

Every Day A New Adventure!

By Michaela, ASSE Exchange Student (Silverlake, Washington, USA)
finding new adventures in Jaraiz de la Vera, Spain

Living in Spain has been some of the best times in my life. My town, Jaraiz de la Vera is a small town, but bigger than my hometown. Here the

when my time here is up.

I've been able to make so many new friends. My host family is very nice and I'm grateful for them. They've helped me improve my Spanish and have shown me so many new things about the culture. My family now isn't only people I'm related to by blood, but includes those who have made a difference in my life and who have found a place in my heart.

Not only has my host family helped me learn and become a better person, they've

helped me realize how much I've taken for granted at home in Washington. For example, I've never stopped to see how much my own

parents have done for me, and I never really noticed how much I love them. I'll never complain about doing the dishes or having to clean up a bit again. I'll definitely have a different outlook on everything when my time here is done.

I have done many new things including different types of festivities such as Los Escobazos and Jarramplas, both being quite passionate celebrations. Los Escobazos was probably one of the most fire filled celebrations I've gone to.

I love being here because every day is a new adventure. Four years ago I never would have pictured myself being an exchange student in Spain having a dinner with Italians, and someone from France and the only way of communication was speaking Spanish to each other.

I'm very grateful for this opportunity and will remember it for the rest of my life.

~ Michaela



ASSE Exchange Student Michaela on the far left (Silverlake, Washington, USA) with her Spanish host family

town is more put together, I love being able to walk around town and explore. It is a very beautiful place and I'll be sad

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Unforgettable, Life-Changing Experience

By Margot Hoffman, ASSE Area Coordinator and host mom (Mead, Colorado, USA)

Our family wanted to host a YES scholarship student from an Arabic country with a Muslim background because we knew the least about that culture and religion. It was out of our comfort zone and we wanted to grow and learn new things.

We fell in love with Mohammad and the experience exceeded our expectations. He was respectful, smart, kind, fun, positive, enthusiastic and a good example for others. Nearly every day he said "This was the best day of my life".

Throughout the year we felt like Mohammad was our own son. After he was back home for one year we couldn't stand to be away from him any longer. My family of 6 went to Jordan to reunite with him and meet his family. It was the kind of experience that warms your heart and you'll cherish for life.

His family felt like our own. Despite all the differences in religion, language, and culture we felt so comfortable,

so loved, and so appreciated. They embraced us and celebrated our visit with big parties, surrounding us with love from their friends and extended family, teaching us more about their culture and religion.

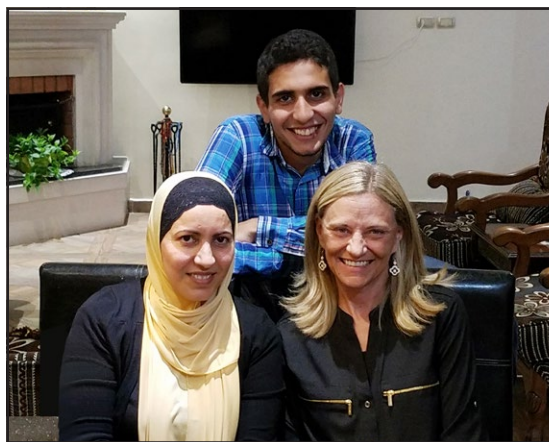
We instantly felt close to his mother and father and brothers as if we had always been one big family. We want to host all of his brothers and stay close to their family for life.

As a result of this experience, my family and everyone I know that met Mohammad has a deeper understanding and a love for the country of Jordan, the Muslim religion and the Arabic culture. We were able to witness firsthand what a true difference this program makes in the lives

of people on both sides of the exchange.

The YES program really does bring countries together one student at a time. We feel fortunate to have had this unforgettable, life changing experience.

~ Margot



Former ASSE Exchange Student Mohammad (YES Jordan) with his two moms Afaf, natural mom and Margot, ASSE Host mom

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

Visit to the Air and Space Museum

By Dinorah Isenberg, ASSE Area Representative, Manassas, Virginia, USA

As an ASSE Area Representative, Dinorah likes to do monthly group activities with her students. The group recently visited the Smithsonian Air

and Space Museum at Washington Dulles International Airport. They learned about the history of many exhibits and collections of the world's most significant aviation and

space artifacts, including the Concorde and the NASA Space Shuttle Discovery.

