

International Festival

By ASSE Exchange Students Adinai and Meerim (FLEX Kyrgyzstan) and Kateryna (FLEX Ukraine)

ASSE Exchange Students shared their culture during the Annual International Festival of North Alabama in Huntsville, Alabama USA. The one-day, family-friendly spectacular included global performances, international cuisine, countries exhibition, music, and free hands-on children's games and crafting.

According to ASSE Area Representative, Cindy Thigpen, an ASSE host mom is one of the organizers of the event and specifically the organizer for the children's craft section. ASSE Exchange Student Adinai (FLEX Kyrgyzstan) created a children's craft and worked hard all day helping children learn about Kyrgyzstan through the crafting activity. Both Adinai and ASSE Exchange Student Meerim (FLEX Kyrgyzstan) wore their traditional dress and talked with attendees about their traditional foods, clothing, etc.

Kateryna (FLEX Ukraine)
ASSE Exchange Student

Vinochky are traditional flower crowns which were an essential part of young girls clothing 3 centuries ago. Vinochky are made of flowers and stripes so although we couldn't use real flowers children still enjoyed making them.

The other craft was harder to make but it was even more interesting and culturally relevant. We taught older children and adults how to make Ukrainian national embroidery. Of course most children couldn't repeat the first pattern but it was exciting to watch them do it their own way. They also asked questions about



ASSE Exchange Student Kateryna (FLEX Ukraine) guides children in learning about Ukrainian national embroidery

Ukrainian culture.

I worked on my crafts with only several volunteers but it was extremely rewarding. The Festival was an amazing experience for me. Firstly, I discovered a lot of new things about cultures of different countries such as Ethiopia, Ireland, Poland, Thailand and much more. And secondly, I met a lot of Ukrainians who moved to Huntsville a year or even 40 years ago. I talked to them, we shared our experience and it is

truly amazing to meet somebody from your country on the other side of the world. However the most important thing such events like this make us realize is: no matter if you're Russian, German, Japanese or American, most of all, you are a person and we all are people.

~ Kateryna

Meerim (FLEX Kyrgyzstan)
ASSE Exchange Student

It was a really good and exciting event for me. I was proud of myself that I'm presenting my country to others and showing my country in the map so they can find it!

~ Meerim

Adinai (FLEX Kyrgyzstan)
ASSE Exchange Student

I learned a lot about other countries. This festival was a really great bridge between peoples of various nations. Thanks to this I was able to better represent my country. I am very thankful for being able to be a part of this wonderful event. Thank you.

~ Adinai



ASSE Exchange Student Adinai (FLEX Kyrgyzstan) taught about her native country while assisting with children's crafts.



Adinai and Meerim, ASSE FLEX Exchange Students from Kyrgyzstan and Adinai's host brother Matt share about the Kyrgyz culture to festival attendees.

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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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Weathering the Storm

By ASSE Exchange Students Faysal (YES Lebanon), Zlata (FLEX Ukraine), World Heritage Exchange Student Vittoria (Italy), World Heritage host dad Ken and ASSE Area Representative Darlene Ritchey with ASSE Exchange Students Valeriya (FLEX Ukraine) and Tianyu (China)

Shortly after their arrivals, ASSE Exchange Students living in Texas joined local volunteers to help their communities in Hurricane Harvey relief efforts.



ASSE Exchange Students Faysal (YES Lebanon) and Zlata (FLEX Ukraine) stepped right in to help the victims of Hurricane Harvey at the St. Andrews Church in Pleasanton, Texas USA. They served food to the evacuees and helped to bring donations from drop off spots to storage areas.



World Heritage host dad Ken says that World Heritage Exchange Student Vittoria (Italy), “met Harvey the day after arriving. Not to be deterred she rolled up her sleeves helping host mom Cara load supplies for the rescued horses. What a trooper. We just love her.” Vittoria says, “We don’t have hurricanes in Italy, so for me everything was new and I felt very sorry for what was going on; I also felt that I had to do something for the people affected by the hurricane and I enjoyed the time spent helping others along with my host family.”



ASSE Exchange Students Tianyu “Albert” (China) and Valeriya “Lera” (FLEX Ukraine) joined ASSE Area Representative Darlene Ritchey at Katy Christian Ministries at the Methodist Church in Katy, Texas, USA “We worked in a distribution center and our job was to find outfits for those affected by the hurricane. We were blessed to help even if it was small. It was a very humbling experience,” shares ASSE Area Representative Darlene Ritchey. Albert also noted that he felt good about volunteering and would like to do more.

Thank you to all that have given of their time and resources to assist in your local communities! Your efforts make a difference!

