Quebec – A Fantastic Place

By Nutcha Duriyaprakit, ASSE Exchange Student (Thailand) enjoying her exchange year with the Fortin/Denis Family in Compton, Quebec, Canada

Nutcha Duriyaprakit
ASSE Exchange Student (Thailand)

“Since I’ve come here to Quebec, Canada, there are many good things that have happened in my life. My host family Josée and Allen are very kind. They never tire helping me with my French or English. They are the best host family and I am proud to be their student. Quebec is very fantastic place with both nice weather and beautiful nature. There are many places that impress me a lot such as the Foresta Lumina, a night illuminated pathway in Coaticook, Quebec. I also like Quebec city and Montmorency Falls.

The people here are very gentle as are my friends at school. I study at École secondaire La Frontalière, a bilingual school so I can improve both English and French. It isn’t easy to understand them as they speak fast for me but I like the exciting challenge. They teach me to be stronger and not to give up.”

– Nutcha

Allen Fortin and Josée Denis
ASSE Host Parents (Quebec, Canada)

Host parents Allen and Josée have hosted for 14 years and say that every year they have a nice surprise with each exchange student. This year in describing Nutcha, they said, “Every day we are surprised by her progress and desire to learn our language. She is very involved in school (dancing and album/yearbook). She already has a large circle of friends and the school is honored to have her among their students. We have no children at home and her presence keeps us young. Nutcha make us smile every day and also gives a touch of madness in the household.”

– Allen and Josée

Ohio Amish Experience

ASSE Exchange Students, their host families and Area Representatives spent a day touring the Amish community in Holmes County, Ohio USA. After making their way through the traffic jam of horse buggies the group started a tour where they learned about the Amish school, tasted apple butter, rode a buggy and got to meet the farm animals. They rounded up their day by having dinner at a family restaurant that serves traditional Amish food.

Sairem Khan (YES Pakistan) said that it was very surprising to learn that “the Amish do not get any sort of funding from the government but still are able to run their system just fine.” Most interesting for Italian exchange student Adele Fontana (Italy) was to learn “how their school works because it’s basically a little building with only one class and they study only certain subjects.” Lena Schneider (CBYX Germany) and Julia Egger (CBYX Germany) were surprised to find out that Amish communities have a German background.

Ivan Hyrn (FLEX Ukraine) said the best part of the day was communicating with all the other exchange students: “All of them are great and unusual.” Students and host families not only learned about the Amish culture but also about each other’s cultures during the day!

ASSE Exchange Students learning about the Amish

Front row – Left to Right: Esther Ripoll Camps (FAO Spain), Barışcan Kalkan (FLEX Kazakhstan), Julia Egger (CBYX Germany)

Back Row – Left to Right: Giorgi Eristaveli (FLEX Georgia), Ivan Hyrn (FLEX Ukraine), Sairem Khan (YES Pakistan), Jessica Joyce (Australia), Anna But (FLEX Ukraine), Lena Sophie Schneider (CBYX Germany)
Inspiration and Growth

By Gassan Kassim, ASSE YES Exchange Student (Israel) 2009-10 who spent his exchange year with Mr. John Jones, Copperas Cove, Texas USA

Being a YES student was a mile-stone in my ongoing path of growth and evolution. It was an experience that undoubtedly helped shape a larger part of the person I am today. It taught me the meaning of independence, leadership, commitment, tolerance, friendship and compassion. It proved to me that life is beautiful, that the universe is a friendly place and that all people are inherently good. It showed me how our similarities far outweigh our differences. In fact, it made it clear to me that mutual understanding and human connection are crucial and of utmost importance when it comes to tearing down walls of prejudice, and building up bridges of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence. I believe that these core values that the YES experience instilled in me are priceless, and they are ought to be shared with every global citizen in our day and age.

