

A Pure Delight

By World Heritage Area Representative Jane Moorman and the Slevira host family

“World Heritage exchange student Juliette (JuJu) from France (PIE) is such a delight to be around and makes you just feel happy when you are with her”, says Area Representative Jane Moorman. “JuJu has a cheerful attitude and continues to be an active part in her school and host family. She is participating in the school play as a mime and is having a blast! She loves the cast and crew. She is also being recognized at school for her great grades and GPA! She loves her host family and thinks they are the best. For fall break, they went on a road trip out West and she was able to see mountains for

the first time in her whole life! Juju thought the mountains were amazing and she had a wonderful vacation with her host family!”

Her host parents say since the moment Juliette “JuJu” stepped off the plane, she has been a pure delight. They believe any and all students that take this journey of traveling to a different country, to live with a strange family, in a strange home, sleep in a strange bed, try to keep up with a new foreign language, walk into a new strange school where everyone is a stranger, all of this takes SO much courage! JuJu has done and
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Juju (left) with host sister

Living Life to the Fullest

By ASSE Outbound Student Morgan from Idaho enjoying a semester in Spain

Outbound student Morgan from Moscow, Idaho talks about her semester in Spain. “I have been here for a few months or so in Valencia, Spain! When I first signed up to be an exchange student, I wanted to learn the culture, a new language, and of course live in Spain. Spain has been amazing for these months. I have learned that I am not only living in a new culture and learning to speak a completely new language but I am learning to be more confident, independent, and I am gaining ways of learning to live life to my fullest. I am learning to keep my mindset open and stay positive on certain things.

I am in a family with two host siblings and I am really close with my host sister. We help each other learn and do many things on our free time together! I’ve learned that the first month I was here was obviously probably the hardest month of all the exchange students lives from overcoming homesickness, going to a new school, living in a town, city or village and surrounding yourself with people



Morgan with friend at campus

you don’t know, and speak a very different language than yours!

The Spanish program has helped with all of my needs and they try their best to make us happy. My advisor knows how hard it is for the American people on Thanksgiving so she put together a wonderful day for us! The people I traveled with to Madrid the first 3 days that I was in Spain will be my lifelong friends, forever! It’s a great opportunity to talk to people who are going through the same thing, in the same country!!!

In Spain on weekdays I don’t do much but study, and try to stay busy! On weekends I spend time with my host family or go to the city with my friends.

I joined a surf team and a dance team with one of the other exchange students in Valencia. It’s honestly a really great experience. We all came in with no expectations so it makes it easier to adapt to the new life you are living. Two of my best friends on my surf team have been inspired by me and are now going to America on exchange!! It is a really amazing opportunity but it’s not all easy. I have learned so much. It’s like a roller coaster of emotions and when there is a downfall, there always has to be a place to go up.”

We would like to thank her Spanish host family and her program in Spain (SHE) for helping Morgan to grow and enjoy her exchange semester.



Morgan with a friend at surf practice



Morgan with her host family

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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,
Cindy Keeney, ASSE News Editor

International Education Week Presenting Kyrgyzstan

By ASSE FLEX Scholarship Student Gulumkan from Kyrgyzstan
enjoying her exchange year in Dickinson, Texas



Gulumkan in traditional dress

ASSE FLEX scholarship student Gulumkan did her first presentation of her country of Kyrgyzstan to fellow students at Dickinson High School during International Education Week. She shared the culture, traditions, history, geography, climate, and interesting facts about her country. She enjoyed singing the national anthem, dancing a national dance, and she even brought food that she made special for them. She said that every person on the campus was excited and they were eager to know all about her home country. It was her first time and she did eight presentations!

Of course, making this day so successful she needed help. She would like to thank her host family, host sister and her friends at school who were taking pictures and videos. She said without them, this day wouldn't be so successful. She is so grateful for all of them. She said, "My friends tried everything that I brought with me to school, from the souvenirs to the food and I'm so happy."

We would like to thank the Lucenti family in Dickinson, Texas for hosting Gulumkan.



