thanks to Steve and the principal Mr. Baker, who welcomed us and every other student every morning before class. This united school spirit is what makes us proud, felt welcome, and never left us out from the community.

Last but not least, we would like to thank ASSE, the exchange organization that made it possible for us to come here and always gave us support through Diane Olesen, our local coordinator. In conclusion, we will carry these memories for a lifetime! -Ali and Elle with gratitude and love”



ASSE Exchange Students, Elle from Finland and Alice from Italy, posing with their new furry best friend

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ASSE Newsletter
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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.

Please send your best photograph and article to:
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Until next edition,
Sarah Shu ASSE News
Editor

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A Star in the Community

By ASSE FLEX Scholarship Student, Filip Rajpert from Poland, who spent his exchange year in Reno, Nevada



Filip Rajpert spent his exchange year volunteering for the Yerington Mason Valley Fire Department after his host mother introduced him to a volunteer firefighter. He always had a passion for firefighting and becoming an emergency responder as he loves to help people and give back to the community. Of course this was the perfect volunteer opportunity for him! Filip has over 600 volunteer hours and quickly warmed the hearts of everyone in his community.

Here is what Filip has said about his experience:

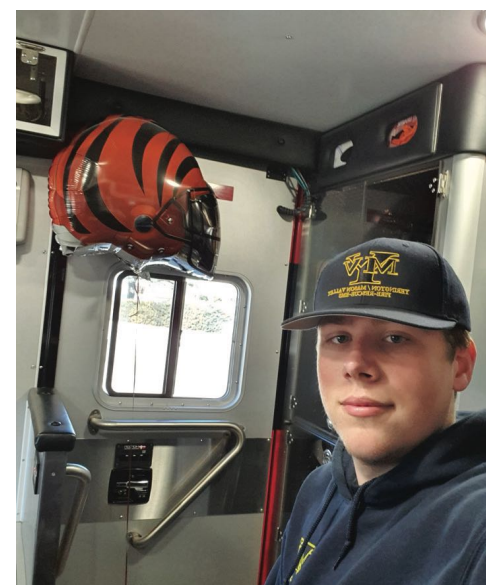
“As a member of the volunteer fire department, I’m responsible for station and vehicle maintenance.

Every day after school, I come to the station and help with minor repairs. On weekends, I do morning checks on vehicles - I monitor fluid levels and check radio connection between the station and dispatch. I also make sure that every piece of equipment is clean, operational, and in the right spot. I also actively participate in Fire and EMS trainings, which helps me to gain knowledge essential during emergency responding. I have completed several courses, including CPR for first responders and I am working on many more. Whenever I’m available, I also respond to emergencies as a third, additional ambulance crew

member (ride-along). There is always a need for an additional set of hands.

One of my best memories is the time when other members were teaching me how to cook typical American food, it was so much fun!

Volunteering at Yerington/Mason Valley Fire Department makes my experience in America unforgettable and it helped me to discover an amazing passion that quickly became an inseparable part of me. It also allows me to give back to my host community, where, because of volunteering I quickly became recognizable and appreciated by its members.”



Excursions for Our Students

By Karen Joseph, ASSE Area Representative in the East

In April, we enjoyed gathering students from all around Michigan for two special events! On April 13, we visited Michigan’s beautiful state capitol building. Our afternoon began with a special meeting with Grand Rapids area Representative, Rachel Hood. She led us onto the House floor and discussed legislating in the minority and what she works to accomplish. We enjoyed a tour of the Capitol building, learning about the history and architecture. Our day was wrapped up with a tour of the large Michigan History Museum.

Ten days later, 21 students enjoyed a weekend in Chicago with four ASSE area representatives! With our entertainment passes, we split into groups to visit three of the following wonderful attractions:

the Shedd Aquarium, the Museum of Science, and History, the Willis Tower SkyDeck, the Shoreline Chicago Architecture River Cruise, and a ride on the Centennial Wheel at Navy Pier. We enjoyed Chicago style pizza at the historic Pizzeria Due (sister restaurant to Uno’s Pizza) and were able to eat dinner in small groups in River North. While the big attractions are fun, nothing beats walking and riding public transportation around the city with friends to take it all in!

