

Intercultural Student Experiences



Steve Struthers,
Executive Director

Points of interest:

- 2012 Marks 40 Years of Intercultural Experiences
- Celebrating International Volunteer Day
- New staff
- 2011 Language Matters Award recipients
- 2011 Program Evaluation Results
- Air and Fuel Surcharges

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❖ ❖ ❖ A nonprofit educational organization since 1972

Happy 2012! As you may have heard, this is a milestone year for ISE; we celebrate our 40th anniversary as an organization. While we haven't gone to the trouble of performing a detailed statistical analysis, it is fair to say that, since 1972, ISE has assisted over 100,000 individuals experience other countries and deepen their world language skills through our programs. And we know from the letters and emails that we receive and the personal conversations we have with past participants (teachers and students alike) that these experiences have made profound impacts on those travelers. Passions are stirred, minds are expanded, and connections are made that set people on a path that more often than not includes additional international travel and, more importantly, a deeper appreciation for the beautiful differences among the world's varied cultures. This is indeed something to celebrate. Of course, the world has changed just a bit since 1972. A gallon of gas cost 55 cents (about two dollars in today's terms, adjusted for inflation); the Dow Jones average closed at 1,020 that year. The leaders of the US, France, Germany, and Spain were Nixon, Pompidou, Brandt, and Franco. Tech-

nologically, HBO launched the first subscription cable TV service, and Atari released PONG. Through the power of the internet (which, by the way, didn't exist as a word until 1974), you can now spend all day uncovering these interesting facts. But, I want to focus on a more critical set of changes over these 40 years.

The role of teachers has undergone significant transformation. Expectations – particularly around student performance on standardized tests – are more intense. The



ISE has been providing Intercultural Student Experiences for 40 years! We hope you'll join us in Minneapolis at a joint anniversary celebration with Global Citizens Network this spring. For more information on the event go to www.gcn-ise.org.

judgment and efficacy of teachers are more likely to be challenged – by parents, students, administrators, politicians, cable news talking heads – than ever before. The rise in importance of 21st century learning skills, with more emphasis on student-directed learning and problem-solving, is creating new curriculum challenges (and opportunities). In the face of all of this, it is remarkable that so

many of you take on the added work of pulling together an international immersion experience for your students – particularly in the face of the rising costs of travel and the most challenging economic conditions for our families in decades.

So, for 2012, we believe that one of our key responsibilities is to stand with teachers as they rise to the challenge of preparing their students to succeed in an ever-evolving world. First, we are changing our pricing model to make it more straightforward and understandable for parents and more attractive for teachers and other group leaders. Second, we are increasing our efforts to share- via our website and social media – useful information and tools with teachers that emphasize the importance and power of language learning. And, we are expanding our efforts to reach out to teachers who perhaps have

never traveled with their students – to make the case that such experiences enrich and amplify their classroom instruction. We look forward to the opportunity to stand with you as partners in making language matter – in 2012 and for decades to come!

Best wishes,
Steve Struthers,
GCN-ISE Executive Director

Staff Celebrates International Volunteer Day



Erin McGillivray,
Volunteer Engagement
Specialist

“As a staff, we are committed to embody deep, intrinsic respect for cultures and diversity, as well as authentic, equitable, collegial, global partnerships and mutual learning.”

**GCN-ISE
Shared Values**

The staff at Intercultural Student Experiences, along with our partner organization colleagues at Global Citizens Network, closed out the year with a joint celebration of international volunteerism alongside the United Nations (UN) and numerous organizations worldwide. International Volunteer Day was created by the UN in 1985 as an opportunity for the UN, national governments, and local organizations to celebrate and advocate for the power of volunteerism in our global community. It is recognized every year on December 5, with the hope that current and former volunteers will have the opportunity to exchange their experiences with one another, strengthening their commitment to international volunteerism.

The staff celebrated with a day of service and a gathering of community members to discuss the importance of international vol-

unteerism. We spent an afternoon with Compatible Technology International (CTI); a Twin Cities based nonprofit organization that alleviates hunger and poverty in the developing world by designing and distributing simple, life-changing food and water technologies. CTI devices help farmers to process and store their crops, while maintaining the crop's nutritional value.