Another highlight was the Air Traffic Control Simulation Observation Tower,

which gives visitors a 360-degree bird's eye view of Washington Dulles International Airport and the surrounding area. The students also had fun riding the two flight simulators at the museum.

"I've visited this museum and other sites with my students many times over the years and every time I visit I enjoy seeing it through their eyes," says ASSE Area Representative Dinorah.

Dinorah Isenberg, Manassas, Virginia, USA has been an ASSE Area Representative for 4 years and her family also enjoys hosting every year.



ASSE Exchange Students Lina (CBYX Germany), Anastasiya (FLEX Ukraine), Javier (Spain), Kren (Estonia), Laurent (France) and ASSE host sister explore the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum

The World of Scouting

By ASSE Exchange Student Julia (FLEX Poland) enjoying her exchange year in Texarkana, Texas, USA

I have been a Girl Scout in Poland since 2012 and a leader since 2015. It is a big part of my life. I am sure I would not have become a FLEX finalist if I was not a Girl Scout. It taught me a lot, especially the skills that are necessary for independent life, such as leadership.



ASSE Exchange Student Julia (FLEX Poland).

I decided to become a Girl Scout in the U.S. because I wanted to experience another perspective and see how this life-changing organization is working here. It was a very good decision because I can share knowledge and experience that I gained in my Polish troop as well as learn a lot of new things that will be awesome to show when I am back in my country.

With the American Girl Scout troop, we volunteer and participate in activities such as camping or trips. I visited Corn Maze in Louisiana; we had a boat race in the swimming pool and had a great Christmas party.

I am looking forward to February 22nd, Thinking Day. It is the day when scouts all over the world show unity through learning about scouting organizations in different countries. On this day I will be organizing presentations and activities about Scouting in Poland for the troops in my area.

I am really happy I have the opportunity to try scouting here, I am sure it is beneficial for both of my troops and communities.

~ Julia

Fun In the Snow

By ASSE Area Representative Coralee Rogers, Wake Forest, North Carolina, USA

ASSE Area Representative and host mom, Coralee Rogers, shared the excitement of Clara, ASSE Spanish scholarship student and her host sisters during a snow storm.

Coralee (USA)

Area Representative and Host Mom

The forecast called for snow and boy, did we get it! After a day of fun in the snow, the girls were ready to warm up. This was the most snow Clara has ever seen.

~ Coralee

Clara (FAO Spain)

ASSE Exchange Student

The day school got canceled, we decided to get out the sleds and go enjoy some snowball fights, snow angels and the beautiful winter scenery! I had never seen this much snow and was so excited I forgot about the cold until we all were warm and having some hot chocolate inside.

~ Clara



ASSE Exchange Student Clara (Spain) and her host sisters Emily and Shannon take advantage of a school snow day!

Gaining a New Family and Friends

By ASSE Exchange Student and Jodi Kiefer Scholarship recipient Tatum (Mountain View, Missouri, USA) spending her exchange year in Spain.

I never thought I would be sitting at a desk in Spain studying irregular present indicative verbs. Nor did I realize the frustration and tears it would cause. Being in another country trying to learn new words and phrases is the most frustrating, stressful, thing I have ever done. But it will be worth it!

I've learned a lot and most of it I learned from my host family. They have taught me how to open a door, wear a coat, cut a steak, that Spain has its own stamps, to sleep with a comforter and to cook. From one roller coaster to the next they have helped me through it.

I'm sure they have figured out that I am a small-town girl with no experience with a stove and I lack street smarts. They have figured out I was sheltered from a lot and that everything is extremely new.

Maybe they think I'm weird... and that's totally okay. They know me better than anyone knows me. My thanks for being a good host family... even if I'm weird!

I've really enjoyed my time here and looking forward to the next few months. I have learned more than I thought was possible and I have gained a new family and new friends. I'm really happy with my decision to come abroad. And I plan on doing it again in the future!

~ Tatum

ASSE Exchange Student Tatum (Mountain View, Missouri, USA) with her host family



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 Host mom Jan is very proud of her student Emmanuelle's (France) talent, "We love having her here. She is a very outgoing teenager. She was involved in soccer and now she is cheerleading for the girls' and boys' basketball team. She has made suppers for us and it is a different change to what we are used to eating. She fits in with us and taking her places is a joy because she reminds me of why our kids at that age were always on the go. I can say it's never a dull moment. It's fun when we are sitting downstairs and we hear her singing upstairs. It has been a pleasure to hear about her country and for us to show her around our country."