Gulumkan and her host family

A Wonderful Holiday in Italy

By ASSE Outbound Student Kameron from New York

Our ASSE 100% Walter Danielson Scholarship winner Kameron from Dunkirk, New York has enjoyed her exchange year in Italy with Mondo Insieme. Since learning that she was the scholarship winner, she has been writing articles for her local newspaper, The Observer.

She shares how she spent the holiday in Italy. "I'll begin with the last day of school, which was the 22nd of December. The night before, I baked chocolate chip cookies for the class (they loved them), not knowing that everyone else would also be bringing food as well! There was soda and ice tea and all sorts of snacks. We spent the first hour just snacking and doing nothing. Then the next four hours we went to different rooms in the school watching two movies. I watched Jumanji and Fast and Furious. Although the films were in Italian, I understood enough to follow along. At 1pm we got to leave (one hour earlier than usual). Then, in between the last day of school and Christmas Day, I went to two choir concerts and a Christmas rollerblading performance!

On Christmas Day, half of my host family was in the mountains and wouldn't return till the evening. Christmas morning, I went to church with my host sister and host grandmother. Although I didn't

really understand what the Priest was saying, it was still a very nice service and I used that time to reflect on Christ's birth and the meaning of Christmas. In the afternoon I stayed home and called my family in the states to wish them a Merry Christmas. Then, at seven in the evening the rest of my host family returned and I helped them make a big dinner for everyone. In between dinner and dessert (which was chocolate covered panettone), we opened gifts. I had brought some things from America for my host family, including a glass necklace and sports clothes. My host parents got me pajamas and my host siblings got me a drawing kit!

Two days after Christmas, we packed our bags and went to the mountains! My host family owns



Kameron skiing in the Italian Alps

a little flat in La Thuile in Valley di Aosta, right on the border of France. The mountains of course are the Italian Alps. While my host parents and brother skied, I mostly hiked to different locations and went to the library. On the last day I went skiing. My host mother was wonderful, going down the slope with me the first four times to make sure it was manageable for me.

On New Year's Eve, my host brother invited over all his friends that were in La Thuile. One of the dads cooked some rice and lentils before heading off to another dinner. We basically ate food, sang songs, and had some celebratory New Year's cheer, not unlike America, until one in the morning. Something Americans don't do is celebrate St. Bafana's Day, or the Epiphany. On January 6th, I found chocolate on the breakfast table from my host mother. St. Bafana, much like Santa Claus, is known to leave either coal or candy in stockings. In summary, I had a wonderful holiday in Italy!"

Kameron shares that she is writing an exchange book about her experiences in Italy. She says by the time her exchange is over it will be about 100 to 150 pages. Well done Kameron! A big Thank You to her host family in Italy and to her program in Italy (Mondo) for making her exchange year one to write about!

Visiting Memphis

By ASSE FLEX Scholarship Student Martin from Georgia

ASSE FLEX Scholarship Student Martin from Georgia and his host family have traveled over the Winter holidays to show Martin more corners of the USA and help him discover more of his host country culture and history.

Martin says, "We celebrated Christmas in Memphis, Tennessee where Elvis Presley was born, visited a lot of interesting places and learned so many new things. This trip is amazing. We spent an amazing time together doing a lot of interesting activities as a family. I am very grateful to my host family for having an awesome opportunity to visit so many places and for having a great exchange experience."

We love Martin's enthusiasm and we thank the Walker family for the big role they play in making his exchange year unforgettable! Huge thanks to Area Representative John Jones and Round Rock High School as well, for together helping make his dream of exchange become reality!



Martin and his host family

...Continued from front page

experienced all of this! Yes, she has had some rough days in the past. But, JuJu has faced her fears and insecurities head on!

In France they don't even play softball, but



Juju (left) at painting class with Area Representative Jane Moorman

that didn't stop JuJu. She joined the team and played and even made an RBI!! She has also joined the Student Council at the high school and has become a strong member of our spiritual center. She is making strong connections with the teens and will even be attending a camp in January. And through all the strangeness, lack of understanding, difficulty with the language, she has maintained straight A's in all her classes!

