

# Language & Friendship Newsletter



FALL 2018

## MISSION: Possible! 30 Years and Counting

Naomi Thomsen started Language & Friendship in her basement in 1988, and we have grown to a team of 11 women determined to carry out her mission: serving language teachers and students to promote global citizenship through quality educational programs.

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We celebrate our wonderful teachers, their brave students, our family-stay coordinators, host families, and the countless new international friendships formed over the past 30 years.

Here are the **FIRST PLACE WINNERS** in our 2018 PHOTO CONTEST that remind us of why we celebrate and what Language & Friendship has stood for these past 30 years.

Top: Analesa Ligon, Bellarmine Prep, Tacoma, WA, captured the first moment of meeting her host family in Costa Rica.

Middle: The Beane Family, West Bend, WI, hosted Carla from Spain. They tied for first place in the photo contest. *"We didn't expect to **create a lifelong friendship** with Carla and her family, but we did! We cannot wait for what the future or travel holds for us. Thank you!"*

Bottom: Krishna and Maydha Kumar, siblings from the STEM School in Highlands Ranch, CO, reached new heights in their language skills and to the top of the Eiffel Tower.

**Come join us in our celebration!**



1st Place: A moment with my host family



1st Place Hosting: #Twinning



1st Place: Surprise!

**YOUR PASSION.  
OUR MISSION.**

Our mission is to serve language teachers and their students and to promote global citizenship through quality educational programs including short-term travels, language-immersion family stays, and hosting opportunities.

FRANCE  
MARTINIQUE  
QUEBEC  
ARGENTINA  
COSTARICA  
SPAIN  
PERU in 2020

HOSTING IN THE USA  
INDIVIDUAL FAMILY STAYS  
ADULT TRAVEL GROUPS

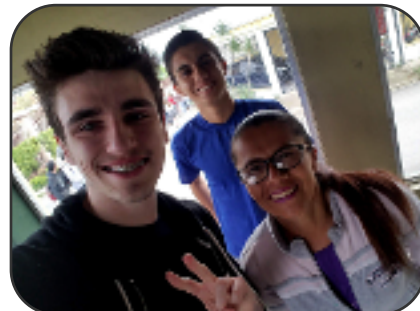
languageandfriendship.com  
888-927-0120

# Scholarship Recipients Say Language and Friendships are Top Take-Aways From Experiences Abroad

*Naomi, the founder of L&F, dedicated her life to promoting international friendships through language and cultural studies. Each year, deserving students are awarded partial scholarships for their L&F program abroad.*

*"It was my first time leaving the country and, to be honest, I was scared. Throughout my family stay, I felt I became more independent and more confident in myself and my Spanish abilities. It also made genuinely strong connections with my family in Costa Rica. It was those days that inspire me to **learn languages, travel, and to never stop creating new friendships.**"*

Photo to right: Ryan Ammerman (left), Germantown HS, WI, and members of his host family.



*"I can't wait to see all the opportunities that Language & Friendship can offer to other students like myself."*

Photo to left: Connor Harrison, ADM HS, Adel, IA, with his fellow student travelers at Kilometre 0 in front of Notre Dame in Paris.

*"The program was sensational! I was able to enlighten myself about the culture deeply and thoroughly through the eyes of my host sister, Chloé. Not only was I able to learn more about France, but I made **amazing friendships** that will last a lifetime. Merci beaucoup!"*

Photo to right: Lauryn Collins (right), International Academy, MI, with her host sister (left).



## 2018 Program Evaluations:

Students and teachers submit evaluations upon the completion of their programs abroad. We are proud to share these positive results and know that these numbers help parents and administrators understand the value of a language-immersion program abroad.

### Overall Program:

Excellent: 73%  
Good: 26%  
OK: 1%  
Poor: 0%

### Family Stay:

Excellent: 68%  
Good: 26.5%  
OK: 5%  
Poor: 0.5%

### Language Improvement:

Improved a lot: 65%  
Improved a little: 34%  
Not much improvement: 1%



Students from Xavier HS and St. Ursula HS, Cincinnati, OH, can't contain their excitement upon their arrival in France.

Per their teacher, Rachel Kohler:

***"This program has made a lifetime of a difference for my students, especially in regard to French and language learning."***

## Celebrate L&F's 30th by Donating \$30

We rely on the support of teachers, travelers, host families, and friends to keep the Naomi Thomsen Scholarship fund up and running each year.