After a thorough introduction to the CTI facility and their work worldwide, we had the opportunity to assemble CTI's small-model grinder in teams of four. The teams competed against each other, working to be the first to not only assemble, but disassemble and package the device, two times over. The valiant winners received a handy corn sheller that CTI also distributes in the communities they serve. We enjoyed not only learning about

another international nonprofit and gaining knowledge outside of our daily work, but we also had a great time using our teamwork and communication skills to assemble the grinders.

As a staff, we are committed to embody deep, intrinsic respect for cultures and diversity, as well as authentic, equitable, collegial, global partnerships and mutual learning. Recognizing International Volunteer Day is one way of upholding our values and we look forward to continuing to engage in our local community while making a global impact.

For more information about CTI, visit their website:

compatibletechnology.org

-Erin McGillivray



GCN-ISE staff assemble CTI's small model grinder. Left to right: Linda Stuart, Anca Coleman, Dan Olstad, Debby Bluem



New Staff Join ISE!



Sophie Gardner, U.S. Hosting Program Coordinator

1. Summarize briefly what your role at ISE is.

As US Hosting Coordinator, I partner with teachers across the country to bring cross-cultural experience to students in their home communities, as well as give students from abroad the opportunity to live with a host family, practice English and immerse in US American culture.

2. Who is the teacher that influenced you the most and why?

I was highly inspired by my 6th-12th grade choir teacher, Barb Geier. She motivated my desire to pursue music as a way to connect with people and taught me how to use vocal performance and music to impact others.



Jenn Gallup, Office Coordinator

1. Summarize briefly what your role at ISE is.

I keep the place humming along, managing all office systems and inventory while providing friendly customer service on the phone and a smile at the door.

2. Who is the teacher that influenced you the most and why?

My favorite teacher was my high school Spanish teacher, Señora Boles. Coming from small town central Illinois, there wasn't much for multi-cultural experiences. She went above and beyond simply teaching us the language by introducing us to cultural arts and customs and cuisine of many countries and regions in Latin America as well as Spain and Portugal to give us a more "immersion-like" experience. She often cooked in class and read to us from revolutionary texts about women's rights movements in Latin America! I just thought this was SO COOL, and I pushed myself to learn the language as quickly as I could so I could read these amazing stories about these brave women.

We look forward to meeting many of you at the 2012 Teacher Workshop!

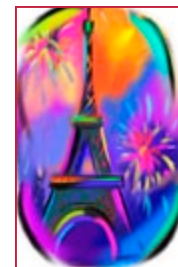


Congratulations ISE Language Matters Award Recipients!

It has been an honor for ISE staff to attend the world language association conferences this year and to present the ISE Language Matters Awards. We met and sometimes reunited with outstanding teachers who represent the best of language and culture immersion education in the U.S.

- AATF—Dawn Young (\$500)
- AATG—Pamela Hoover (\$500)
- AATSP—Annie Winkler (\$500)
- CO-CCFLT—Pamela Centeno (\$250)
- MAFLA—J. Douglas Guy (\$250)
- KSWLA—Alyson Kilcoyne (\$250)
- WAFLT (WA) —Gisela Hanks (\$250)
- WAFLT (WI) —Karen Pfefferle (\$250)

¡FELICIDADES! GRATULIERE!
FÉLICITATIONS! 恭喜恭喜



Changing Lives and Inspiring Students

ISE Photo Contest 1st Place Winner \$150
Kendall Wilkins,
Eden Prairie HS,
Eden Prairie, MN



Program Evaluation Results

We have been reviewing the results of 2011 program participant evaluations and are pleased to report the results!

- 98% of students who responded to evaluations this year said that their language skills improved by going on their program.
- 94% of students said that their family stay experience was good to excellent.
- 99.5% of students reported that the program as a whole was good to excellent.
- 99% of students said that they were glad that they went on the program.
- 97% of students said that their preparation was satisfactory or excellent before they went abroad.
- 88% of students reported that they used the target language abroad more than 50% of the time.
- 97% of students said that their leader used the target language abroad more than 50% of the time.

Congratulations to Madison Wright from Kenmore, WA. She won the \$150 random drawing for those who completed an evaluation. Remind your students to fill out their evaluations and they could win in 2012!

Congratulations to students, teachers and leaders for making the most of your time abroad. You are all an inspiration!

Photo Contest

As you can see by our photo contest winners on the left, we had a tough job choosing the

top three this year! We posted the submissions for the contest on our Facebook page. If you haven't "fanned" us yet; look for us on Facebook.com at ISE—*Intercultural Student Experiences* and check out the photos, the latest ISE buzz and cool links to information and resources.