Helping Families in Need

By ASSE Exchange Student Daniel (FLEX Romania)

ASSE Area Representative, Amy Chamberlain organized a volunteer activity for her ASSE students which benefited the Cincinnati Ronald McDonald House. As a mom of a special needs child, Amy is giving her ASSE Exchange students Daniel (FLEX Romania) and Kate (Australia) the opportunity to learn practical ways of showing support to families in need. The day also included a visit to President Taft’s house and a stop at the historic Lunken Air Field

Daniel (FLEX Romania) also volunteers for ‘Share a Meal’ at Gabriel’s

Place, a community garden in an urban setting where there was an absence of fresh food alternatives and nutrition education.

**Daniel (FLEX Romania)
ASSE Exchange Student**

I love it! Chef Mike is a very friendly person, and I learn a lot of culinary skills from him. Also the people there are friendly and are happy to see me as a student volunteer. When they notice my accent, they ask a lot of question about my home country, which makes me happy.

~ Daniel



ASSE Exchange Students, Daniel (FLEX Romania) and Kate (Australia) learn practical ways of showing support to families in need by stocking the Ronald McDonald House with breakfast bags, snack bags and light lunch bags.

Destination Alaska

By ASSE Exchange Students Daniel (FAO Spain) and ASSE Host Mom Crystal Nygard (Palmer, Alaska USA)

**Daniel (FAO Spain)
ASSE Exchange Student**

I’m having a really great time up here in Alaska, with a bunch of cultural experiences since I came here. This was one of them where we picked about two baskets of apples that afternoon. It was a lot of fun and we made sure they had no bruising on them!

~Daniel

**Crystal Nygard
ASSE Host Mom and
ASSE Area Representative
(Palmer, Alaska USA)**

We picked the right son for our son. Lots of students to choose from...we picked the right one for us.

~Crystal

Crystal also wants the world to know that Alaska is a fantastic location for an exchange year. As an ASSE Area Representative,

Crystal says it often happens that students wonder ‘where is Alaska’ when initially receiving their placement but students love it once they arrive. Alaska is an open, friendly state and very welcoming to a variety of nationalities. Often students aren’t expecting to see a variety of wildlife and it is wonderful to see moose in the yard!



ASSE Exchange Student Daniel (FAO Spain) and his host brother Nik make picking apples in Palmer, Alaska, USA a fun opportunity!

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 gathered in Milan, Italy for student orientation. After the morning lesson, the group took the train to Como. Besides visiting the city center, they enjoyed the cable railway and a walk to the lighthouse for a view of Como Lake.

Standing by the Como Cathedral "Duomo" are ASSE Exchange Students Anabelle (Rockland, Ontario, Canada), Cole (Aurora, Colorado, USA), Makayla (Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA), Madeline (Swartz Creek, Michigan, USA), Jessica (Peru, Illinois, USA), Luca (Washington, D.C., USA)



ASSE Exchange Student, Alexa (Winter Garden, Florida, USA), enjoyed meeting some local Australian animals.

"I am so thankful that I have been able to spend the past year of my life in Australia and I wouldn't trade it for anything! I have learned to live life from a different perspective while making lasting friendships and memories!"

~Alexa



The relationships built during the exchange year often continue long after the exchange student returns home. ASSE Exchange Student Essie (2014-15 Finland) returned this summer to visit her host family.

ASSE Host mom Jean Huelsman said, "We were delighted and honored Essie came back to visit. During her 3 weeks stay we visited Silver Lake Michigan Sand Dunes, took in the Aladdin play as well as many of the sites in Chicago. Most of all we enjoyed playing board games like old times." Reflecting on the year that Essie spent with the Huelsman family, ASSE host mom Jean shared, "Our daughter especially enjoyed it because she does not have a sister. Essie and Hannah were a great match because they are both serious about their studies."



ASSE Exchange Students met in Madrid for a week to learn about the Spanish culture and to strengthen language skills prior to meeting their host families. In addition to classes and workshops, the students were guided on a night walk during their last day in Madrid.

One of the stops was the Plaza de Cibeles in front of the City Council.

Students reported the time in Madrid was memorable and a wonderful way to begin their exchange year in Spain!



ASSE Exchange Students excited for the adventure ahead!

Students from USA, English Canada and Mexico met at the departure gate when heading to Copenhagen, Denmark. Some students met their new host family in Denmark and others continued on to their final destination in Sweden, Norway or Finland.



ASSE Student Orientation in Maryland included both setting the stage for a great year as well as a fun filled time of adventure at the Ocean City Beach, Maryland, USA.

ASSE Area Coordinator, Elizabeth Milby said, "It was fun to think that we were standing right beside the ocean that the students had just crossed to begin their exchange year in the USA!"

From left to right: ASSE Exchange Student Gustave (France), ASSE Area Coordinator Elizabeth Milby, ASSE Area Representative Suzanne Kristensen, ASSE Exchange Students Sozic (France), Paloma (Spain), Auriane (France), Susan (CBYX Germany), Rodrigo (Spain), Liliana (FLEX Moldova), Oleksandra (FLEX Ukraine) and ASSE Area Representative Heather Johnson



ASSE American CBYX (Congress Bundestag Youth Exchange) Scholarship Exchange Students gathered in Washington D.C. USA July 31 - August 2, 2017 prior to departing to Germany.