### See how quickly it adds up!

\$30 x 30 donors: \$900

\$30 x 100 donors: \$3000

\$30 x 500 donors: \$15,000

### Send your donation to:

Language & Friendship  
c/o L&F Naomi Thomsen  
Scholarship Fund

8011 34th Ave, Suite 250  
Bloomington, MN 55425

## August Adventures

When students and teachers all return to their respective countries, L&F staff take their turns to explore, rest, and have some fun.

**Liane** (*Co-Director*) and her husband took a "staycation" to work on house projects. No fun pictures of that, so here is a picture of their Normandy visit in April with dear friends - the parents of the French student they hosted in 1998!



**Julie** (*Quebec & Immersion Programs*) and her husband celebrated their own 30th anniversary by spending two weeks in France exploring the Dordogne region and hanging out in cafés in Paris!



**Laurence** (*Programs to France & Martinique*) spent her time on the East Coast (Rhode Island, Massachusetts & Vermont) with friends and family. She enjoyed eating a full fresh lobster and sitting on a pier where the fishermen were unloading the catch of the day!



**Elizabeth** (*Programs to Spain, Costa Rica, Argentina, Peru*) and her husband traveled to Florence and Rome, Italy. A highlight for her was feeling like a regular at the nearby coffee shop: "The barista learned our coffee order as if we were locals."



**Rachel** (*Special Projects*) spent time with her family on the lovely shores of Lake Superior. She also tried her hand at Yoga with Llamas. There may have been more giggling than yoga.



**Liz** (*Accountant*) spent her time reconnecting, celebrating birthdays, and spending time with life-long friends in Delaware.



**Jennifer** (*Co-Director*) and her family enjoyed a variety of experiences including visits to an Amish community, the farmers' market, historic sites, and boating with friends.



**Maria** (*Registrar*) took her family to Mexico. Their vacation included Casa Madero, the Museum of Sarape and Mexican Costumes, and the Desert Museum. And, of course, she enjoyed the time to reconnect with family.



**Michelle** (*Hosting Programs*) spent a week visiting her best friend, Emily, in western Massachusetts where they enjoyed the local sights, including the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst. These two met while studying abroad in Montpellier, France.



**Barb** (*IT Coordinator*) took a 10-day RV trip to South Dakota and Wyoming, with visits to several National Parks: Badlands, Mount Rushmore, Grand Teton, and Yellowstone. 2000+ miles and a million awesome memories!

## Bienvenue, Manon!



We welcome Manon Houillère to L&F's French team. Growing up in Strasbourg, a European capital, Manon has always been fascinated by languages and cultures. As part of her Bachelor Degree in Modern Languages, she studied for one year at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette

where she met professionals working in French-immersion schools, and it confirmed her desire to work in intercultural programs.

Manon graduated with a master's degree in teaching French as a foreign language from the University Paul-Valéry of Montpellier, France. She enjoyed teaching French and sharing her culture in South Africa and Poland before moving to Minneapolis in 2016. Manon loves to travel to foreign countries as well as taking her husband on adventures through the French countryside.

## Family Stay - El corazón del programa

### 2nd Place: A moment with my host family



Ingrid Streitz, Iowa City, IA, shares a moment with her host family in Dos Hermanas. She also spent a few days visiting sites in Madrid with her school group.



Our program in Argentina includes a full family stay. Students visit school with their hosts and explore Buenos Aires with their group.



L&F offers a 3-Week Immersion Family Stay for Individuals in Spain and Argentina. Ashley Zalla from Villa Hills, KY, is greeted in Buenos Aires.

We often say that anyone can be a tourist, and that a family stay is a unique opportunity to be immersed in the language and culture in a personal way. Our students and teachers agree!

The majority of students report that "the time with my host family" is the favorite part of the L&F program. They find that their language skills improve immensely and they have a life-long connection to a family in another country.

Contact L&F to plan a family stay program for you and your students.

*"The best was getting to see how a family in a totally different culture lived day to day, and building friendships with them."*  
~ Lauren Slawin, Eagan HS, MN, Spain traveler

*"The most difficult was not being able to tell my family in detail how thankful I was and how much I enjoyed this trip."*  
~ Nathan Noma, Jefferson HS, Bloomington, MN, Argentina traveler

*"Getting to experience the culture first-hand was great. I liked feeling like I was part of the family."*  
~ Brynn Klein, Surrey HS, ND, Costa Rica traveler

## ¡Programas a Perú en 2020!



Elizabeth is excited to share a new L&F program to **Peru**! We are running a pilot program in 2019, and we plan to offer a guided itinerary to Peru starting in 2020.

Elizabeth's first time out of the country and her first host-family experience was during a semester abroad in Peru. She fell in love with the busy, lively streets of Lima and the fresh air and mountain views in Cusco. It was during this first visit that she met her now-husband, César.