Mr. Jones as my host father is truly a blessing! There are no words that can serve justice to this man and to all the great things he has done, and still does. For the past 20 years or so, Mr. Jones has been hosting 2 students every year and I was lucky to be one of those kids back in 2008 along with Mustafa Musayev (FLEX Kazakhstan) as my host brother. Mr. Jones taught us character, compassion, respect, courage and independence; priceless gifts! He opened his home for us, he cooked for us, he entertained us when we were bored, he taught us about life, he shared his endless life experiences with us, he took us to the hospital when we were sick, he sang with us, he played with us, he took us on vacations, whether it was Kansas, San Francisco, Hawaii, or Hollywood. Above all, he loved us like a father would love his son.

Mr. Jones has a very deep passion for the youth. He believes that we hold the key to a brighter future, and that is what drives him to do all the great things that he does for us. The way I see it now, teenagers that undertake the exchange student journey are thrown into such an exciting and intense experience, that all these values that I mentioned penetrate so deep into us and they are engraved into our souls. Mr. Jones has mastery when it comes to teaching teenagers how to evolve and how to transform into the best possible version of self. Years later when we grow to become leaders in whatever field life brings us into, I believe that these values will be our subconscious operating system that will govern our decision making and ensure that we bring this world into unity, peace, and prosperity. Few words about myself:

After completing my exchange year back in 2009, I went back to Israel and completed my high school education. I then went into my medical studies in the medical school of DeBrecen, Hungary and I will be graduating in December of this year. This past summer 2016, I did clinical rotations at Mount Sinai hospital, New York City, USA and I visited Mr. Jones, while I was preparing to take the second exam of US medical licensing. After I graduate, I will start my 1 year internship in Israel and then plan to apply for a residency program in the US to continue my medical education. I hope to be able to give back for all the great things I have been given.

– Gassan

Reunion in Paris

By ASSE Alumni Exchange Student Giovanna Zaino (Italy 2010) and host sister Emily Rogers, Wake Forest, North Carolina, USA.

Host sisters, Giovanna Zaino, ASSE Exchange Student 2010 (Italy) and Emily Rogers were able to spend several hours together recently at the Louvre in Paris, France. Giovanna is pursuing her Master’s degree in Paris and host sister Emily visited France with a school trip.

Giovanna Zaino

ASSE Alumni Exchange Student

I was pretty excited meeting my little host sister in Europe, and felt lucky to have the chance to be in Paris the same days that she was coming in Europe, and felt lucky to have the chance to spend time with Gio so many years after hosting (in Paris, of all places!). Spending a week in France was an incredible experience and getting to meet up with Giovanna made it that much better!

– Emily

Coralee Rogers

ASSE Host Mom (North Carolina, USA)

So you see... at the end of 10 months, a new family is created... one that extends beyond your front door and without the limits of time or distance!

– Coralee

Jodi Kiefer Memorial Scholarship

The Legacy Continues!

The legacy continues with the Jodi Kiefer Memorial Scholarship to Spain - in memory of Jodi Kiefer, dedicated advocate for the ASSE & World Heritage International Student Exchange Programs for over 25 years, in cooperation with ASSE, SHE Herencia and the Kiefer Family, ASSE offers one full scholarship to Spain in the 2017-18 school year covering 100% of the program fee, round trip airfare, one field trip in Spain, comprehensive insurance and monthly pocket money.

Having benefited from high school international exchange firsthand, after college Jodi began a lifelong career with ASSE. She believed that one student can make a huge impact and helped thousands of American families and teenagers from other countries realize the value of cultural exchange.

ASSE 2016 Jodi Kiefer Memorial Scholarship recipient, Bailey Ford of Cortez, Colorado USA is spending her exchange year in Uruguay, The Netherlands, Italy and Hungary and I will be graduating in December of this year. This past summer 2016, I did clinical rotations at Mount Sinai hospital, New York City, USA and I visited Mr. Jones, while I was preparing to take the second exam of US medical licensing. After I graduate, I will start my 1 year internship in Israel and then plan to apply for a residency program in the US to continue my medical education. I hope to be able to give back for all the great things I have been given.