During the preparation meetings, students visited the office of Senators/Representatives from their home state and district; visited Smithsonian museums and National Monuments; met with the U.S. Department of State CBYX Program Officers and had discussions to prepare for the new cultural experience awaiting them in Germany

*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



Spreading Joy

By Robin Beal, ASSE Area Representative,
Merritt Island, Florida USA

ASSE Area Representative Robin Beal inspired her group of newly arrived ASSE Exchange Students to join in the local effort “Brevard Rocks FL” which fulfills the community wide goal of ‘spreading joy’ through painted

rocks hidden around the county. ASSE Exchange Students’ artistic talents helped spread the word about ASSE and the variety of countries represented in the county this year!

ASSE Exchange Students proudly show their rocks painted to ‘spread joy’ throughout their American host community.

Left to right: Irene (Italy), Giselle (CBYX Germany), Tergel (Mongolia), Aya (YES Philippines), Victor (FAO Spain), Alla (FLEX Kazakhstan), Lorenzo (Italy)

Thriving in Japan

By Tonya Reeves, mom of ASSE Exchange Student Caleb (Brendon, Mississippi, USA) spending his exchange in Japan.

Caleb has definitely had the opportunity of a lifetime. Everyone in Japan has been very good to him. Caleb has gotten to speak at his high school, other schools, and had some interviews about his exchange experience. Over summer break in Japan, he was able to go to English camp and teach English to Japanese students.

As a mother it has been difficult letting my 16 year old go to another country and never imagined this would happen for him. However, it has been

very rewarding watching him grow, overcome his shyness, gain confidence in himself, and become a leader. Not only has he made friends in Japan but also he has made many friends with other exchange students from around the world. Caleb has thrived in this experience and learned so much about himself. Caleb and I are thankful to have chosen ASSE and we are thankful for the support he has received from ASSE!

~ Tonya



ASSE Exchange Student Caleb (Brendon, Mississippi, USA) with his Japanese host family.

A Warm Welcome!

By ASSE Exchange Student, Diana (FLEX Ukraine) and ASSE Host Family, Nathan and Sue Carter of Thompson, North Dakota, USA

Soon after arriving in the US, ASSE Exchange Student Diana (FLEX Ukraine) celebrated her birthday. Her host family, Nathan and Sue Carter surprised Diana by renting a local sign board for the day and dropping off cupcakes with one of the teachers to share with classmates. The day ended with a bonfire for friends after the high school football game.

Diana (FLEX Ukraine)
ASSE Exchange Student

My birthday here was the best ever! I never had such a wonderful celebration and a lot of surprises. I had no words when I saw the birthday & welcome sign. The bonfire was great too. I am happy and love my American family!

~ Diana



ASSE Exchange Student, Diana (FLEX Ukraine) stands with the sign proclaiming her birthday and welcome to the residents of Thompson, North Dakota, USA.

Awesome Quebec Canada!

By ASSE Exchange Student Antea (Italy) discovering about Canada living with her host family in Deux-Montagnes, Quebec, Canada

My name is Antea, a 17 year old Italian exchange student living in Quebec. The months before the departure one thinks a lot about the new experience, what will I do, my host family, my school, my friends and what life will be, but trust me, it’s all completely different from the expectations.

Visiting a Canadian city is also discovering the history, food, culture and people. One can see cities rich of history with all the monuments, like in Quebec City, and modern cities with skyscrapers and street art, like Montreal. In Montreal one can visit districts of different nationalities such as China Town or little Italy. If you want to taste different types of food you can go to Jean Talon market where you can find all sorts of meals such as Mexican tacos, Moroccan couscous, Italian pizza or Lebanese shawarma pita and at the same time, you can have some of the best and most local maple syrup or the national poutine.

One can visit awesome shopping malls, beautiful bridges, enormous constructions or go to thrilling

amusement parks but the thing that is the most striking is the landscape. Canada’s nature is one of the most alluring sights in the

world. There are places completely immersed in nature such as my host family’s chalet where we go and stay during weekends. Here



Antea, ASSE Exchange Student (Italy) experiences the Canadian nature kayaking on the lake at her host family’s chalet.

I can read a book and drink a cup of hot tea on the dock of the lake, walk in the forest filled with autumn colours or do kayaking on the lake.

Spending time with my host family allows me to discover more about the Canadian life style to learn many “Quebecois” expressions. In Quebec I was lucky to spend Thanksgiving with a diverse family made up of different people with different culture such as Quebecois, Italians and Jewish people while having conversations in English, French and even Franglais. It’s one of the aspects that I love the most of Quebec: the importance of the family. It doesn’t matter the nationality or the language that you speak, people from Quebec are able to welcome you as a member of their family. I have learned that even if you have problems you can find someone who can help you.

So if you have the possibility, travel! Travel to see new places, travel to find new cultures, travel to meet new people but especially travel to discover yourself and the world.

~ Antea