Through her many travels to Lima and throughout Peru, Elizabeth has made life-long friends, personal connections, and a second home. She and César return as often as possible to visit friends and family.

Get ready for the warm people, the magic of the Andes mountains, the world-famous cuisine, and the Incan legacy. It is all waiting for you in Peru!

## Conectar a la Cultura por la Comida



Our travelers have a chance to connect to the culture through the cuisine: family meals, cooking classes, or interacting with the locals at restaurants and markets. Trying new foods is part of the experience!

*Above left: Teachers Katie Girmscheid and Ryan Mayer, Sheyenne HS, West Fargo, ND, try their hand at making alfajores in Argentina. Above right: Elizabeth Stockbridge, Washburn HS, Minneapolis, MN, helps her Costa Rican host family prepare pan casero.*



### SPAIN

- ✓ Fixed Itineraries
- ✓ Custom-designed Itineraries
- ✓ Immersion for Individuals

TRAVEL + FAMILY STAY  
TRAVEL ONLY  
FAMILY STAY ONLY

### ARGENTINA

- ✓ Fixed Itinerary
- Family Stay + Excursions
- Fully guided
- ✓ Immersion for Individuals

### COSTA RICA

- ✓ Fixed Itineraries
- Travel + Family Stay
- Fully guided

## Family Stay - Le cœur du programme



Lexi Brabec, Rock Canyon HS, Highlands Ranch, CO, visited Paris with her group and spent 1 week with a host family.



One of our Martinique program boasts a full family stay with school visits and excursions. The Martiniquais students then come to the USA to be hosted by their partner school.



Shawn Siler, Glacier HS, Kalispell, MT, opted for our 3-Week Immersion Family Stay Program for Individuals in France.

### FRANCE

- ✓ Fixed Itineraries
- ✓ Custom-designed Itineraries
- ✓ Guided itineraries
- ✓ Immersion for Individuals

TRAVEL + FAMILY STAY  
TRAVEL ONLY  
FAMILY STAY ONLY

### QUEBEC

- ✓ Fixed Itineraries of 4-7 days
- Available any time of year
- Fully guided
- Hotel + Excursions

### MARTINIQUE

- ✓ Fixed Itineraries of 8-12 days
- Family Stay + Excursions
- Reciprocal exchange required
- OR
- Hotel + Excursions

### Rejoignez-nous en France en 2019 !

Join a guided itinerary where you and your travelers can enjoy the camaraderie of French teachers and students from other schools. Best of all, you travel under the expertise of an L&F Program Guide.

**NORTHWEST GUIDED Summer**  
Normandie, Loire Valley, Paris;  
Family Stay in Bretagne

**SOUTHEAST GUIDED Summer**  
Côte d'Azur, Provence, Paris; Family Stay in Languedoc

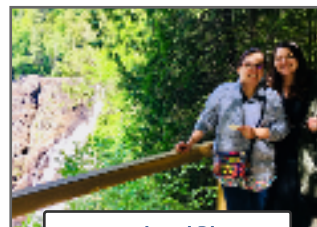


### Parfait en Toute Saison

Visit our neighbors to the north by exploring Québec City and Montréal in any season. Many teachers alternate years traveling to France and Québec.

Top: Leila Mohsenian captured her teachers, Sarah Barbican and Katie Milella, Homestead HS, Mequon, WI, at Ste-Anne Canyon this past June.

Bottom: Ilse Norris and her student, Anna Yu, from Visitation School, Mendota Heights, MN, enjoy the frosty air around the ice castles at Québec's winter carnival.



1st and 2nd Place:  
Teacher in Action



### Des Opportunités Hors du Commun

In July, Laurence attended the 2018 AATF annual conference in Martinique. It was a hit! The AATF board prepared a 3-day program packed with interesting local visits. The grand finale was "une haie d'honneur, par les gens d'argile" (right) offered by the Martinique Tourism Bureau.

Laurence extended her visit to explore new sites and activities. Since not all schools in the USA can offer reciprocity for hosting (a requirement in Martinique), we created a **travel-only program with a hotel stay, more excursions, and an optional school visit**. We also have our first **adult program to Martinique** in 2019.

*Laissez-vous tenter par ces expériences qui sortent de l'ordinaire !*



### Back-to-Back Programs for Immersion Elementary Schools

L&F provides family-stay programs for immersion elementary student groups. We pair you with a school abroad for a back-to-back exchange. Both groups visit for 10-15 days. The students visit school with host siblings and have a few planned group excursions.

