

Spreading Cultural Exchange

ASSE Exchange Student Anne Groezinger (*CBYX Germany) and ASSE CBYX Alumni Tammy Tarhini had the privilege to be invited to meet with the German Bundestag delegation and members of the American Congress to discuss the CBYX programming and impact.

For Tammy Tarhini, her time with the ASSE CBYX program in Germany has opened many doors. Since the exchange experience, Tammy has studied abroad in Australia, Jordan, has been a business camp advisor in Poland and has participated in ASSE screening committees to help select candidates for the ASSE CBYX scholarship. Tammy has also been involved with her local German community as an assistant

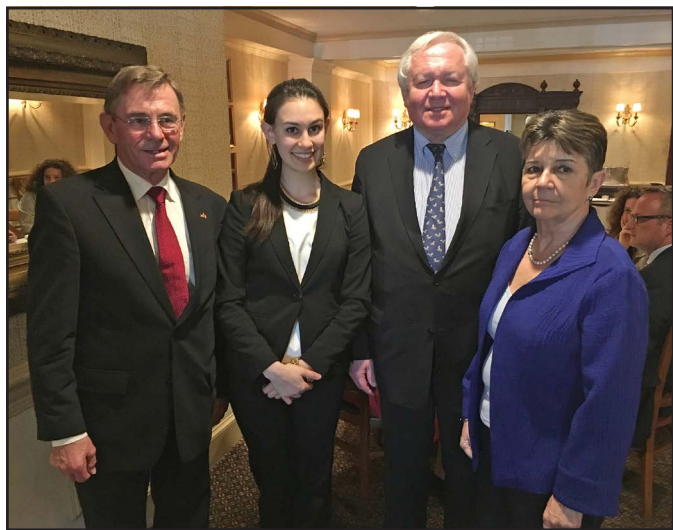
teacher at the German Language School Seattle, Washington, USA.

"CBYX Program alumni have done—and will continue to do— amazing things, and I am excited to see the current generation of students follow the same path, fostering and spreading this cultural exchange and understanding that only continues to become more important with time," says Tammy.

Anne Groezinger will be soon ending her exchange year with the Ruebke Family in Newton, Kansas, USA. Anne also found value in the opportunity to speak with the American Congressmen and the members of the German Bundestag. "We all came to the conclusion that this is an excellent program for students and

that it definitely has to go on," noted Anne.

Anne says her exchange experience is unique "because of the people! Especially my family and friends of course, but everybody else is so nice and open to me too. They showed me more about America that I could have ever dreamed of and encouraged me to do so many things; trying out for the play, and dipping fries in shake or cheese fries from a truck stop."



German Bundestag members Dr. Kalb and Bernhard Schulte-Drüggelte, Tammy Tarhini ASSE CBYX Alumni, and the meeting's translator



Anne Groezinger, ASSE Exchange Student (*CBYX Germany) enjoyed the opportunity to visit many sites while in Washington DC.

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Huge Opportunities

By Olena Kozyr, ASSE Exchange Student (*FLEX Ukraine) spending her exchange year in Hot Springs, Arkansas USA

Olena Kozyr, ASSE Exchange Student (*FLEX Ukraine) spending her exchange year in Hot Springs, Arkansas USA received a scholarship to attend Civic Education Week in Washington DC. Olena and U.S. Senator for Arkansas, Tom Cotton, met for a 2nd time in Hot Springs.

Olena says, "I learned a lot about US government and politics during Civic Education Week. I was inspired and decided to continue learning and get as much as possible for the remainder of the year.

I got a chance to meet Ruth Carney - major of my host city (Hot Springs, Arkansas

USA). I also attended a meeting where Senator of Arkansas Tom Cotton was talking about problems and possible solutions. After his speech, I introduced myself and the FLEX program to him again. I was really pleased to know that Senator Cotton remembered me from the meeting we had in Washington DC two weeks ago!

Thank you, FLEX program and ASSE for the unforgettable year and huge opportunities."



