

Sharing My Georgian Culture

By Ruzanna Yazhyan, ASSE Exchange Student (FLEX Georgia)
spending her exchange year in Sidney, Ohio USA

When one goes to a foreign country, one often starts to miss the food from the home country the most. That also happened to me.

There is a restaurant, named "Clancy's" in



ASSE Exchange Student Ruzanna 'Rose' Yazhyan (FLEX Georgia) with community supporter Mary Ann Olding. Mary Ann, an experienced world traveler and longtime supporter of international exchange welcomed the opportunity to experience Georgian food at the local Clancy's restaurant.

my host community. They serve an international meal every Wednesday, but they never had any food from Georgia. In fact, they had no idea about the country of Georgia.

I asked them if they could make something from Georgia and the response was "yes"! On the 1st of February Clancy's served the Georgian national food Ossetian chicken, green beans and tea cake

On that day, I volunteered in the restaurant to help serve the food. I also talked with people about my home land and my culture. They were pretty interested. Over 100 people tried a Georgian meal and learned about the Republic of Georgia!

I am proud to be from Georgia and for the opportunity to share my culture with other people. I like teaching Americans about my food, music, dance, and nature. It is my biggest goal to share my culture as much as possible. I am also encouraging people to come to my country, because it is an awesome place!



ASSE Exchange Student Ruzanna 'Rose' Yazhyan (FLEX Georgia) enjoyed the opportunity to serve national Georgian food to the restaurant guests.

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Fun in France

By Pablo Gudiño, ASSE Exchange Student (Queretaro, Mexico) placed in La Montagne, France

I am very happy in France!

When I started my year, it was difficult because of the language and of course I missed my family and my friends, but as the time passed I realized this big opportunity to learn French and make new friends. After being patient, now I am very happy with my all friends. I also looked for fun things like guitar and art classes to help stop missing my country and family.

New Year was magical because it snowed the whole day and I played with my family and my friends. I cooked Mexican food and my family cooked French food for dinner. It was fun to see how different our cultures are.

~ Pablo



Pablo Gudiño, ASSE Exchange Student (Queretaro, Mexico) and his French host family enjoying a magical, snowy day!

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

Shared Experiences

By Yun Ting "Sunny" Hsia,
ASSE Alumni Exchange Student (Taiwan)

ASSE Alumni Exchange Students Yun Ting "Sunny" Hsia (14-15 Taiwan) and Nodoka Saito (15-16 Japan) both lived with Lesley and Jason Roush in Ripley, West Virginia, USA in different years. The girls made contact when Nodoka decided to study in Taiwan. When the girls met, they enjoyed discovering shared experiences.



ASSE Alumni Exchange Students
Yun Ting "Sunny" Hsia (Taiwan)
and Nodoka Saito (Japan)

"I finally met Nodoka, the exchange student my host family hosted after I left. It was so neat that we got to talk about so many similar experiences we had. We shared the same American family, bedroom, some teachers and friends yet we never really knew each other. I'm glad we got this opportunity and hope that one day all of my host family's exchange students get to go back and visit them together!!"

~ Sunny

Extraordinary Norway!

By Jacob Hamelin, ASSE Exchange Student
(Rouyn Noranda, Quebec, Canada) hosted in Gan, Norway

Norwegian culture is extraordinary and sometimes a surprising culture. I am spending the best moments of my life. Since my arrival I have done a lot of things, especially in cross-country skiing. I had several training camps and one camp was in Sweden. I'm part of the cross-country ski team at my school and I race almost every weekend.

I also made a trip with my family to see the town of Røros. The town of Røros is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is Magical !!

I love my family. They are nice and look very much like me on certain points. I hope to keep a good relationship with them!

~ Jacob



Jacob Hamelin, ASSE Exchange Student (Rouyn Noranda, Quebec, Canada)
in Norway, competing in cross-country skiing

Making Friends in the Choir

By Solomiya Kubinska, ASSE/ WH Exchange Student
(FLEX Ukraine) spending her exchange year in
Tuscaloosa, Alabama, USA

I joined the school choir during my first week at school. I am really happy because I have found a lot of good friends in the choir.

I taught my choir the Ukrainian song, Carol of the Bells and they sang almost like Ukrainians! We performed it at three concerts together with a group of special needs children.

Our choir also had a great opportunity to visit Disney World and sing at the Disney Candlelight Procession. I learned 12 songs. Some were in French, German and Spanish. We sang with the famous American choir, Voices of Liberty and I was

dressed up in a candle costume. It was an amazing performance and we had a great time. I also rode my first roller coaster, took pictures with a lot of Disney princesses and visited animals from all over the world in Animal Kingdom.

I am so grateful for having an amazing host family who encouraged me to go to choir and my choir teacher who takes care of us and helps us to develop our talents. Thank you FLEX for this amazing opportunity!!! Exchange isn't a year in your life, it's a life in a year!

~ Solomiya



Solomiya Kubinska, ASSE/ WH Exchange Student
(FLEX Ukraine) spending the day at Disney World.