Juju rode on a float that she helped decorate in the Homecoming Parade, attended her first homecoming dance, and received her first Texas Mum. She has fallen in love with guacamole and vegetarian food, and has joined her host families' strong belief to fight for our environment, even calling her family in France asking them to stop using straws and plastic!

Juju has a sense of humor and keeps them laughing constantly! She

and her host sister have become best friends which they believe will last a lifetime. Her host parents took her to Colorado where she hiked mountains and saw snow for the first time. She has experienced her first fair, ate her first corn dog, attended concerts, taken road trips, and on and on. She approaches all these experiences with an open mind, open heart and pure excitement!

Her host parents are still so excited to show JuJu many more firsts in her remaining time here. They have come to love JuJu with all their hearts and will forever have a family and home wherever they are. They say, "We love our little JuJu to pieces!! We are all so very proud of you for facing your fears and can't wait to see what the next few months bring!"

Thank you to the Slevira family in Forney, Texas for opening their home and helping JuJu to experience her many

firsts. Thank you to Area Representative Jane Moorman for helping to make her exchange year unforgettable.



Juju (left) with host sister at homecoming

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 the fun!



ASSE FLEX scholarship student Agnese (center front) from Latvia says, "Dancing ballet has been my dream since childhood and now that it has come true. It's so unbelievable. Being part of The Nutcracker ballet show was really amazing and will definitely be one of the unforgettable parts in my exchange. Thank you FLEX Program for this unbelievable experience!"

Thank You for sharing this special moment with us, Agnese, and huge thanks to the Puente family in Casa Grande, Arizona for warmly welcoming Agnese into your home and for making her dream of exchange possible with the help of Area Representative Gary Smothers.



What a lovely photo capturing what the exchange experience is all about, the little things like when World Heritage Spanish Scholarship (FAO) student Mikel and his host siblings enjoyed an autumn afternoon together.

A huge thanks to the Rea family in Colchester, Vermont for welcoming Mikel into their home and to World Heritage Area Representative Luciana Swenson for making such amazing experiences happen for so many of our students and host families!



ASSE FLEX Scholarship student Khrystyna from Ukraine was a contestant at Miss Merry Christmas 2019 and the best part was her host family being there to support her. Khrystyna shared, "This chapter of my life feels really good because of the people that make my experience in the USA unforgettable; my host family and friends. I am very lucky, happy and thankful to all of them, and I couldn't even ask for something better!"

We thank Khrystyna for sharing this memory with our community and the Kremp family in Lamar, Missouri for everything they do to make her exchange experience an amazing one! Thank you to Area Representative Jill Hartgrave as well for helping make this happen!



World Heritage FLEX scholarship student Symbat from Kazakhstan shares, "Thank you and bye 2019. I have accomplished so many goals I set last year, and the biggest achievement was becoming an exchange student. I met so many wonderful people I am grateful to my FLEX family, my host family, and my American friends. Those are the people who were and are supporting me throughout 2019. I am grateful to my family, that believed in me and did everything to help me reach my goals. 2020, I am ready to learn and make new memories."

Huge thanks to the Musquez family in Beeville, Texas and World Heritage Area representative Thomas Cox for together helping make Symbat's exchange year happen!



Area Representative Audra Locke had a great school visit at Jourdanton High School in Jourdanton, Texas. "Thank you for welcoming our students into your school community each year!," shared Audra. She is pictured (middle left) with ASSE exchange students Lukas from Germany (ASSE), Elena from Italy (Mondo Insieme), Alla from Ukraine (FLEX Scholarship), and Astrid from France (PIE). Huge thanks to all their host families as well for making possible their dreams of exchange. Thank you to Audra for everything you do for the exchange world!



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas. Outbound exchange student Anna from Newark, Ohio who is spending her exchange year in France and her host mom were enjoying some holiday joy at the Galerie Lafayette in Paris. Can you imagine doing your Christmas shopping in Paris next year?

Thank you Anna for sharing this wonderful photo and to her program in France (PIE) for giving her a wonderful experience.



