

An Incredible Day!

By Deanna Allen, World Heritage Area Representative, Fresno, California, USA

Does getting up early on a Saturday morning sound good to you? With big smiles and great attitudes, the four World Heritage Exchange Students that I oversee in Fresno were ready to go by 6 a.m. When we arrived at the first of two volunteer opportunities, we had no idea what a great day was ahead of us!



World Heritage Exchange students enjoyed volunteering at the Best Buddies Friendship Walk for inclusion in Fresno California USA. Back row: Edoardo (Italy) and Marharyta (FLEX Ukraine). Front row: Julia (CBYX Germany) and Begmurod (FLEX Kazakhstan)

Our first event was the Best Buddies Friendship Walk. Founded by Anthony Shriver, Best Buddies is an International non-profit organization that exists to create opportunities such as a productive job in

the community for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities! Before the fundraising walk event started Edoardo (Italy) helped put up tables and chairs. Then Begmurod (FLEX Kazakhstan) and Edoardo played a little soccer with kids waiting for the event. Julia (CBYX Germany), Rita (FLEX Ukraine), Ed, Begmurod and I walked the course a couple of times as we planted sponsor signs along the route. The highlight of our day was being the High Five Club at the turn around point where we greeted and encouraged all the participants. It was so fun! The celebration afterwards was epic as many of those participating danced together, including our own Begmurod who showed off some impressive moves when he joined in a line dance! Of course, afterward we stayed to help clean up until the very end. The students worked very hard and I was so proud of them!

But our day was not over! Ed, Beg and Rita were able to continue on to another event happening at Clovis North High School. We kept the statistics and the score for the Special Olympic Basketball Tournament! Special Olympics, founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, is the world's largest sports organization for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, providing year-round training and competitions to 5.7 million athletes.

There were two big gyms full of games and we got to have a front row for the action. It was motivational to watch men, women and teenagers work so hard, play as a team and rise above their particular struggle. We worked until the end of the tournament. Though we were quite tired, we were also grateful for the experiences. The final question was: when can we do it again?!

~ Deanna



World Heritage Exchange students Begmurod (FLEX Kazakhstan) and Edoardo (Italy) keeping score during the Special Olympics basketball tournament at Clovis North High School in Fresno, California, USA

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A Beautiful Year in Italy

By Madeline, ASSE Exchange Student (Swartz Creek, Michigan, USA) enjoying her exchange year in Italy.

I live in a city called Padua in northern Italy, in the region of Veneto. It's very beautiful and I live in the city square! There's a central fountain and a canal ringed with statues. None of it looks real. The whole city is a maze of columns and statues and colorful architecture. I'm very shy, but I've managed to make some amazing new friends and I've decided that meeting new people might actually be kind of fun sometimes. I'm getting better at being the shiny new object and the center of attention.



ASSE Exchange Students Madeline (Swartz Creek, Michigan, USA), Anabelle (Rockland, Ontario, Canada) and Jessica (Peru, Illinois, USA) enjoy 'gelato' on a visit to Milan.

Connecting with the other exchange students and sharing stories is rewarding and interesting as well. We all struggle with the same things and we are all fascinated by everyone else's language and culture. We're always laughing, comparing stories, and interrogating each other. We all spent a few days in Milan when we first arrived and every once in a while we go on trips with our exchange company.

My best friend at my school was an Australian girl
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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.

