A Newsletter for Students, Host Families, Representatives and Other Members of the ASSE/WH Program

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 continues on bottom of page 2...

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 overlooking homesickness, going to a new school, living in a town, city or village and surrounding yourself with people who are going through the same thing, in the same country!!! It’s a great opportunity to talk to people who are going through the same thing, in the same country?!?

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.

Living Life to the Fullest
By ASSE Outbound Student Morgan from Idaho enjoying a semester in Spain

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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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Until next edition,
Cindy Keeney, ASSE News Editor

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In France they don't even play softball, but insecurities head on! JuJu has faced her fears and experienced all of this! Yes, she has had some rough days in the past. But, 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.
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 Pressure 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.

A huge thanks to the Brea family in Elk Grove, California for hosting Mikel and his host siblings to enjoy an autumn afternoon together.

AGN. 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 (FLEX). Huge thanks to all their host families as well for making such amazing experiences happen for so many of our students and host families!

Thank you Audra for sharing this memory with our community and the Kepp family in Laramie, Wyoming for making such amazing experience happen for others as well. Thank you to Area Representative Jill Hartgrave as well for helping make this happen.

Huge thanks to all of them, and I couldn’t even ask for something better!”

Thank you to ASSE Area Representative Rebecca Ciavolella for helping make such connections happen.

It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas. Outbound exchange student Anna from Newry, 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 host family in France (FLEX) for giving her a wonderful experience.

Thank you to the Allen family in Van Buren, Arkansas for warmly welcoming Michael into your home and to Area Representative Kim Brill for helping make this experience happen for both the host family and the student.

Among all the things ASSE Exchange Students Anna from France (FLEX) 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.”

The card with “Thank You” to the Leuthmann family in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota for warmly welcoming Michael into their home and to Area Representative Kim Brill for helping make this experience happen for both the host family and the student.

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

A huge thanks to the Rea family in Goshen, 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!

World Heritage FLEX scholarship student Symbola 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.”

A huge thanks to the Berta family in Clarendon, Oklahoma for warmly welcoming Johanna into their home and for offering her an amazing exchange experience. Also a huge thanks to Area Representative Melody Rabbitt as well 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, Betty, and Gabriell. Back row are Hugo, Maria, Emiliano and Francois. Thank you ASSE Canada for providing such a wonderful opportunity to students studying in beautiful Quebec!”

Thank you to Area Representative Audra Leuck for having 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 (FLEX). 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!

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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.

I know that I have not been here for a long time but after living what I have since my arrival in 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 program in France (PIF) for giving her the unique experience.

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

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 spent unforgettable time together and the trip made us more united.

Two weeks later it was the “Halloween 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 dance.

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 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 you 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 big impact on my exchange year.”

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

Part of a Team
By YES scholarship student Jessilee from Philippines enjoying her exchange year in Hagerman, New Mexico

When you have exchange students live with your family, you may think you’d 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 we 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.

Forever Family
By ASSE Host Mom and Area Representative Pam Ianni in Ohio

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