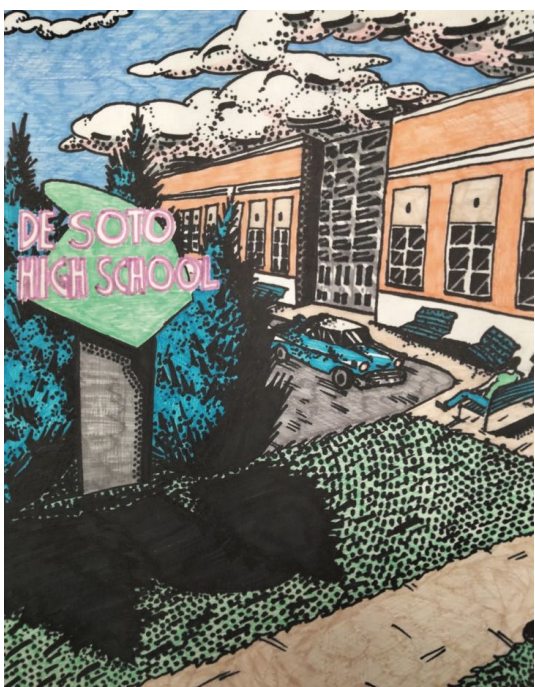


There are Artists Among Us

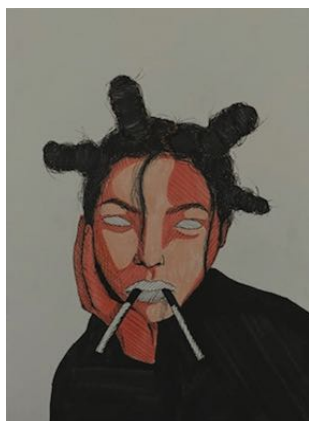
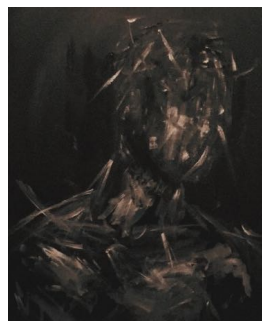
Introducing ASSE exchange students Fred Goncalves from Portugal and Enna Lehmusvuori from Finland! Enna created some beautiful artwork while she was doing her exchange year in the USA. Fred won an art contest at his school, DeSoto Missouri High School, so his art will be displayed in the yearbook for the graduating class of 2022.



Class of 2022 yearbook cover created by Fred Goncalves



Enna's Artwork



The Annual Berlin Meeting

By Lori Wichael, Germany CBYX Scholarship Director

Lori attended a meeting in Germany with American CBYX Scholarship Students where she got to welcome over 300+ American CBYX Scholarship Students and also reconnect with ASSE's German partner office, GIVE. She collected some useful advice from this year's outbound CBYX Scholarship Students for our incoming Fall CBYX Scholarship Students:

"Communicate often! Don't be shy to be direct and express how you feel! Make time to get to know them!"

"Get out of your comfort zone. Speak with others and make the first move!"

"You will probably have more freedom so enjoy it but also be respectful of your host family's rule and be responsible."

"Don't spend all of your money on food. Plan ahead so you have money for activities you want to do."

"Remember to be your own advocate within the host family and school."

"Learn how to utilize the public transportation if it is available when you are there!"

"Be eager to make friends but not overbearing. Trust that others will see for themselves how interesting you are on their own. Don't feel you need to force yourself on others or show off."

"It takes self-confidence and understanding to be successful."

"Try your best but don't stress to be perfect in your new school. Teachers appreciate the effort and don't care if you get perfect grades. You will eventually get to the point where you can answer a few questions and understand things so be proud of yourself and embrace the small improvements."

"Give your relationship with your host family time. Your local Area Representative will have good advice."

"Bring lots of small gifts you can give people you meet throughout the year."

A Heartwarming Note

By Bill Parker, ASSE Host Father to Mirijam Werner from Germany

In September 2021, we were blessed with the arrival of 17 year old Mirijam Werner, from Leipzig, Germany. Pamela and I both feel that after the first 7 months, we have been blessed beyond our expectations. Mirijam has been a joy and the entire experience has been more than we could have hoped for. During her time here, Mirijam has become our adopted daughter and has become a part of our family in just about every way.