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Until next edition,
Mary Loving ASSE News Editor

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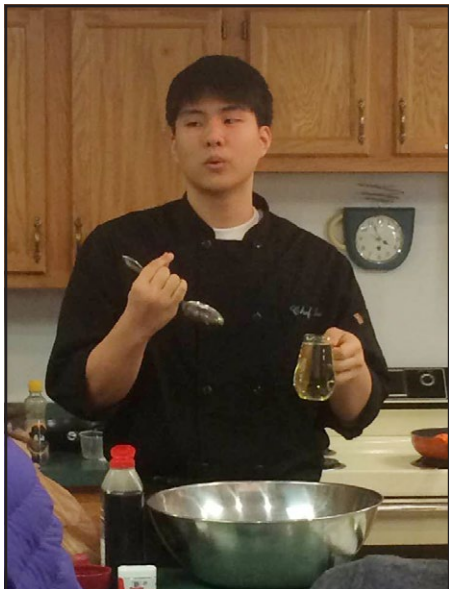


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Delicious Dumplings

By Janet Maxim, ASSE host mom, Pataskala, Ohio USA for ASSE Exchange Student Hong (South Korea)

ASSE Exchange Student Hong (South Korea) recently led a cooking class for Korean specialties. With the help of his host family, who put word out to local friends, Hong researched, planned, prepared, shopped and presented a Korean Fried Rice and Dumpling workshop for 12 attendees. "Everyone participated in both cooking and eating – and loved it," according to host mom Janet.



ASSE Exchange student Hong (South Korea) teaching his Korean Fried Rice and Dumplings cooking class.

"We accepted Hong from South Korea on a temporary basis last September, not knowing if we'd have the space to host him for the full year. Turns out we did, and are we ever thankful! He's a good young man with a great attitude, sense of humor, desire to learn, to help and to be part of our family... and with big dreams. He is also a godsend. When our special needs son had difficulty chewing, Hong quickly performed the Heimlich Manuever, which we feel saved our son's life. You just never know how your exchange student will bless your family!"

~ Janet



Delicious dumplings

Exploring South Africa



Calvin-Thomas South African students from France, Italy and Thailand enjoyed an outing to Cape Point, Cape Town South Africa



ASSE Exchange Student, Kendall (Austin, Texas, USA) with her host family visit the southernmost point of Africa called Cape Agulhasope.

Walking the Path of Pioneers

By Marcia Foley, ASSE Area Representative, Arapahoe, Nebraska, USA

OREGON OR BUST!! ASSE students Vladyslava (FLEX Ukraine), Elene (FLEX Georgia), Fryderyk (FLEX Poland) and Rezo (FLEX Georgia) enjoyed a visit to the Great Platte River Archway Monument in Kearney, Nebraska USA with ASSE Area Representative Marcia Foley. The Archway took the students on a self-guided tour that starts in the 1840's with the Mormon, Oregon, and California Trails west. There are also exhibits that display buffalo stampedes, the Mormon Handcart Expedition, gold seekers, and the Pony Express, along with individual stories of the travelers. It continues through history with the transcontinental railroad and the Lincoln Highway that features a small town with a drive-in movie and 1950's diner.

Vladyslava (FLEX Ukraine)
ASSE Exchange Student

I learned a lot about the American History of the Oregon Trail, while walking through the paths of pioneers with my local representative and other exchange students.

~ Vladyslava

Fryderyk (FLEX Poland)
ASSE Exchange Student

On the way to the Nebraska Capitol in Lincoln, Nebraska we chose to visit the Great Platte River Archway Monument Museum because we wanted to learn about the immigrants coming through Nebraska to different parts of the U.S.

In the museum we learnt some awesome facts, including the struggles, the moments of happiness

and many, many thrilling stories. We enjoyed the trip a lot, as it was both an awesome educational and social activity.

~ Fryderyk

After leaving the Great Platte River Archway Monument built over Interstate 80, the group continued on down the road to Lincoln to visit the Capitol, the University of Nebraska Lincoln Morrill Hall, and the Russian Store at the Haymarket in the downtown area.



Vladyslava (FLEX Ukraine), Elene (FLEX Georgia), Fryderyk (FLEX Poland) and Rezo (FLEX Georgia) learned about the Platte River valley role in the westward expansion at the Great Platte River Archway Monument in Kearney, Nebraska, USA

Beauty and the Beast

By Rick Stuhmer, ASSE host family and Area Representative in Baltimore, Ohio, USA

Kemalcan "Can" (YES Turkey) enjoyed being one of the villagers in Liberty Union High School's fantastic production of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*. Can (pronounced John) had a speaking part

during the opening street scene and during the villagers' riot to kill the beast. He also sang as part of the villagers' chorus and danced in another scene.

