An Incredible Day!

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

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 volunteered at the Best Buddies Friendship Walk for inclusion in Fresno California USA. Back row: Edwards (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 Edwards (Italy) helped put up tables and chairs. Then Begmurod (FLEX Kazakhstan) and Edwards played a little soccer with kids waiting for the event. Rita (CBYX Germany), 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

A Beautiful Year in Italy

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

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.

World Heritage Exchange students enjoyed ‘gelato’ on a visit to Milan. By Deanna Allen, World Heritage Area Representative, Fresno, California, USA

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. Continued on last page...

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.

Until next edition,
Mary Loving ASSE News Editor

ASSE Newsletter
Laguna Beach
Organization
USA
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World Heritage Exchange students enjoyed volunteering at the Best Buddies Friendship Walk for inclusion in Fresno California USA.
Delicious Dumplings
By Janet Maxin, 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.

Exploring South Africa

Calvin-Thomas South African students from France, Italy and Thailand are eating at Cape Point, Cape Town, South Africa

ASSE Exchange Student, Kendall (Austin, Texas, USA) with her host family enjoying an outing to Cape Point, South Africa

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.

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.

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. When our special needs son had difficulty chewing, Hong quickly performed the Heimlich Maneuver, which we feel saved our son’s life. You just never know how your exchange student will bless your family!”

– Janet

Delicious dumplings

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’ visit 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 village’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)

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.

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.”

“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), Normukhamed (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. Adrausma (Italy), Barbara (Spain), Cathy (ASSE Area Representative), Anna (FLEX Ukraine), Pernilla (Denmark)
Well. They make school fun and interesting.

Of course I love my Italian friends as another language.

As everyone says, my exchange has changed me. I think I’m a better person now. I understand 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 more 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 study 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 and you take the first step, friendship and tolerance comes a lot quicker.