Pictured is ASSE exchange student Johanna from Estonia (right) with her host siblings. Johanna shared, "You don't have to be related to feel like family. I am so thankful to them for letting me join their family." We can tell from their genuine smiles that they have built a strong sibling bond.

Huge thanks to the Berka family in Claremore, Oklahoma for warmly welcoming Johanna into their home and for offering her an amazing exchange experience. Also thank you to Area Representative Melody Rabbitt as well for helping make such connections happen.



ASSE FLEX Scholarship student Misheel from Mongolia on the left, her host mother, and one of their host family's former exchange students dressed up for the Winter holiday season. Misheel shares, "I want to thank my family for making my first Christmas so special. They treated me as a family member the moment I came and I could not be more grateful."

A big 'Thank You' to the Lehmann family in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota for warmly welcoming Misheel into their home and to Area Representative Kim Brill for helping make this experience happen for both the host family and the student.



Snow Day in Arkansas! World Heritage Flex Scholarship student Miranda from Georgia (pictured on the right) had some fun playing in the snow with her host sisters! Perfect snow to build a snowman!

Thank you to the Allen family in Van Buren, Arkansas for the great photo.



Among all the things ASSE Exchange Student Anna from France (PIE) will always be appreciative of regarding her exchange experience, is the special connection she has with her little host sister. It will probably result in a long distance friendship for her to cherish forever. Anna's host mother shares, "She's such a nice kid and she isn't 'too cool' to play silly games with her kid sister."

Huge thanks to host mother Cheryl Sims for sharing this lovely photo of the girls, and the entire Sims family in Goldvein, Virginia for warmly welcoming Anna into your home! Thank you to ASSE Area Representative Rebecca Ciavolella for helping make such connections happen.



When our students from ASSE Mexico realized the Italian flag is almost like theirs. Cultures coming together during a high school exchange year to Quebec, Canada!

Pictured front row are Lisa, Betsy, and Gabriel. Back row are Hugo, Maria, Emiliano and Franck.

Thank you ASSE Canada for providing such a wonderful opportunity to students studying in beautiful Quebec!

*FAO – Foundation Amancio Ortega Scholarship

*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

Worth Every Second

By ASSE Mexico Exchange Student Daniela enjoying her exchange year in France

ASSE Mexico student Daniela shares her experience in France. "It has been a few months since my arrival in France and what I can say is that it has been a unique experience that does not compare with anything in the world! I live in a small city in the south of France and the truth is that I have made an incredible connection with my host family. It's amazing how they have opened their home and have given me so much even though they didn't know me before.



Daniela is enjoying her day

I know that I have not been here for a long time but after living what I have since my arrival to France, I recommend to everybody that is interested in living the exchange experience to take a risk and move forward for a year as exchange student. Try all the new things available since there are a thousand things to learn from the first day you arrive. Of course you miss your family, but it's only a year and I would say it is worth it since every second you are learning all about the culture of France. You will also be improving a lot in the language since all day you will be listening to it. There may be difficult days but nothing that you can't handle and adapt."

Thank you Daniela for sharing your experience in France and big thank you to her her program in France (PIE) for giving her the unique experience.

American Traditions

By ASSE FLEX Scholarship Exchange Student Meri from Armenia enjoying her exchange year in Johnstown, Ohio



Meri and her friends getting ready for Homecoming

ASSE FLEX scholarship student Meri from Armenia shares with us her experience in the USA so far. "It's already a few months in the US and I have enjoyed it so much. I would love to share some stories with you all! A few months ago, I had my first family trip to Pennsylvania. During the short period of time we managed to enjoy the beautiful sights. Our house was next to Erie lake - a beautiful scenery, sunset, boating, biking, touring, and exploring - just a scenic byway to enjoy your time. We also visited Tom Ridge Environmental Center which is an educational center helping to preserve the unparalleled beauty of Presque Isle, the site of Pennsylvania's only seashore. We spend unforgettable time together and the trip made us more united.

Two weeks later it was the "Homecoming day" in my school. I was able to join my friends' group. First we had photo session together then we had lunch and went to the dances.