Among those there for opening night

of three sold out performances were Can's host parents, Rick and Dolores Stuhmer (also ASSE Area Representatives), Adriane (ASSE Ohio Area Coordinator) and Matt Wagner, Mariya (FLEX Ukraine) and her host mom, Lauren (LUHS Art teacher), and the Superintendent of Liberty Union Local Schools, Todd Osborne.

During intermission, there was an art show in the halls and cafeteria which showcased the talent of the LUHS students. Included among the works on display were numerous paintings and drawings by both Kemalcan and Mariya.



(From left to right) ASSE host parents and Area Representatives Rick and Dolores Stuhmer, ASSE host mom Lauren Martin, ASSE Exchange student Mariya (FLEX Ukraine) and Superintendent of Liberty Union Local Schools, Todd Osborne enjoying the artwork displayed by students during the play's intermission.



ASSE Area Coordinator Adriane Wagner with ASSE Exchange Student Kemalcan "Can" in his villager's outfit for the play *Beauty and the Beast* at Liberty Union High School, Baltimore, Ohio, USA

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 Exchange Students represented ASSE on International Student Awareness Day at the Oklahoma State Capitol. While there, students also found it exciting and informative to be at the capitol during the teacher's strike. To round out the day, students visited the Oklahoma City National Memorial.

Left to right: ASSE Exchange Students Enkhtuul (Mongolia), Inmaculada (Spain), Mariam (FLEX Georgia), Noah (Germany), Plaipansa (Thailand), Nigar (FLEX Azerbaijan), Arman (FLEX Kazakhstan) and Aisha (FLEX Georgia)



"Off to regionals! It was a close match, and we played great!" said ASSE Exchange student Kristof (Czech Republic) and his tennis partner after making second place at the district tennis tournament and advancing to Regionals! Great job!



ASSE Exchange Student Nilufar (FLEX Tajikistan) shares her culture, "My future profession is a diplomat. I really enjoyed presenting about my country and to feel myself as a diplomat. This exchange year is the best gift that I have ever had."



ASSE Exchange Students enjoy Mate after their arrival in Cordoba, Argentina to attend the arrival orientation camp before they joined their new host families.

Left to right: Andrea (Argentinean office staff), Ellie (Cody, Wyoming, USA), Tom (Germany) and Atlee (Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA)



From the Basque country in France we received this snapshot of ASSE Exchange student Avery (Wailuku, Hawaii, USA) and his host parents out on a walk along the beach in Biarritz.



"Thank you to the best coach and team in the world. Coach, I will never forget what you told me, I will never forget your valuable advice and the way you supported me despite all the difficulties. I even couldn't dream about such an amazing team."

Heartfelt words from ASSE Exchange Student Anzhela (FLEX Kazakhstan) to her swim coach Shawn Klosterman of Webb City High School in Webb City, MO. Anzhela enjoyed participating in swim team and learning about the correct practices. She now wants to become a swim coach herself.



The annual ASSE/World Heritage FLEX, YES & CBYX Conference for Area Representatives, Area Coordinators and Directors this year took place in Phoenix, AZ. ASSE/WH Exchange students inspired attendees with enthusiasm and wisdom to promote and support U.S. State Department sponsored grants program students.

Back row: Faysal (YES Lebanon), Michelle (CBYX Germany), Nurmukhamed (FLEX Kazakhstan), Vadym (FLEX Ukraine)

Front row: Kateryna (FLEX Ukraine), Kawish (YES Pakistan), Aisulu (FLEX Kyrgyzstan) and Daler (FLEX Tajikistan)



ASSE Exchange Students Zach (Clarkston, Michigan, USA), Valeria (Monterrey, Mexico), Nicole (San Luis Obispo, California, USA), and Klaudia (Chicago, Illinois, USA) receive a warm welcome on their arrival in South Korea!