Olena Kozyr, ASSE Exchange Student (*FLEX Ukraine) and U.S. Senator for Arkansas, Tom Cotton

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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I Wouldn't Change a Single Thing

By Justine Blake, ASSE Exchange student (Grand Rapids, Minnesota USA) spending an amazing year in Portugal



Almira from Indonesia and ASSE Exchange Students Justine Blake (Grand Rapids Michigan USA), Ilaria (Italy) and Daichi (Japan)

My overall experience in Lisbon Portugal as an exchange student has been amazing. When leaving home you have no clue what you are actually getting yourself into. I think that's why so many exchange students hit a serious homesickness stage somewhere between getting to the country and Christmas. Usually we exchange students think that it's going to be super easy and that every day will be an adventure. We refuse to think that it'll be hard and before we leave, whenever anyone asks us if we are scared we simply answer "no". But being an exchange student one does struggle, cries, and definitely misses home. But we also smile, laugh, and experience the feeling of joy in ways we never thought possible.

This year has taught me so much about myself and who I want to be in this world. I grew up a lot. My first day of school I really just wanted to go sit in the bathroom, cry and hide from my responsibilities but the first bell rang and I pulled up my big girl pants and walked to my first class. Wow! I am sure glad I did. I met some of the most amazing people I have ever met in my life that morning. They immediately took me under their wing and wanted to do everything in their power to

help me. That same day they took me all over Lisbon and gave me the low down on everything to do and not to do.

Being an exchange student, I learned that growing up doesn't mean never being afraid but it means putting on a brave face, going into situations head on and hoping for the best; because sometimes the best is exactly what you get. In the end you feel so proud of yourself for overcoming the struggles in a mature way.

I have seen so many wonderful and beautiful things in and around Lisbon I have met so many people from different countries and cultures who have shown me how big the world can be and also how big love is. I will have these friends for the rest of my life and even though they might be halfway across the world I know that whether I was having a bad day or a good day, they are the people I would want to share it with. If I had the choice I wouldn't change a single thing about my exchange so far, even the bad days, because they have gotten me to where I am today and who I am today.

~ Justine Blake

Asian Conference

April 7th - 10th, 2016 ASSE & WH Area Coordinators and Directors met in Seattle, Washington USA for the Third Annual East Asian Workshop. Seattle is one of the oldest and richest slices of Asian American history. This set the stage for the workshop attendees

to collaborate on ideas and better understand our students from the East.

The focus was specifically on the countries of Japan, China, Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand, and Mongolia. One of the highlights was meeting our East Asian Essay Contest Winners. This year they were from Japan, China, Thailand, and Mongolia. They helped us recognize the unique value of hosting an East Asian student and the importance of placing the students early in the season.



ASSE Exchanges Students shared their culture at the ASSE Third Annual East Asian Workshop. Temuulen (Timmy) Kherlen (Mongolia) living in Bemidji, Minnesota USA, Yue (Maggie) Zuo (China) living in Texarkana, Texas USA, Adriane Wagner, ASSE Area Coordinator and Asian Specialist, Yuka Sakogashira (Japan) staying in Bemidji, Minnesota, USA and Sorravich Prarom (Thailand) living in Sherman, New York, USA



ASSE / WH Area Coordinators and Directors met in Seattle, Washington, USA April 7-10 for the Third Annual East Asian Workshop.

Opening New Possibilities

By Dane Austreng, ASSE CBYX Exchange Student Alumni 2011-12 (Washington State, USA)

It's been nearly four years since I went abroad as a ASSE CBYX Exchange Student, and the experience continues to be a highlight of my young adult life. I built lifelong friendships, learned another language, and experienced a different culture— experiences which changed my perspective, my

behaviors, and my beliefs. For me, and for many other exchange students I've met, those are the very reasons which motivated us to go abroad in the first place.

But frankly, some of the most powerful benefits of my experience have been ones I could never have anticipated, which have come to shape my life in unpredictable ways.

After my first year of undergraduate study, just one year after returning from abroad, I was looking for different ways to get more involved in campus life. A close friend and fellow CBYX student I'd met in Germany, Katie, suggested I join a professional development organization which she had joined at her own university.

A few months later, I was serving as my university's chapter president, and it was by far the most rewarding experience of my college career. I met dozens of other students (who also have become life-long friends), planned fundraisers and community events, and networked with everyone from corporate professionals to elected officials.

Through the connections I made that year,

I was hired as an intern at my state's capitol working for an executive office. And from that experience, I managed to secure my first post-graduate job—my dream job, in truth—working on a political campaign during the 2016 elections.

None of this would have been possible if I hadn't made the connections that I did while abroad—it took just one suggestion from a friend I made while abroad to set me on the trajectory I find myself today. If someone had told me five years ago that a friendship I made almost 5,000 miles away could lead to so many opportunities in my life, I'd have struggled to believe it.