A couple of months ago I was invited to an American wedding. It was quite different from what we usually have in my country, but was

really interesting. What's important to mention is that I met alumni and current ASSE students from five different countries (Ukraine, Estonia, Montenegro, France and Thailand). After the wedding my family organized a campfire and we invited all the ASSE students. We had an amazing time together."

During International Education Week, Meri talked to American students about her country. She says, "It was my first time to represent my country to the students, which was both fun and challenging for me. It seems to be responsible for representing a country which is literally new for Americans. I found it to be successful after the presentation seeing teachers' and students' reactions. How can one not be happy when you are asked to teach them about your country? This is a big success for me. I am coming from a country which has 3000 years of history so I included the most important and entertaining facts about my country of Armenia. First, I talked about the geographical location, about historical places, churches, religion and symbols of Armenia. I talked about famous Armenian people, fun and weird festivals, Armenian cuisine and the capital city of Yerevan. I taught



Meri in traditional dress

them Armenian words, how to spell their names and the Armenian national dance. Every Friday, I am going to teach my history class traditional dances. I am glad to be given this opportunity to represent my small community to a big community. My school's student council interviewed me. I was asked questions about my country, culture and traditions. Soon they are going to publish the interview in the school newspaper. I am so excited!"

I went to Gahanna Holiday Light with my host family. It's a big honor to be in this family where they encourage me to be involved in the U.S. community and culture. Thank you to my host parents, host sister for her support, and my ASSE Area Representative Pamela Ianni for having a huge impact on my exchange year."

Thank you to the Wilford family for showing Meri some great traditions here in the U.S.



Meri and her classmates

Part of a Team

By YES scholarship student Jescille from Philippines enjoying her exchange year in Hagerman, New Mexico



Jescille in her cheer uniform

ASSE Yes Scholarship Student Jescille from the Philippines is sharing the highlights of her American experience so far. "The most fun and exciting part of September was putting on my uniform, makeup and cheering for the football team in Hagerman. I received the most amazing privilege when my coach in cheer asked me and my host sister to sing the "Star-Spangled Banner" for two home games and 1 prep rally. I also met the most amazing girls that make my days and keep me from missing my home so much. I was

surprised because these past months I didn't miss home. Thank you ASSE and YES for letting me experience this kind of activity!"

Thank you, Jescille for sharing what a great time you are having in Hagerman, New Mexico! None of this would have been possible without the help of the Nichols family, who welcomed her into their home and Hagerman High School for accepting and offering her such unique opportunities. We thank you for helping make this happen!

Forever Family

By ASSE Host Mom and Area Representative Pam Ianni in Ohio

When you have exchange students live with your family, you may think you'll have an opportunity to show someone a bit of American life. You never know how much it will change your own life and the lives of your family. Our family had not travelled much and had never been out of the country. Sixteen years ago Adriane Wagner asked me if I would host a Japanese student for a language camp. We decided on a Thai boy and Japanese boy. This fall, Nuk (our first student from Thailand) attended our son and daughter-in-law's wedding. He has been here for all three of our children's weddings. Chris, from France, has also attended all 3 weddings. Anastasiya, from Ukraine also attended. Anastasiya lived with us 5 years ago and her parents designed and crafted the engagement ring as well as the wedding bands.

So many students are a part of our forever family. We love them like our own children. Our children have always had a place to stay as they have travelled as well. Our exchange students have shared so many aspects of life with us. The exchange students with us at first were all older than our children and now they are all younger. They have graduated, gotten advanced degrees, gotten married, and had babies and they have seen our children graduate, get married, have babies, and watched us care for elderly parents in our home which is the realities of life. I would not have traded this experience for anything. What a privilege to have been a part of ASSE's exchange student program.

A huge thank you to the Ianni family in Pataskala, Ohio for sharing your family with so many exchange students.



Picture left to right: Chris (France), Anastasiya (Ukraine), Nuk (Thailand), Heather and Sam Ianni, and students in the US this year attending the wedding, Marko (Montenegro), Meri (Armenia), Mei (Estonia)