Unforgettable New Beginnings in South Korea!

By Isabelle Brucellaria, ASSE Exchange Student (New Smyrna Beach, Florida USA)

spending her exchange year in Daegu, South Korea.

Megan and I were welcomed warmly by our host mother upon our arrival in South Korea on February 27th, after a 13 hour flight from our international gateway. Meeting her for the first time, we were relieved to see how enthusiastic she was about us becoming a part of her family, treating us as if we were natural family members, and making sure that we were as comfortable as possible. Our first night was great, and despite being tired from a long journey, we were still able to enjoy eating chicken with the family and learning more about each other.

Our first few days in Korea were labelled as our “honeymoon stage.” We explored Daegu, visiting the street markets, downtown, and even the school that we would soon be attending. During three few days, our host mom taught us that humor and body language was the key to breaking any language barrier.

School started March 3rd—something extremely nerve-wracking for me, considering I have only ever been homeschooled. Megan had her concerns as well, considering English wasn’t her first language, and she only knew how to say “hello” in Korean. Upon our arrival to school, Megan and I were immediately thrown into class. We had barely even entered our new classroom before screaming could be heard from everywhere. While sitting at our desks, girls instantly crowded around us, introducing themselves, complimenting us, and asking for our numbers. It calmed down a little after several days had passed, but we still randomly get crowded around or have students from other classes come to ours to say hi or just sneak a glance. It was quite a big culture shock since we hadn’t expected such big reactions from the students. Megan and I now have a collection of letters, drawings, and other small gifts from our classmates. They have all been so helpful and kind to us that I couldn’t think of a better first experience attending school.

After a week of being in Korea, our host mom decided that it would be interesting for us to see what it was like attending a Korean church. I’m glad she took us because we have gained a lot of new opportunities from it! The Priest even greeted us himself and after mass invited us to have coffee with him in his office.

We’ve been honored with so many great experiences, varying from wearing hanboks and exploring Korea’s history in Gyeongju, to relieving our stress in Noraebang with friends after school. We have also been able to eat so many delicious foods, although I have to admit that some of them have made me scream from shock (for example: my host mom scooped an anchovy head out of my soup when I wasn’t expecting it). This has been the most memorable time of my life. Besides gaining the life-changing experience of living in a foreign country and learning a new language and culture, I have also gained a family that I know I will keep in my heart forever.

~ Isabelle

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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.

Please send your best photograph and article to:

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World Heritage Exchange Students living in Georgia were treated to an event filled day while learning more about their host state! Setting in the gallery of the House of Representatives, they listened to the Governor speak about tourism and movies in Georgia. The photo with Governor Nathan Deal and with Georgia State Senator Marty Harbin was a highlight. Governor Deal took time to learn about the students’ home countries. He also explained that he had hosted a German student when his children were in school and they continue to keep in touch and even attended his exchange student’s wedding.

A visit to the Court of Appeals followed the Capitol. The students met Chief Judge Sara Doyle who explained the court system and how things are decided in the Appeals Court.

Pikria Tsutskiridze (FLEX Georgia) said, “It was an honor to meet the Georgia governor, senators, judicial court attorney and judge. I learned a lot of things about the Georgia State Capital building, how bills become laws and how the judicial system works.”

The day ended with a visit to Georgia Tech including a visit to the McAuley Aquatic Center which hosted the U.S. Olympic diving and swimming teams prior to the 2016 Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Left to Right: Yarinya Tsyknytets (FLEX Ukraine), World Heritage Area Représentative Bob Comeau, Polona Vasyurenko (FLEX Ukraine), Martina ‘Mari’ Mereu (Italy), Karle Paaskeesen (Denmark), World Heritage Area Représentative Lane Clemmons, Letizia Casa (Italy), Georgia Governor Nathan Deal, Sejo Iglio Lopez (PAO Spain), Sarah Reichert (Germany), Pikria Tsutskiridze (FLEX Georgia), World Heritage Area Coordinator hendric hende, Sulome Abukaldeh (FLEX Georgia), Georgia State Senator Harbin. (photo taken by Andrea Brucic, the governor’s photographer – photo used by permission)
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!

*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
2017-2018 Outbound Scholarship Winners!

We are very excited to announce the ASSE and World Heritage Outbound Scholarship Winners for the 2017-2018 Program Year!

We had a record number of excellent applications this year, and an amazing group of students have been chosen.

All of us at ASSE and World Heritage are very proud of our Outbound program - with good reason!

• The ASSE/WH Outbound Program is one of the largest – because we are dedicated to helping American High School Students go abroad!

• ASSE/WH Outbound students get to choose their destination country – other programs tell the students where they can go!

• The ASSE/WH Outbound Program does not require foreign language proficiency – but our kids are learning some in their new language.

• The ASSE/WH Outbound Program has the lowest fees that let us offer all inclusive

• ASSE/WH provide multiple scholarships for Outbound Students every year

The Walter Danielsen 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: In cooperation with SHE Herencia and the Kiefer Family, ASSE and World Heritage offer one full scholarship to Spain for the 2017-2018 school year. This 100% 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 students 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, well-qualified students who also have won because of their overall merit.

Hector Lopez Garcia of Carrollton, Texas USA is the recipient of the prestigious 100% Walter Danielsen Scholarship. Hector is the proud recipient of his exchange year in Germany. Hector is very active in his community and high school. His hobbies include playing soccer and basketball and he is a Juvenile Jury Member at the Municipal Court of Plans. Hector speaks 3 languages fluently, as a native from Mexico, he knows Spanish and English and learns French. He wishes to study in Germany to learn the German language and culture as he dreams of becoming a successful business man – now he has the chance and will put it to the test.