Some of the biggest benefits from my time abroad have been ones that were never advertised—but in the end, that is exactly what student exchange is all about: opening yourself to new possibilities without knowing what might come of them.

You never truly know what you're getting yourself into living abroad, but that might be the biggest highlight of them all.

~ Dane Austreng



Dane Austreng, ASSE CBYX Alumni receives a Certificate of Appreciation for his work with the Washington State Office of the Secretary of State.

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!



"This year has been like one giant toe-touch. I feel like I'm still hanging there flying in the air where I'm learning, observing, and doing as much as I possibly can before I return home to Denmark again!" Casper Oehlers, ASSE Exchange Student (Denmark) has spent his exchange year in Katy, Texas, USA with the Elliott Family.



ASSE Exchange Students Michelle Chiru (*CBYX Germany), Valeriya Kravets (*FLEX Ukraine) and Gayane Khachikyan (*FLEX Armenia) participated in the Gibsonburg High School, Gibsonburg, Ohio USA, musical, 'Once Upon an Island'. They gave 3 performances and Gayane said, "Every single one was amazing!"



ASSE Exchange Students Etienne (France) and Daniel (Czech Republic) with host mom Peggy Watters. Both boys express warm appreciation for host mom Peggy, who has been hosting students since 1984!

Daniel says, "Anytime I wanted to talk with her about anything, she was always available. I have fully enjoyed my time with Mrs. Watters!". Etienne says, "If I could do this exchange year again I would, but I wouldn't change my host family!"



ASSE Exchange Student Lea Guerin (Hebertville, Quebec Canada) has spent her exchange year in Pachuca, Hidalgo, Mexico. Lea, her host family and ASSE Area Representative enjoy an opportunity to visit about their year.

Left to Right: ASSE Host mom Cecilia Fregoso, Lea Guerin, ASSE Area Representative Adriana Villarreal and ASSE host dad Jose Fregoso.



Annika Hamann, ASSE Exchange Student (*CBYX Germany) visits New York City with her high school senior class.

Annika says, "I can't believe that my exchange year is almost over. I have had amazing months in the state of Ohio I have fun every day with my host family and friends. That might be the reason that my year abroad seems to be way too short."

I am very thankful to have the opportunity to be an ASSE CBYX Exchange Student and to have all kinds of new amazing experiences. I was fortunate to travel to New York City with the senior class of my High School.

This year has given me so many experiences and I have learned so much. I have made so many new friends and have met the greatest people. I have found a second family on the other end of the world. This year has been great and I would totally apply again to be an exchange student.

An exchange year is a great addition to your life and I am glad that I made the decision to spend 10 months in the United States!"



Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA was the destination for over 100 ASSE/WH Area Representatives, Area Coordinators, Directors and FLEX, YES, and CBYX students to spend 2 days learning how to support of U.S. State Department sponsored grant program students. These FLEX, YES and CBYX students were the highlight of the meetings and informal discussions. The students helped prepare those that attended to place and support ASSE/WH scholarship students for the 2016-17 school year.

Back Row: Manuel Dressen (*CBYX Germany), Aichurok Shair kyzy (*FLEX Kyrgyzstan), Amna Khan (*YES Pakistan), Akmaljon Akmedjonov (*FLEX Tajikistan), Yaroslav Kuzko (*FLEX Ukraine), Symbat Kanat (*FLEX Kazakhstan).

Front Row: Mohammad Al Qarallah (*YES Jordan), Yuliya Oliyuk (*FLEX Ukraine).



ASSE Area Representative and host family John Jones and ASSE Exchange Students Erzhan Zakirov, (*FLEX Kyrgyzstan) and Syafrie Renaldo, (*YES Indonesia) talked with visitors to the Fort Hood, Texas USA mall about the benefits of hosting an ASSE/WH exchange student during ASSE/WH Super Saturday.

*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

A Tremendous Year!

By ASSE Host mom Maribel Huelskamp, Sidney, Ohio USA and ASSE Exchange Students Victoria Gaitan (*FLEX Moldova) and Kathi Viethen (*CBYX Germany)

Victoria Gaitan, (*FLEX Moldova) and Kathi Viethen (*CBYX Germany) have had a tremendous year full of adventures living with the Huelskamp family in Ohio.

Victoria's first adventure was getting on a plane for the first time. Host mom, Maribel said, "Viktoria was very quiet at first, had never really been away from home before or traveled very much. Even though English was a challenge at first in school, now she has straight A's and has made the Honor Society. Her secret to success was figuring out how to study for the tests." Victoria was also chosen for the Prom court.