– Gassan
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/WH students had a 'super fun' activity in Danville, Vermont, USA visiting 'The Great Vermont Corn Maze', the largest maze in New England.**

*First Row:* Heidi Halkjaer and Lasse Heilesen (Denmark), Kajal Arya (YES India), Mariam Vardikyan (FLEX Armenia), Sara Bellon Martinez (Spain), Namman (Onjira) Juabkwamsuk (Thailand)

*Second Row:* Landry David, Megan Tauzin, Clara Arocas, Clement Soler and Emmanuel Lafficher (France), ASSE/WH Area Representative Luciana Swenson, Elena Sanna (Italy), Rukayyah Kaita (YES Nigeria), Sara Bellon Martinez (Spain), Namman (Onjira) Juabkwamsuk (Thailand)

ASSE/WH Exchange Students Arianna Capriglio (Italy) and Emiliano Barrera Fuentes (Mexico) joined ASSE/WH Area Representative Kathy Cross and her ASSE Exchange Students enjoyed visiting the Virginia Beach International Neptune Festival. Many of the students had never been to the ocean and they loved being able to experience the waves and see the dolphins.

ASSE Exchange Students Dejan Tasdelen (Denmark) and Thachita Harfst (CBYX Germany) joined host mom Joana Elizabeth of New England, North Dakota USA in a community dinner theatre performance called "Pistols and Posies". "It is a great experience to perform with such a wonderful cast. The roles of 여러분이해도 유지의 역할은 항상 기억하고 싶어요."

ASSE American CBYX (Congress Bundestag Youth Exchange) Scholarship Exchange Students gathered in Washington, D.C., USA, August 1-3, 2016 prior to departing to Germany. During the preparatory meetings, students visited the office of Senators / Representatives from their home state and district; visited Smithsonian museums and National Memorials; met with U.S. Department of State CBYX Program Officers and had discussion sessions to prepare for the new cultural experience awaiting them in Germany.

Left to right: Kerstin Rinkleben (FLEX Georgia), Zuzanna Niwojko (FLEX Poland), Sandra Musaeebili (FLEX Georgia), Nkko Apye Dpepe Nqalamn (YES Cameroon), Davide Vittoria Berrucca (Italy), Irena Dineva (FLEX Moldova), Elena Furman (FLEX Moldova), Andrezhka Hanoveroon (FLEX Armenia), Mie Omura (Japan), Christine Hauge (Thailand)

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**USA is Amazing!**

By ASSE Exchange Student Antonio Segura Lopez, Spanish scholarship student through Foundation Amancio Ortega (FAO) living with the Izenberg Family in Manassas, Virginia USA

Antonio Segura Lopez

ASSE Exchange Student

It all started when my physics teacher in Spain told me that there was a scholarship for students to study in the USA that maybe could be a good experience for me. When they told me I got the scholarship I was really excited! I’m glad I applied because I’m having an amazing time here and I think that is the best decision I’ve ever made.

My host family is perfect; I enjoy spending time with them. Colgan High School, Prince William County, Virginia, USA is amazing! It’s a huge new high school with a lot of great things such as technology, a great library, really nice teachers and sports opportunities with an Olympic pool, an awesome track, nice fields and great coaches. I joined the cross county team. I love practice and I like spending time with my teammates.

In my first cross country meet, I ran in the junior varsity 5K and I won the race. The last race I ran was a really hard and muddy race but I won. Everybody was congratulating me!

I’m enjoying my time here with my host family and my new friends. I’m living a great experience here and I can’t wait to do new things and visit some amazing places here in the USA.

— Antonio

Dinorah Izenberg

ASSE Host Mom

My family has been hosting for the past three years. Antonio is adjusting very well. He is a very nice young man who excels academically and we are coming to find out he also excels athletically.