ASSE Exchange Students joined ASSE Area Representative Gordon Wayman to visit the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum in Springfield, Illinois, USA. Luca (Germany), Victor (Denmark), Yehor (FLEX Ukraine), Roksoliana (FLEX Ukraine) and Ting Hsuan (Taiwan) posing in front of a figure of young Abraham Lincoln.



ASSE Exchange Student Tereza (Czech Republic) enjoys riding her host family's horses in Norco, Southern California, USA. She also is involved in track and basketball at her school.



ASSE Exchange Students Eliza (FLEX Moldova) and Bogdan (FLEX Montenegro) toured the Washington State Capitol with their ASSE Area Representative Penelope and visited with State Representative Edmund Orcutt.

Bogdan was very excited to meet with a government official, "I am sending you a thought that I was even more assured in after speaking with Representative Orcutt, 'The strength of any government is determined by the willingness of its political parties to work together.'"



As an ASSE CBYX Scholarship Exchange Student, Dachele (Coquille, Oregon, USA) experiences many aspects of the German culture including the popular sport of soccer.

"My Host Family and I attended a Düsseldorf Fortuna soccer game. This was so fun, being with my family, learning about Düsseldorf's local culture, and watching Germany's greatest sport - Fußball!!"



Front Row, Left to Right: World Heritage Area Representative Luciana Swenson, Julie (France), Coco (Taiwan), World Heritage Area Representative Katie Powell, Chip Troiano (Vermont State Representative)

Back Row, Left to Right: Artur (FLEX Ukraine), Miguel (Spain), Vanessa (Italy), Angela (Germany), Marcela (FLEX Moldova), Adriana (FLEX Romania)

World Heritage Area Representative Luciana expressed, "Weather cooperated this year and all were able to make it! We watched most of the House session, got a tour of the historic State House, and had lunch at the House's cafeteria. Representative Chip Troiano introduced all students to the House Representatives by name, country and schools they are attending. He also spent time explaining the work done at the State House and answering the student's questions. It was very informative for all! As we ate together, we were able to catch up on each other's activities, and even had a cake to celebrate Coco's (Taiwan) 16th birthday!"



ASSE Area Coordinator Teresa Weyer, ASSE Area Representative Heather Bartlett and ASSE Exchange students shared their wonderful diversity with the Ethnic Heritage Festival visitors in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA.

ASSE Exchange Students Michael and Clara (CBYX Germany), Ghalia (YES Jordan), Junaid (YES Pakistan), SoSo (FLEX Georgia), Aigerim (FLEX Kyrgyzstan) and Agnieszka (FLEX Poland).



ASSE Exchange Students Anna (Germany), Marin (France), Pooja (YES India), Catarina (Portugal), Akziynat (FLEX Kyrgyzstan), Altynai (FLEX Kyrgyzstan) and Karolina (FLEX Poland) gathered to visit the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum in Simi Valley, California, USA.

They toured the museum as well as the Titanic Exhibition.

"It is a fascinating place to visit and the students were all excited to be able to attend," remarked ASSE Area Coordinator Barbara Walton.



ASSE Exchange Students Mariya D (FLEX Ukraine), Pimmipa "Ty" (Thailand), Mariya B (FLEX Ukraine) and Irfan (FLEX Serbia).

ASSE Area Representative Angie Lehmann arranged for her students to visit a glass art demonstration in Nevis, Minnesota, USA. After the demonstration the students chose what they wanted to make using glass. For example, they could make a picture frame, candy dish, ornament, etc.

Angie said, "We spent a few hours socializing with each other. We learned about each other's creativity for the day, for example what they envisioned for a final project. Mariya made a candy dish, incorporating wire into the glass. I think she was going for a profile of a person infused in the glass."

*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

Love Your Life!

By Leyla, ASSE Exchange Student (FLEX Azerbaijan)
enjoying her exchange year in New England, North Dakota USA

First, I want to say that my life completely changed during my time in U.S. The main thing I am so grateful for is my host family, because they support me, they help me every time and it is always fun to spend time with every one of them.