ASSE Exchange Students celebrated their year in America with a lunch for Area Rep Cathy Halvorson. Adreanna (Italy), Barbara (Spain), Cathy (ASSE Area Representative), Anna (FLEX Ukraine), Pernilla (Denmark)

*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

Congress Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX)

ASSE / World Heritage is honored to be one of 5 high school exchange programs participating in the bilateral U.S. State Department sponsored Congress Bundestag Youth Exchange Program (CBYX) and German Bundestag Parlamentarisches Patenschafts-Programm (PPP)

**Jonathan (CBYX Munich, Germany)
ASSE Exchange Student
spending his exchange year in
Prescott, Wisconsin, USA.**

Being a foreign exchange student with ASSE and as a special honor being part of the CBYX/PPP program has not only taught me a lot about my host community, host family and America, but most of all I learned a lot more about myself. Living in a new family, a new community and most of all a new country, I surely had problems



Jonathan and one of his host sisters enjoy family time at Disney

and difficult decisions, as well as some hard days. But most of all I had a lot of fun, thousands of new experiences and an enrichment for my entire life. I saw places I couldn't even imagine and met friends for a lifetime.

Looking back, I would surely make the decision to be a foreign exchange again and I encourage everybody who is thinking about going abroad: DO it! There is nothing better!
~ Jonathan

**Franz (CBYX Jena, Germany)
World Heritage Exchange Student
spending his exchange year in
Bremen, Indiana, USA.**

The best part of my experience attending an American high school was to see how the high school works, to meet all the people, and to be part of a sports team. The sports team gives me and all the other students a good school spirit. It connects us, and we are training our mind and body through it.

I have a good relationship with my host family. We can talk about everything, and we try to make the best time before I leave.

I have learned that no matter what skin color a person is, no matter what religion a person belongs to, and no matter if a person is disabled or not, we have to work together, tolerate each other as well as show respect and enjoy that everyone is different.

I am going to take home the idea of volunteering as well as working together with people after school to create a good school spirit. I also want to engage myself more into politics because I see how a democratic system can fail when the people don't share their opinions.



World Heritage Exchange Student Franz has accumulated over 200 volunteer hours during his exchange year. He spent most of his community service helping out at the nursing home and local church. At the nursing home he is helping Joan, one of the residents, to write her memoirs. Franz said one of the most rewarding parts of his exchange year has been the conversations with the people at the retirement home.

**Leon (CBYX Lauingen, Germany)
ASSE Exchange Student hosted in
Grand Forks, North Dakota USA
and Lisa (CBYX Alumna
Grand Forks, North Dakota USA)**

I am really enjoying my exchange year here in Grand Forks North Dakota. I love my High School and go to all the Football / Hockey / Basketball games to watch my friends play and cheer for the school. High School here in America is so much different than in Germany, since the American schools feel a lot more like "family". The highlight so far was definitely the trip to Los Angeles with my host family, where we spent two days in Disneyland and explored the sights of California.

~ Leon

At a celebration of his American

high school German teacher, Leon met American CBYX alumna, Lisa, who was an exchange student during the first year of the CBYX bilateral exchange program. Once a year Lisa participates in the CBYX committee that interviews and recommends students for the CBYX scholarship. She still thinks often about her own exchange experiences.

April 1984, I learned I was going to spend my senior year in West Germany. I was accepted to a brand-new scholarship-abroad program, Congress Bundestag Youth Exchange. I was excited when I flew to another country, moved-in with a wonderful host family and started to adapt to the language, culture, and the expectations I had for myself and those others had for me. It was an amazing year. I don't think there is an adequate measuring system to illustrate how positively I have benefitted from the experience. The people, the program and experience continue to influence my life, family and career.