Most Valuable Travelers

Students who win the \$250 cash prize for this award are nominated by their group leaders. Winners are selected in a random drawing from all the students nominated.

Winners for exemplary use of target language on the program:

Katie Sullivan—Costa Rica

Hayley Vaughn—Ecuador

Ellery Wadman-Goetsch — France

Jake Blair —Germany

Meghan Larson —Mexico

Tanner Crandall—Puerto Rico

Robert Keafing —Spain

Winners for outstanding leadership on the program:

Abigail Mendez—Costa Rica

Kelly Koronkowski—Ecuador

Ashley DeRonde —France

Tiana Solbreken —Germany

Jordan Krump —Mexico

Gabrielle Tatara—Puerto Rico

Marcia LaSalle —Spain

Congratulations!
Tanya Gajewski,
Director of Education



ISE Photo Contest 2nd Place Winner \$100
Katherine Landau, independent student traveler,
Croton-on-Hudson, NY



ISE Photo Contest 3rd Place Winner \$50
Emily Anne Plachetka, Rice Lake HS, Rice Lake, WI

The Hidden Cost of Fuel and Other Air Surcharges

We receive a lot of questions about fuel surcharges from teachers and parents. When calling an airline or travel agency, or researching international fares online, the fuel and other surcharges are embedded in the total ticket price. They may be included in the base fare, they may be lumped in with the tax, fees and surcharges, but they are there. I recently visited an airline website to view their fares from Minneapolis to Frankfurt in June 2012. The price display read “from \$1073.60” with a total price of \$1687.80. That \$614.20 difference includes the non-U.S. tax and fuel surcharge. When I clicked on a link requesting more information about the additional costs, I received a long list of fees or ranges of fees (ex. International Surcharges “up to \$260 each way”) that may be added to the ticket price. Whew!

The good news is, once an airline ticket is purchased, the base fare, tax, fuel and other surcharges cannot be changed. So if the cost of fuel or other surcharges increase between the time that the ticket is purchased and travel commences, the passenger cannot be charged for the additional costs.

Group air contracts fall into a unique category. While we can make flight reservations for a group up to 11 months before travel, we do not purchase the tickets until the group is closer to their travel dates. This allows people

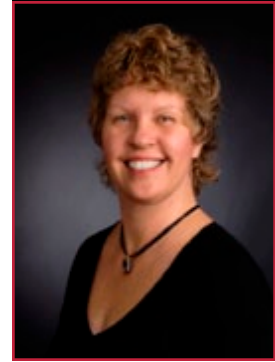
to be added or dropped from the group, names to be changed, and contracts to be changed or cancelled if the group cannot travel without incurring stiff fees or committing passengers to non-refundable tickets they will not use. On group contracts, the base fare is guaranteed. All taxes, fuel and other surcharges are not guaranteed until we actually purchase the tickets when the group is finalized, so these costs can change, sometimes dramatically. These costs can go up and down by hundreds of dollars between the time we book a group contract and the time we purchase the tickets. In the past, some airlines did guarantee tax and fuel on group contracts, but this is seldom the case anymore. With such volatility, the airlines are now unwilling to guarantee these costs. We at ISE do our

best to give you a “best guess” estimate of your fuel surcharges (see page 58 of the program booklet). Sometimes prices are higher, and other times they are lower, and ISE will only pass along the exact cost we are paying on the tickets.

As Steve Struthers mentioned in the front page article, “we are changing our pricing model to make it more straightforward and understandable for parents and more attractive for teachers and other group leaders” for the 2013 program year. ISE will continue to make the experience of going abroad about immersion and less about having to decipher the ever changing world of airline pricing.

Happy New Year!

Debby Bluem,
Air Coordinator



Debby Bluem,
Air Coordinator

“The good news is, once an airline ticket is purchased, the base fare, tax, fuel and other surcharges cannot be changed.”

You're Invited!

“CELEBRATING A WORLD OF DIFFERENCES”

A 20/40 ANNIVERSARY EVENT

Saturday, April 14, 2012

Nicollet Island Pavilion | Minneapolis, MN


 MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW AND AVAILABLE ON OUR SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY WEBSITE - www.gcn-ise.org




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Immersion Programs
that *Inspire!*



Fan us on Facebook!



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