— Dinorah

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**The Memory Tree Flourishes!**

In the Fall 2010 ASSE Newsletter, host parents Anthony and Susie DiSabatino shared a photo of a cherry tree, a ‘memory tree’, ASSE FLEX Exchange Student Yuliya Ivanyuk (Ukraine) chose for planting at the end of her exchange year 2009-10.

Yuliya returned to visit the DiSabatino family in August 2016 as she travelled to the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Canada to complete her graduate degree in peace studies.

The DiSabatino’s are delighted that Yuliya and the tree have grown through the years. “Yuliya has become an incredible young woman who is representative of what the ASSE Exchange Program is all about! She completed her undergraduate degree at university in Kiev, Ukraine in 2016. Yuliya had rich and varied experiences: she interpreted for NATO conferences, participated in political and military presentations and operations, and volunteered with an organization that provided humanitarian care for displaced women and children due to conflict within her country.”

Yuliya shared that her year with ASSE and the U.S. Department of State sponsored FLEX scholarship program helped her the basis for the path she’s chosen in helping others globally.

Anthony DiSabatino continues, “We feel blessed that she has been a part of our lives and we have kept in contact with her on a weekly basis via Skype ever since she left us in 2010. Her parents must be very proud of the person she’s become, and we are thankful to them for giving their daughter up for a year to live with us. They must be extraordinary people to have done so!”

— Anthony DiSabatino

ASSE FLEX Alumni Exchange Student

( Ukraine) 2009-10, Yuliya Ivanyuk

interpreted with her ‘memory tree’!

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**Time Goes By Quickly!**

By Megan Moyes, ASSE Exchange Student (Ferndale, Washington, USA) enjoying her exchange experience in Cotton Hackett, Worcestershire, England

My time so far over here has been wonderful and I have loved every minute of it. School is very different for me compared to school back in the United States. Even though classes are harder here, I like it better.

Everyone has been so nice and friendly. I have made many new friends and I can’t wait to keep these friendships for a lifetime. Time really does go by quickly!

My host family life is wonderful and they were very welcoming and helpful. My host family has 4 younger children so the house can be quite noisy at times.

My host mom is a good cook and she has made lots of different meals for us, which have been good. I really like how they still do a traditional Sunday meal every week.

I have loved learning all the differences between the two cultures. I realize by a blank stare that the word was not understood. For example, on my first day, I was offered crisps, I said yes not really sure what I was saying yes to. It ended up being potato chips.

Another example is when my family said we are having pizza and chips for dinner and I thought that was a weird combination, but chips over here mean fries.

One of the first things I think of when I think of England is the old red telephone boxes. Since there was one near our house after we got off the bus one day, we took this picture because it just captures England for me.

— Megan

ASSE Exchange Student Megan Moyes (Ferndale, Washington, USA)

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**So Happy!**

By Maria Ledesma Rios, ASSE Exchange Student (Mexico) living with the Smith family in Griswold, Connecticut, USA

Since I arrived to the United States I have learned a lot of things with the new people that I have met. My family is so funny and we share many things in common. Many people have asked me how am I feeling in Griswold, Connecticut? Really I’m so happy, it is awesome! The people here is very nice, everything is different, the city, my new school, my friends, my family... but I like everything.

I miss so much the Mexican food, but also the American food is so delicious (mom and dad cook so good). Something new is that the Mexican food is not really our food. It is like a combination of Mexican and American food. It is crazy but pretty good! On Mexico Independence’s Day we cooked tacos and made tortillas!

I’ve gone to different places here, to the beach, to the mall, football games, and also spent time with some friends in Griswold. I’m happy, enjoying this experience!

— Maria

Maria Ledesma Rios, ASSE Exchange Student (Mexico) enjoying a moment with her host brother. Maria is the recipient of the 100% scholarship to experience an academic year in the USA.