~ Lisa



Lisa (CBYX alumna) and Leon

The Lasting Legacy Given Through Hosting

By Gail Smith, ASSE host family and Area Representative, George (ASSE Alumna) and Daler, ASSE Exchange Student (FLEX Tajikistan)

ASSE host family and Area Representative Gail Smith began her hosting legacy for the first time in 2006-07 when Chi Ao 'George' from China came to stay in her home. They have continued contact. George, now a physician has returned to his host community Cass City, Michigan USA to learn and to 'give back'.

"During my exchange year, I got acquainted with the American culture and customs. I enjoyed them and aimed to come back to pursue my profession. Cass City has a lot to give. Though it is a small town with less than a population of 2,500, I can feel that people here know each other, care about each other just like an extended family. I decided since I would like to gain some professional experience in the USA. Why not do it here in this beloved little town located in the thumb of Michigan? This way I not only gain things I want to learn but I also enjoy the family-like atmosphere.

One thing that inspired me most from my exchange year is the



ASSE Area Representative Gail Smith with her first ASSE Exchange Student George (left) who returned as a physician to 'give back' to his host community. On the right is Daler (FLEX Tajikistan) whom Gail currently hosts.

generosity my host family offered to exchange students. I learned that the key to happiness is in giving."

~ George

Daler (FLEX Tajikistan) has many memories that he will be taking home. He said, "I think people in USA have a best democracy and know their rights. Whenever people share their ideas about what they think is right, it makes me learn and feel the democratic things." Daler adds, "People are nice and kind. I can't forget them at all. Diversity makes my exchange experience unique. Doing everyday duties and school made me to find confidence. I am pretty confident about what I do and it's a great achievement for me."

~Daler

Gail shares, "Daler and I were having a discussion about the differences in our cultures when it comes to aging and senior living. He does not understand the American

tradition of independent living we favor, as opposed to the Tajik tradition of living with family. He grew quiet, then seriously stated, 'Mommy, when I return to my country, I will attend university, after I graduate I will return and take care of you the rest of your life.' Powerful words from one so young. Hosting touches lives in so many ways.

Wisdom from Gail: "You have heard the saying, 'It takes a village . . .' Yes, villages help, but one person, one open home and heart can grow a world."

~ Gail

Thank you to all our beloved ASSE and World Heritage host families that sow the seeds for better understanding in our world, one student at the time. And thank you to each exchange student that gives a glimpse into a world outside the familiar!

...continued from front page

named Sinead. We're also close with the Japanese boy at our school, Hiyo. Hiyo and I take part in our schools theatre program and we performed a beautiful holocaust remembrance dance/theatre piece. It was so rewarding to watch the way our art touched people emotionally. It was inspiring and tragic and beautiful that we could have that effect, we could tell a story like that, even in another language.

Of course I love my Italian friends as well. They make school fun and interesting.

It's so funny to listen to them try to speak English (they like to practice) to me or me try to speak Italian. With them, the language barrier isn't a wall, but one long joke that is endlessly hilarious.

Speaking of Italian, mine is pretty good now and I don't need to speak English to get through daily life. It comes naturally and I can usually express myself. I've had to study and practice a lot and it can be very frustrating sometimes. That said, I'm proud of where I'm at now; I know I earned it.

As everyone says, my exchange has changed me. I think I'm a better person now. I understand what it feels like to walk into a situation where everyone already has a presumption about you, your culture, or your country. I'm certainly much less critical of others now, and I can be genuinely and honestly kind to people who may not have shown that respect to me. My favorite part is to smile and prove people's assumptions wrong. It's fun to show others a different attitude and way of life, just as they've shown

me. American food is all fried and disgusting? Here! Try this dish I made for you! Girls can't play soccer? Watch me!

I've found that being myself and explaining instead of being aggressive or defensive, is much more effective at breaking down walls. Obviously I've had to learn to adjust and accept this new culture as well, but if you accept others first and you take the first step, friendship and tolerance comes a lot quicker.