A Big & Beautiful World

By Maria Panainte, ASSE Exchange Student (FLEX Moldova)
spending her exchange year with the York Family in Manchester,
Maryland, USA

I've been extremely excited to discover a new world in the USA. I just love my host family and I'm very thankful for them always being there for me.

My classmates are very kind and they help me with some words or pronunciation. I'm always extremely excited to talk with others, giving them the chance to learn more about other nations, other people and their beliefs.

I learn something new every day. The refillable drink, drive-through everything and paying taxes at stores was interesting to learn. It took 3 months for me to realize that it was normal for a 'small' meal to be twice as big as my stomach.

On the other hand,

normal in Moldova are gates and fences around the houses and weddings that last all night. Everybody dances and eats until the morning.

The world is big and beautiful and we should discover it. Being open-minded to challenges brings a lot of fun, adventures, and memories.

~ Maria



Maria Panainte,
ASSE Exchange Student
(FLEX Moldova) shares
her sweet treats!
"My host mom and I have
fun making all kinds of
sweets together!"

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!



In the gusty winds of the North Dakotan 'wilderness', ASSE Exchange Student Charles Pain (France) pulled out his snowboard hoping to take advantage of a potential opportunity!

Host mom Cathy Rust said, "There is actually quite a steep slope even though the picture looks flat. The grass was tall and there wasn't enough snow but he wanted to try anyway. This was his first experience with North Dakota bitter winter wind chills."



ASSE Exchange students Luca D Amato (Italy) and Gabriela 'Gabi' Przybyla (FLEX Poland) and host parents Pamela and Tim Godlevsky are recognized at Scotland High School, Scotland, South Dakota, USA.

Gabi says her favorite activity is cheerleading. She also expressed, "I have never thought I could have another family or get to know how it is to love siblings! I would never dare to dream of such a lovely and wonderful family! Thank you for being who you are for me! Love you all so much."



Happy Chinese New Year from ASSE Exchange Student Yi Hsuan "Rebecca" Tsai (Taiwan) and her host parents Mary and Richard Drake from Massillon, Ohio, USA!

Host mom Mary Drake explains: "Traditionally, Lunar New Year foods include noodles, dumplings and some kind of meat. Rebecca and I prepared noodles/pasta, dumplings, and beef stir fry. Rebecca, wearing a traditional Chinese dress, received the customary "red envelope" with money that is given during Chinese New Year."

Rebecca said she asked her host parents to celebrate with her. "I have a great host parents that love me so much as I am their daughter, I'm not alone here."



ASSE Exchange Students Goncalo Silva (Portugal), Tiarna Church (Australia) and Daniel Kelly (Australia) pause by the Lone High School, Ione, Oregon, USA foreign exchange student board displaying 25 years of students welcomed from around the world!

ASSE Area Representative Cathy Halvorsen says, "Every basketball team that comes into this hallway and into the gym looks at the board. We hope the legacy will continue for at least another 25 years!"



The exchange experience begins!! ASSE Exchange Student Daisy Hall, (Eugene, Oregon USA) meets her new host sisters as she begins her semester in Unanderra, New South Wales, Australia.

Daisy's host mom says, "We love Daisy already. She is funny and sweet and has just walked in like she was always here."



ASSE Exchange Student Alexander Herzog (CBYX Germany), Kristy Weller, ASSE Area Representative, ASSE Exchange Student Arianna Polesel (Italy) and her host parents Ceara and David Barber find their inner artist. According to ASSE Area Representative, Kristy Weller, "they had a blast!"



ASSE Exchange Students explored the Nicodemus National Historic Site in Nicodemus, Kansas, USA. Nicodemus was founded in 1877 by former slaves from Kentucky and is one of the oldest and most famous Black towns on the western plains.

ASSE Exchange Students stand in front of the original church at the Nicodemus National Historic Site, Nicodemus, Kansas, USA. Andrei Muresan Radu (FAO Spain), Tetyana Humeyuk (FLEX Ukraine), Tatyana Khvan (FLEX Kazakhstan), Nikita Sadok (FLEX Ukraine), Kervennur Muradov (FLEX Turkmenistan), Sadie Ritter (host sister), Hunter Swanson (host brother).

*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

Missouri Inauguration Celebration!

By ASSE Host dad Doug Osborne, Jasper, Missouri USA

On January 9th 2017, ASSE Exchange Students Volodymyr Babenko (FLEX Ukraine), Shoinbek Shoinbekov (FLEX Tajikistan) and Ali Albahrani (YES Bahrain) attended the inauguration and gala of Missouri's new Governor Eric Greitens. ASSE Area Representative and Missouri State Representative Mike Kelley and host dad Doug Osborne, ASSE host dad for Shoinbek and Ali joined the festivities.

"My goal was to get close enough to shake the governor's hand. Mission accomplished!" says ASSE Bahraini student Ali Albahrani (YES Bahrain).

Vlad Babenko (FLEX Ukraine) enjoyed the atmosphere of the gala and being surrounded by really important people. The honorable Mr. Kelley personally introduced the group to many of Missouri's top government

officials that night.