Kathi's favorite classes are English and choir as well as extracurricular sports. She was selected to participate in an honor choir performance in Cincinnati. Kathi was chosen for the

homecoming court. This event was also a family project from picking out the dress to choosing the hair style.

According to host mom Maribel, the girls are like real sisters; they work out their differences and cheer each other on. Both Victoria and Kathi set their goal and accomplished over 100 hours of community service. Volunteering at their school, Knights of Columbus, thrift shop, library and Ronald McDonald House has been done amid a busy schedule. Victoria and Kathi have also participated in volleyball, basketball, softball and track, cross country and were on the academic bowl team.

Victoria says, "I can't believe how I have managed to fit all the activities in and still have time to watch TV." They are currently hooked on "Shadow Hunters" and both girls are making a point to watch all the recorded Disney classics

Kathi says she learned from her host

family, "That family reunions are a great thing and that they are really welcoming.

I also learned how to make my host mom's famous spinach dip."



Having fun on a spring break visit to Chicago! Victoria Gaitan (*FLEX Moldova) and Kathi Viethen (*CBYX Germany) on the left with two classmates enjoying a trip highlight of stepping onto the sky deck at the Willis tower.

Washington D.C.

By Sara Ferri, ASSE Exchange Student (Italy) living with the Kerns family in Edgewood, Iowa USA

I am a member of 4H and my group organized visit to Washington D.C. It was an incredible experience, and I am so lucky I got to go there this year!

The bus ride from Iowa, where I live, to Washington D.C. was very long but everything was perfect! I got to tour the major monuments and I think my favorite



Sara Ferri, ASSE Exchange Student (Italy) and her host sister in Washington D.C.

was the WWII memorial. We went there at night, so all the lights and the water fountains were on, creating a magical atmosphere.

We went on a boat ride to Mount Vernon, the place where the first president of the United States, George Washington, lived. It's hard to believe that a president had a farm and small houses for his slaves!

I went to the theatre where President Lincoln was shot. I saw the exact place where he was sitting when the bullet reached him and also visited across the street to the house where he died. The following day, I visited the Newseum, which is a museum dedicated to the history of journalism. There are front pages from all around the world.

The National Archives was my favorite building as I love historic documents. Is there anything more interesting to see than the original copy of the Bill of Rights? I could have spent hours in the National Archives reading every word of every document.

I also visited the Smithsonian Museum of American History and had a quick stop in front of the White House.

It was a great experience, and I would truly encourage everyone to visit Washington D.C.

~ Sara Ferri

Be An Inspiration

By Mehdi Belhaj, ASSE Exchange Student (*YES Tunisia) spending his exchange year in Spokane, Washington, USA.

I want to thank ASSE and the YES program for making this year possible. I thank my family, my host family, my friends and teachers. My name is Mehdi Belhaj and I am an ASSE YES Exchange Student from Tunisia.

Tunisia is having some hard times heading through a new democracy but we are trying. It takes sacrifice and by the end of the day we are on the right path. Whining and complaining about the bad job people in charge are doing, won't make a change. Even if you can't do something with a direct impact, do something that'll end up making a change. Be an inspiration and a leader to those around you and your influence.

It is an honor to be an ambassador of Tunisia. At Shadle Park High School in Spokane, Washington, USA, I had the chance to speak in front of the

whole school of around 1500 people or more including students, teachers, principal and staff about my culture, traditions and peaceful religion. Stay strong Tunisia! Long live Tunisia!

During my year, I got to learn many things about the American culture and traditions during an important part of my life as I am growing. I have participated in DECA including the Career Development Conference in Business Service Marketing and got 13th place out of 21. I have also been nominated DECA member of the month by my classmates. I stayed out of my comfort zone during the whole exchange year. It was challenging but it definitely was a great experience!

~ Mehdi Belhaj



Mehdi Belhaj, ASSE Exchange Student (*YES Tunisia) cooking traditional Tunisian food for his host family and friends

Outbound Scholarship Winners

All of us at ASSE/WH are very proud of our Outbound program - with good reason! We had a record number of excellent applications this year, and an amazing group of students have been chosen.