*"My host family welcomed me like their own."*

~ Brooklyn Acuff, Académie Lafayette, Kansas City, MO

*"Bassam, our family-stay coordinator, is great to work with. Wonderful experience!"*

~ Audrey Gagnaire, teacher, L'Etoile du Nord, St. Paul, MN



Above: Students from Normandale French Immersion, Edina, MN, enjoy the reflective pool in Bordeaux.

# HOSTING: #Twinning

The theme for this year's hosting photo contest was **#Twinning**. In addition to *discovering* similarities in cultures, host families and students had fun *creating* similarities for the contest. The winning entries can be found on the first and last page. Several entries will be featured on the annual hosting poster.



2nd Place

Axel from France and host sister, Rose, make the perfect rock duo during his stay with the Braun family in Stillwater, MN.



3rd Place

"We have become more patient, more kind, and open to new experiences. There is a place in our hearts and an empty place in our home without her." ~ Kalvig family, Kalispell MT



## Accidental #Twinning!

Alexis Savas, Rock Canyon HS, CO, and her French guest, Corinne, enjoy chicken and waffles at a Denver restaurant.

Per Alexis, "I hope we can do this again next February. Our Spanish teachers want a Spanish-speaking group, too!" Ask, and you shall receive! A group of students from Costa Rica is arriving Colorado in January.

## Continued Friendships

"Our whole family went to France to visit our exchange student Lucas. We fell in love with the country, the food, and mostly, the people! We truly have made life-long friends with him and his family.

It has been a life-changing experience for us!"

The Novak family hosted Lucas from France in the winter of 2017 at Washington HS in Cedar Rapids, IA.



"My children feel like they got another brother. This will be a friendship that will continue long after the exchange is over."

~ Kelly Karstrand, host mom and French teacher in Palos Heights, IL. Kelly also found host families in her community.

Thank you to the many teachers who host our leaders (l) and students (s) from France and Spain! **Merci! ¡Gracias!**

### Winter 2018

Andréanne Annis, TX (l)  
Serena Henault, FL (s)  
Julie Sullivan, FL (l)  
Alexis Savas, CO (l)  
Kim Uyyek, WA (l)  
Pam Melchert, MN (l)  
Cinthia Johnson, WI (s)  
Susan Dickerson, KS (l)  
Debbie Bowe-Wielgus, WI (l)  
Nora Boyd, NE (l)  
Julie Carlson, IA (s)

Dana Moore, MO (l)  
Kathy Neugebauer, ND (l)  
Moiria Smith, TN (l)  
Mallory Garcia, TN (s)  
Brenda Henschel, WI (l)  
Nichole Sieck, IA (l)  
Carmen Knott, OH (l)  
Erica Duffin, OH (l)

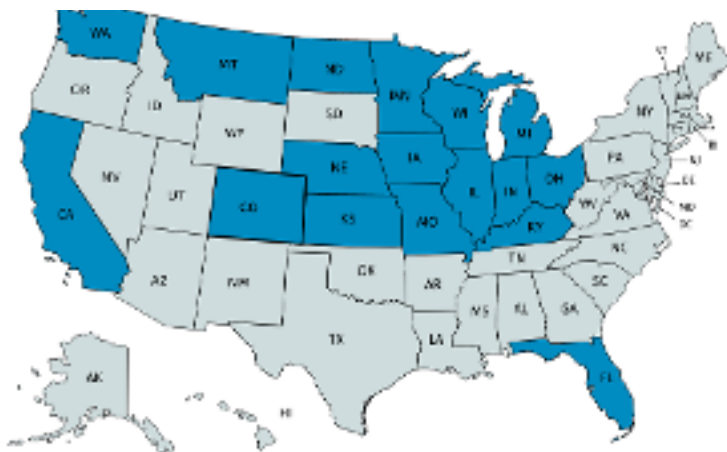


Pam Melchert from Waconia HS, MN, receives French students at her school each winter. She has also enjoyed hosting the teacher who comes with the group. Pam, left, and Véro, right, became fast friends!

### Summer 2018

Nancy Ledesma, MN (l,s)  
Jamie Simon Linkowitz, MN (l,s)  
Kristi Liljenquist, MN (s)  
Julie Easton, MT (s)  
Kelly Karstrand, IL (s)  
Karen Morgan, WI (s)  
Susan Dickerson, KS (l)

## Hosting Areas 2019



Find your state! All those with dark shading will have students arriving in 2019. Check the Language & Friendship website for more details.