Besides shaking Governor Greitens' hand, students also got to meet John Ashcroft, former United States Attorney General, US Senator and Missouri Governor, who was there to support his son, the newly elected Secretary of State for Missouri, Jay Ashcroft.

"I enjoyed everything!", states Shoinbek. "It was astonishing. Dressing up in fancy clothes was fun. Everything was beautiful."

It's safe to say that not only did all of them look very sharp in their suits, they also had a memorable experience.

ASSE Exchange Students Shoinbek Shoinbekov (FLEX Tajikistan) and Ali Albahrani (YES Bahrain), Jay Ashcroft (Secretary of State of Missouri), Doug Osborne, ASSE host dad, and ASSE Exchange Student Volodymyr Babenko, (FLEX Ukraine).



Two Sisters Same destination country. Different villages. Different families.

By ASSE Exchange Students Ana Cristina Avila Sánchez
and Sabina Avila Sánchez living in Quebec, Canada

Ana Cristina Avila Sánchez
ASSE Exchange Student (Mexico)

"My name is Ana Cristina Avila Sánchez and this year is really special for me because I have the opportunity of living in a different country as an exchange student.

I stay in L'Ascension, a really small town in which the community doesn't speak anything but French, so of course my school was also in French. My family was composed by an older couple, already grandparents, so there were no kids or animals in the house, just me and my two host parents. With my host family everything was perfect. Every Thursday we go bowling with their group of friends.

I really enjoy my experience and I made my group of friends really quick. I joined a group of organizers for prom and I also joined a graduation trip to New York. I am getting much better in my French.

I'm really grateful for all the people that helped me make this experience possible, especially my Mexican real parents and my Québécois host parents."
~ Ana Christina



ASSE Exchange Student Ana Cristina Avila Sánchez (Mexico) and her host family Suzanne Tremblay and Michel Larouche, L'Ascension, Quebec, Canada.



ASSE Exchange Student Sabina Avila Sánchez (Mexico) enjoys experiencing life in Chicoutimi, Quebec, Canada.

Sabina Avila Sánchez
ASSE Exchange Student (Mexico)

"My name is Sabina Avila Sánchez. A great family opened to me the door of their house.

I have a mother, her name is Nicole and she has two sons.

My little advice - ENJOY!!! This will be just one year of your whole life. It will be a very different experience, you'll do different things, and know new people, and the most important, you'll learn a lot of new things. For me something that helped me a lot was trying to always see things positively.

Time flies, and I'm happy and thankful for being here, meeting these amazing people. Learning one more language is completely changing my life and my way of thinking, I'm having a very good time, everything is worth it. THANK YOU!"

~ Sabina

Best Time of My Life!

By Aliza Fatima,
ASSE Exchange Student
(YES Pakistan)
enjoying her year with the
Terrell Family in
Altamont, Kansas, USA

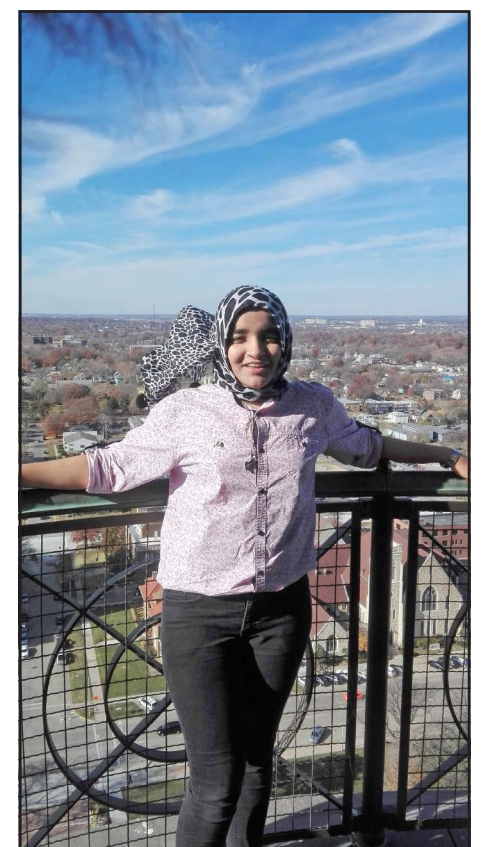
Somebody said it right, 'life begins at the end of your comfort zone'. Applying for an exchange program is so far the best decision of my life and I'm literally having the best time of my life!

A highlight of my year was visiting Topeka, the capital of Kansas. I met the Kansas Secretary of State, Kris W. Kobach and gave him a flag-pin of Pakistan. It was a great pleasure talking to him and all the people in the office about Pakistan and Kansas because this is how we exchange culture.

The most awesome thing while visiting the Capitol Building was going all the way up to the top of the dome. It is almost 250 feet above the ground and it was great seeing that breath-taking view of the City of Topeka.

From meeting the Secretary of State to sitting in Governor's chair, every moment was spectacular. I'm so grateful to my ASSE host family in for arranging this amazing experience for me.

~ Aliza



ASSE Exchange Student Aliza Fatima (YES Pakistan) delights in the awesome view from the Kansas State Capitol Dome.