Tatum McCollough of Mountain View, Missouri USA was awarded the 100% Jodi Kiefer Memorial Scholarship and will spend 10 months in the Spanish. Coming from a small community in the Midwest, she takes active part in the opportunities she is offered. Tatum is part of the school’s cheerleading team and drama club. She loves playing the guitar and reading. Tatum is an active member of her church and volunteers at the local youth center. 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.

Laurel Mulhy-Alexander of Bridgeport, West Virginia USA will spend her exchange year in Mexico as an ASSE 90% scholarship winner. She is involved in her high school’s Spanish Club, the Thespian Troupe and Chess Club. Laurel loves to read, cook, learn and volunteers in her free time at the local hospital. She is also a member of the local 4-H club and a cadet in Girl Air Patrol. This year will be a giant leap for her to take and she recognizes the importance of the ambassador role she is taking on.

Danielle Suerensen of Vero Beach, Florida USA cannot wait until her exchange adventure begins in France. She has been awarded a 90% scholarship. She has been learning French for 2 years and loves the history and culture of France. Danielle believes that cultural exchange is the key to humanity and wants to build a past, present and future that will forever inspire others. She is an active member of her school’s writing club and enjoys technical theatre, photography, running, reading and music. Danielle plays 4 instruments and also has a passion for languages. We believe she will represent the United States very well in France!

Alicia Griggs of Simi Valley, California USA is looking forward to her exchange year in Italy next fall beginning this fall on a 90% scholarship. She is an active volunteer in her community and helps regularly at the local soup kitchen with a variety tasks from warehouse tasks to helping with paperwork. Alicia also enjoys dancing, baking, cooking, photography, playing the violin, board games and biking. We think Alicia will be a great addition to an Italian family and learn the language and culture quickly!

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

Outdoor Spirit & Community Service

By ASSE Exchange Student, Gvantsa Delbaia (FLEX Georgia)

When I became a president of an outdoor club at my school, I wanted to involve the members of the club with my Global Youth Service Day project for the ASSE FLEX program. I love being outdoors and thought that organizing an event that is also related to my club would be beneficial as well as a lot of fun!

The #1 ranked town in my town, Vernal, Utah USA, had a review that said it was extremely hard for the reviewer to find the way. They often got lost, wasting time and energy and not being able to indulge themselves into the actual sightseeing of the place. The trail, “The Three Kings Panel” is unique with its history. One of the three oldest tribes lived in this area and their history is engraved on the cliffs of the trail through pictographs. In order to admire all the trail wonders, the adventurers must follow the trail. The outdoor club advisor was very enthusiastic for my leadership in solving the problem through our “outdoor spirit” because she also was once lost on the trail. When I contacted the property supervisor/guardian and suggested helping to make the trail, she was very happy to hear the offer.

On April 1, my 20 volunteers and I went to the destination with the marking tape to make it easier for the visitors to explore the beauty of the historical trail. After long hours of walking, after working hard and having a lot of fun at the same time, we successfully completed our task. Hopefully, more people will enjoy one of the truly enchanting places of Utah.

~ Gvantsa

Greetings from Belo Horizonte Brazil

By Jayden Stauffer, ASSE Exchange Student (Alix, Alberta, Canada) discovering incredible Brazil during his ASSE exchange year

This has been an incredible journey so far and time is flying by! There definitely hasn’t been a dull moment since I arrived in Brazil.

The language barrier has definitely not been as difficult as I feared, and the Brazilians are extremely patient and understanding with me. I can’t believe how fast my Portuguese has come in just a month! When I stepped off the plane, I knew next to nothing and while I still have a long way to go, I am learning new words every day and have found myself asking my host brothers and friends to speak Portuguese instead of English!

By far my favourite part of Brazil are the people. I have already made so many amazing friends and established an incredible bond with my host family. I believe they are the reason I have adapted so well to my new life in Brazil, and while it has only been a little over a month, I have not felt even the slightest bit homesick.

Since arriving, I have gone out with my friends (who are very excited and interested in my culture and language, and I have had as much fun teaching as I have learning!), prepared a Canadian Breakfast for my host family (with a family recipe for pancakes, maple syrup, bacon, eggs and maple cookies along with an array of fruits and drinks), joined the local gym, started forro classes (a traditional Brazilian dance), toured the city, planned trips with my host family to Rio de Janeiro, the historic cities of Ouro Preto, Tiradentes and Diamantina, tasted traditional foods and drinks (Minas Gerais is considered the culinary state of Brazil), and believe it’s perhaps my next favourite thing after the people!, went on a day trip to the National Park Serra do Cipo, participated in the Carnaval celebrations, and so much more (too many to list!). I have noticed so many cultural differences, and already feel my perspective has changed, and I have a newfound appreciation of the world around me. While I have been frustrated many times, I know this is all part of the learning experience. I just want to thank you, ASSE and everyone who made this unforgettable trip possible!

~ Jayden

~ Third from the left: ASSE Exchange Student Gvantsa Delbaia (FLEX Georgia) and some of the members from her volunteering group admire the pictographs as they are engraved on the cliffs of the trail through "The Three Kings Panel" and we successfully completed our task. ~

Weirdos in齿轮

~ Jayden