We have traveled extensively and she has visited 9 different states on our family travels and vacations. She has been to Disney World, Universal

Studios, the John F. Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, FL, and toured the USS Alabama battleship. She has learned how to keep honey bees and is my beekeeping buddy. She completed the tour de Houston 60 mile bike ride, hiked the Sam Houston National Forest, participated in our family Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years, birthdays and other family celebrations. She has learned to cook some of our favorite Cajun recipes and has cooked us some traditional German dishes. She is a very intelligent, mature young lady, and has what we refer to as an "old soul".



ASSE Photo Gallery

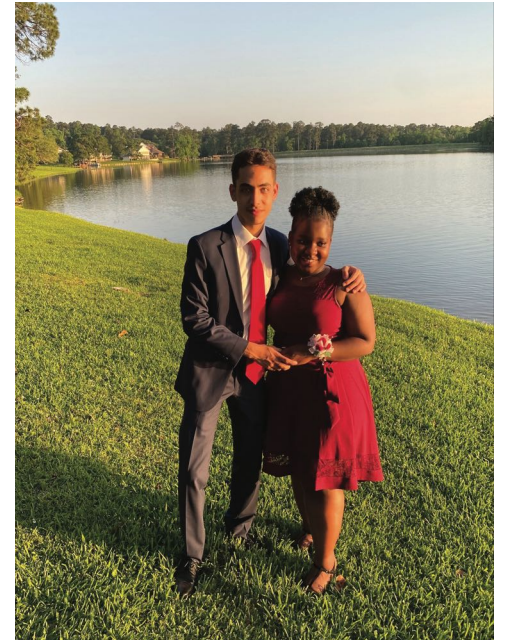
ASSE is very grateful to receive so many photos from around the ASSE and World Heritage world! Enjoy the following examples of all of the fun!



FLEX/YES Scholarship Students - Shoima Kholiknazarova from Tajikistan, Munisa Hasanova from Tajikistan, Paula Milakne from Latvia, and Haya Yahmid from Libya - meet with the California state assemblyman - Thurston Smith.



Annija Karkliniece from Latvia attending an awards banquet for tennis which she lettered.



YES Scholarship Students Yazan from Jordan and Praise from Tanzania have become the best of friends this year and went to prom together. "In America, high school students are a good example to the younger kids. It's made me want to be a better example when I go back to Tanzania," shares Praise. Yazan expresses, "Because of this year, I am more confident to try new things and face things alone."



Lena Siegfried from Germany has taken first place in Virginia in two statewide virtual business competitions sponsored by DECA. Lena created a supermarket in the first competition and an electronics store in the second. Marketing is her favorite class at Colonial Heights High School in Colonial Heights, Virginia.

Pictured: Lena, second from right, being recognized along with other students who won various statewide athletic and extracurricular honors.



ASSE Spanish Scholarship Student - Miriam Sanchez, FLEX Scholarship Student from Romania - Alexandra Codrea, and host sister - Lyric Hein posing for a photo at the Mackinaw Bridge after spring break trip there.



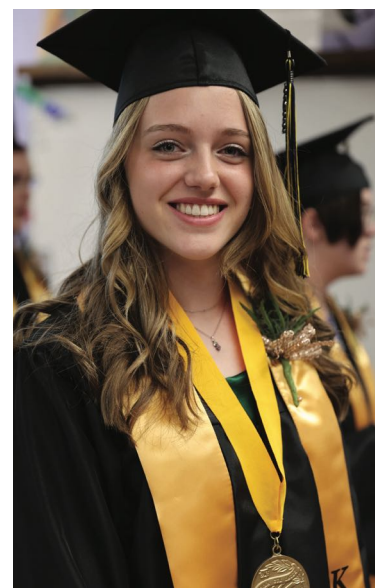
Mathilde Hervouet from France excelled in track and field this year and is taking so many medals with her back to France!



FLEX Scholarship Student, Irina Balan, from Moldova takes a photo with her track and field coach, Aaron David on her last day. Her teammates surprised her with a customized discus with all their names on it. She shares how it was the most thoughtful gift she has ever received.



FLEX Scholarship Student Ayana Madikhanova from Kazakhstan and FLEX CBYX Scholarship Student Marly Gross from Germany attending graduation at Keya Paha High School.



*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