Students will come from Spain, France, Argentina, and, for the first time, Costa Rica! They come for 3 weeks to experience life with a family and to practice their English. If your state is not shaded but you would like to be involved, contact us! We are always looking for more locations.

# MAILBAG

"I'm retiring from teaching this year. Having my students participate in L&F programs was one of the most worthwhile things I did."

Mary O'Brien, Broomfield HS, CO

"Hosting gives our students a renewed sense of motivation! Having visiting students here during the school year for 3 weeks gives our own students a sense of **true relevance for the language.**"

Erin El Amatoury, Stillwater HS, MN

Eagan HS students, right, take their own advice as they take in the views atop the Alcázar in Segovia.

"Unplug from social media for a while to get the most out of the trip. Challenge yourself to speak the language."

Claire Schomogyi, Bellarmine Prep, Tacoma, WA, gets a final group hug from her host family in Costa Rica.



2nd Place: Surprise!



Students from Amery, WI, flip over their crêpe workshop in Saint-Malo, France.



"Don't think of all the reasons it won't work. **JUST DO IT!** It is a wonderful experience for the whole family."

Chiavetta Family, Marion, IA

They had a lot of fun with their #Twinning photo shoot with their Spanish visitor, Marta.



## Travel without your students? YES!

Many teachers take advantage of L&F's expertise to help them organize their travels abroad with friends and family.

Jodi Johnson (KS) took friends to **Italy to celebrate her birthday!**

LaRae Ellingson and Linda Albertson (MN) teamed up to take a group of friends to **Bordeaux, the Dordogne and Basque regions.**

Chris Kauffeld (MN) is planning a **cider-tasting and Camino-exploring** tour across northern Spain.

Carolynn Johnson (MN) is planning an adventure to Martinique for a week of **excursions and tropical visits.**

Jen Bouchard and Catherine Pulling (Normandale Community College, MN) took a group to **Senegal.** They had classes and activities at the Baobab Center in Dakar, and then enjoyed a few days at an Arts & Cultural center near the Bandia Nature Preserve.

Picture from Sobo Badè in Toubab Dialaw, Senegal

## Flashback to 1988

Fashion trends included acid-wash denim, geometric-print sweaters, and big hair.

Die Hard, with a 33-year old Bruce Willis was released.

George Michael was Billboard's Artist of the year.

The first truly portable phone came to market in 1989. It cost \$2995 and had a battery life of 75 minutes.



## A few staff highlights from 1988:

Naomi Thomsen founded Language & Friendship.

Liane was organizing 1-month family-stay programs for 7000 French, German, Spanish, and US students.

Laurence moved to Minnesota.

Jennifer started her first year of college with the intention of becoming a foreign diplomat.

Julie got married.

Rachel was an exchange student to Argentina.

Barbara attended the Festival of Nations as a student of German.

Michelle was born!

## How much did it cost in 1988?

1 USD = 6.10 French Franc

1 USD = 113 Spanish Pesetas

Coffee in Madrid = 80 pesetas

Entrance to Louvre = 6 Francs

Gallon of gas in USA = 91¢



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Bloomington, MN 55425 USA

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toll-free 1-888-927-0120  
info@languageandfriendship.com

*"One language sets you in a corridor for life.  
Two languages open every door along the way."*

~ Frank Smith

## Twinning is Winning



You are not seeing double! Here is a winning submission for the Hosting Program's photo contest theme: #Twinning. The Littlefield family from Mobile, AL, tied for 1st place with this photo of their son, left, and Maxime, right, from France. See more #Twinning photos and 2019 hosting details inside.

## Continued Friendships

*Hello, L&F family!*

*I'm on a month-long study abroad trip (January 2018) and I'm in Paris at the moment. Raquel, my Spanish "sister," came to meet up with me. Raquel first stayed with my family in 2010 and came again to stay for the summer in 2011 & 2012! Raquel and I also met up in Madrid in 2014 when I traveled with my school.*

**Thank you so much for investing in lifelong international friendships.** *This girl is one of the most important people in my life and I have all of YOU to thank for that!*

~ Ellie Tiegs, Tracy, MN

Send your L&F friendship story to [info@languageandfriendship.com](mailto:info@languageandfriendship.com)



## Celebrate 30 Years with Language & Friendship!

France • Martinique • Québec  
Argentina • Costa Rica • Spain

Perú in 2020

Hosting Opportunities in the USA

*"Thank you to Language & Friendship for always going above and beyond! L&F staff and their family-stay coordinators do an amazing job to ensure the best experience for our students! Here's to another 30 years! "*

~ Jamie Simon Linkowitz, Sebeka HS, MN