I tried basketball and became part of team, played for my school and heard people cheering my name. Sport is definitely what people need to try in United States. It is such fun. Also, I am singing in the choir and I took part in Christmas concert. I am heading to a music festival in Fargo and will meet many new people from North Dakota,

South Dakota and Minnesota there. During my time here, I decided to start writing a blog about my life and United States.

While I was in United States, I have understood many important things. One should never give up on dreams, work hard for all aims, always be with a positive attitude, be open to new things, ways, people and feelings in your life. Love your life and enjoy it. Appreciate people around you and show how much you love them.

What happened to my hair? I had long hair for a really long time and I wanted some changes in my appearance,

so, I asked my host mom. She said that I could cut it and then donate it. I thought that would be perfect. I think we all sometimes want some changes, big or small doesn't matter, it will bring new feelings and will fill our lives with energy and joy.

ASSE Exchange Student
Leyla (FLEX Azerbaijan)
shows off her new look after
cutting her long hair and
donating it for a good cause.
We think she looks great!



Living in Spain

By ASSE Exchange Student Amelia (Camp Dennison, Ohio, USA) loving her exchange year in Spain

Things are going super well here. I have a great host family and I love spending time with them. We've gone on trips for a few days, for example Gredos, and Avila. Over the break we have for Carnavales we went skiing.

Also, I have great friends, and I love hanging out with them on the weekends and in my free time. I keep busy on the volleyball team. I love it

and its super fun. My Spanish has improved an incredible amount thanks to all of the help I've gotten from my family and friends here. They've taught me so many new things about Spain and the culture that I didn't know before. I'm so grateful for this experience.

~ Amelia



ASSE Exchange Student Amelia (Camp Dennison, Ohio, USA)
on the far left with her host family

Hollins' Farewell

By ASSE Exchange Student Hollins (Austin, Texas, USA)

ASSE Exchange Student Hollins (Austin, Texas, USA) spent a semester in Ulaan baatar, Mongolia.

Hollins' natural mother expresses her appreciation for the ASSE team.

"We can't thank you enough for making this possible for Hollins. You all were incredibly responsive to our inquiry about Hollins' interest in Mongolia. In a very short amount time, you processed his application, identified a school and a

family and ironed out all the details.

Hollins is motivated by nature but the degree to which he studied the Mongolian language and culture this summer was impressive. He loves language, culture, politics and history. People have been asking us about the group that was able to make a high school study abroad in Mongolia possible. We've been passing along asse.com with the highest recommendations."



ASSE Exchange Student Hollins (Austin, Texas, USA) saying farewell to his host family before returning to the US.

Canadian Sleigh Ride!

By ASSE Area Representative, Chantale Poulin, St. Georges, Quebec, Canada

Dressed in their warmest winter clothes, ASSE Canada Area Representative Chantale took her students on a beautiful outdoor activity in Beauce, Quebec, Canada. They enjoyed a sleigh ride and had marshmallows over the campfire. All students expressed their enjoyment of a great time in the Canadian outdoors!

Fantastic day! I had never done a sleigh ride in the forest and thanks to the not too cold weather I really enjoyed myself. It made me happy to talk to other exchange students and to notice great improvements in their French. I am happy for them and have the opportunity to do these well-organized activities in full Quebec style.

~ Claudia (Italy)

I feel good to go to sleigh ride, it is fun, but is cold for Taiwanese to be in so cold weather like this.

~ Yu-Hsien (Taiwan)

I like the activity of a sleigh ride because I can look at the good landscape and can look at the nest in the trees.

~ Carlos (Mexico)

Our two Italian exchange students Allegra (left) and Claudia (right) enjoyed meeting the horses that pulled the sleigh.



I really like this activity. It makes me happy and warm. And this activity made me realize that we (exchange students) are very close. It's a good time.

~ Nawaphorn (Thailand)

The activity was very fun, although it was cold enough! It was really interesting to be able to observe the beauty of the rural side of Quebec during the winter.

~ Allegra (Italy)

It was an interesting activity with everyone together, in the narrow paths with the trees. And in the cottages with campfire and marshmallows."

~ Lukas (Germany)

Thank you to Chantale for organizing this unforgettable experience for your students!



ASSE Exchange Students; Back row:
Lukas (Germany), Carlos (Mexico), Yu-Hsien (Taiwan)
Front row: Nawaphorn (Thailand), Allegra (Italy) and
Claudia (Italy) roasting marshmallows over the campfire.