1. ASSE's Outbound Program is one of the largest – because we are dedicated to helping American High School Students go abroad!
2. ASSE's Outbound Students get to choose their destination country – other programs tell the students where they can go!
3. ASSE's Outbound Program does not require foreign language proficiency – our kids come home dreaming in their new language!
4. ASSE's Outbound Program have the lowest fees that are all inclusive
5. ASSE provides scholarships for Outbound Students every year

The Walter Danielson Scholarship – named for the founding father of ASSE – pays for the complete program.

- 100% of the Program Fee
- Domestic Flight Costs to and from the departure gateway
- Spending Money for incidentals while on program
- One optional Field Trip

The Jodi Kiefer Memorial Scholarship - For 2016-17, the Kiefer Family graciously is sponsoring one student in memory of Jodi Kiefer who had been a dedicated advocate for the ASSE & World Heritage International Student Exchange Programs for over 25 years. This scholarship also pays for the complete program (see above).

How do we choose the lucky winners? These scholarships are intended to provide program opportunity for kids who otherwise would not be able to realize their dream for lack of financial resources – in other words “financial need” is the final qualifier. All of the applicants for these scholarships are amazing, very well-qualified kids. We wish we could provide scholarships for every student who applied. All of the applications were wonderful and we do hope many of our applicants will still choose to be an Ambassador for the USA and study abroad with ASSE in the country of their choice.



Siobhanie Cook of South Lake Tahoe, California is the recipient of the prestigious 100% Walter Danielson Scholarship and she will be spending her exchange year in Taiwan. Siobhanie is very active in her community and high school. Her hobbies include Nordic skiing, Track, Orchestra, Girl Scouts, cooking and baking. She wishes to become an English as a Second Language Teacher. She says ‘Foreign exchange is a new adventure full of tasks that I've never been able to even attempt’ – now she has the chance and will put it to the best.



Bailey Ford of Cortez, Colorado was awarded the Jodi Kiefer Memorial Scholarship and will spend 10 months in the Netherlands. Coming from a small community, she takes advantage of most activities in her school. She is part of the school's theater program, marching band and art club. Her passion is art. She realizes that the exchange experience will continue on past the time she spends abroad and wants to bring back what she will experience and inspire others to seek such opportunities.



Kodie Jenkins of Weston, Idaho plans to spend her exchange year in Finland as an ASSE 90% scholarship winner. Kodie is all outdoors! She loves reining, riding horses, camping, fishing, swimming, hiking – perfect for Finland. She hopes to grow physically and mentally from the experience. She realizes ‘everyday as a foreign exchange student would be an adventure’. She looks forward to learning from the experience and meet lifelong friends.



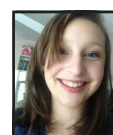
Madisen Huffmann of Charles City, Iowa cannot wait until her exchange adventure begins in Spain. She has been awarded a 90 % scholarship. She has been learning Spanish for 2 years and loves the history and culture of Spain. Madisen also wants to learn the Spanish cuisine and any aspect of the culture. She is an active member of FCCLA, FBLA, student government and a junior ambassador. We believe she will represent the United States very well in Spain!



Aaron Rogers from Walters, Oklahoma is looking forward to his exchange year in Italy beginning this fall on a 90% scholarship. He has gotten a great insight on what it is like to be an exchange student as his family has hosted students over the past 3 years. His international siblings have made a huge impression on him and triggered his interest to study abroad. He is a member of his schools' marching band and Academic Team and loves running and swimming.



Boston McKibben from Hopkinton, Massachusetts is a recipient of one 90% scholarship and will be spending his academic year 2016-17 in France. Already studying French for 5 years, he has a long standing desire to travel and experience other cultures. Boston has been a member of his school's French club and art club amongst others. He loves playing the ukulele which he taught himself to play.



90% scholarship goes to **Carey Key of Alabaster, Alabama** who will spend a year in China. Carey is one of 8 children and a very active member of her church. She volunteers at Cyber Seniors – helping senior citizens to use technology. She sees this opportunity as a ‘melting pot of things she wants to experience and her goals. She is ready and thrilled at the possibility to be an excellent ambassador for her home country and ASSE/World Heritage.’



Ruth Ledesma of Cabo San Lucas, Mexico is our Mexican Scholarship winner. She is super excited to spend her school year in the United States. “My dream is to live in the USA to learn the culture and really improve my English, this great opportunity will be very good to my future. I can't wait to live this beautiful experience and will make my best effort to represent Mexico.” She is very active in school and has won many speech competitions. Ruth loves physics and will represent her school at the State Physics competition.

We wish all scholarship winners a successful and exciting year abroad! Congratulations from ASSE and World Heritage!