



LANGUAGE & FRIENDSHIP NEWSLETTER

TRAVEL IS BACK!



The year 2023 has ushered in a return to travel the L&F team could not have imagined! Michelle and I began planning with our teachers in the spring of 2022, and as the months passed we watched our expectations double, then nearly triple in volume! We offer you, our dedicated L&F teachers, our deepest gratitude for supporting us through the pandemic and giving us the opportunity to resume our role as your go-to team for student travel.



I'd like to share highlights for 2023 so far:

- The addition of two new staff members! Leah and Hannah joined our team in the last 6 months and have jumped in with great enthusiasm and commitment to our mission.
- The re-establishing of our IN-PERSON Leader Workshop! We welcomed many traveling teachers to Minneapolis in January to join us in planning and preparing for their family stay and travel programs.
- Our first group of winter hosting programs took place, after a 3 year hiatus. French visitors spent a few weeks living with host families and attending school with their host siblings throughout the midwest and beyond. We are grateful to the schools willing to open their doors to international students once again!
- Our winter and spring programs to Quebec, France and Spain were all a great success! I commend my colleagues, Michelle, Hannah and Leah for doing a great job supporting our groups through the strikes in France. I am so proud of them for being able to monitor the situation and quickly advise teachers by the day. I observed them giving the group leaders in France the support L&F is known for.

The end of the school year is upon us and L&F is ready to send groups off at the end of the month and welcome international students this summer! Without your support, this year's comeback from the pandemic would not have been possible. The L&F team is truly grateful to you. We look forward to giving you another update in the fall!

-Jennifer Beattie-Cramer, Director

INTRODUCING OUR NEW STAFF!



Leah Jadeke (right), Registrar & Office Coordinator, began learning about languages in middle school French class and has continued ever since. While earning degrees in both Environmental Studies and French from Concordia College, Leah studied abroad in Bangalore, India and Tours, France – where she lived with a host family. These experiences sparked the excitement to encourage student and adult travel. Leah enjoys camping, cooking, and exploring the food and beverage scene of Minneapolis.

Hannah Borgh (left), Program Assistant, started learning French in middle school and loved it so much she wanted to continue learning it forever. Hannah was a student on a L&F trip in high school. She earned a double major in English and French from Gustavus Adolphus College. She studied abroad in Nantes, France – wanting to return there after having made great memories in high school. Most recently, she returned to France for a year as an English Language Assistant. Hannah enjoys playing tennis, listening to music, watching new films and TV shows, and of course, traveling!



SPRING PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT



Students from Lyons Township HS saw a stunning double arc-en-ciel while on l'Arc de Triomphe!

"My favorite memories of this experience are going to Montserrat and playing my guitar at the Templo de Debod." - Benjamin Kunkel, Maple Lake HS



Host families from Viry-Châtillon welcomed Lakeville HS students at the airport in Paris.

Jennifer joined Mounds Park on their Québec trip in March! She loved connecting with our local partners and fencing. She even got to cross dogsledding off her bucket list!



CONNECTIONS CONTINUE...



Alaena, from Stevens Point, WI, traveled to France in summer 2022. Her host sister, Kim, came for a 2-week visit this spring and was surprised at the airport with a promposal!



Do you have stories of continued connections? Send stories and photos to L&F to be featured in future newsletters.



WINTER HOSTING HIGHLIGHTS

Leah and Hannah got to experience first-hand the impact of the L&F hosting program. They saw their first groups both at arrival and departure to see how much they'd truly grown, in language and in life. The tears at departure were very real.



The Lobb Family, MI, even made t-shirts to help welcome their student, Benoit!

French students in Ohio gave a presentation of their country to American students.



Students in Kansas City got the full American experience, attending the Chiefs' victory parade, post-Super Bowl.



A few students got to meet Patrick Star at the Mall of America on arrival day!



DID YOU KNOW?

- Naomi Thomsen, our founder, started L&F 35 years ago to promote global citizenship through quality educational programs. Every May, the staff gets together with friends of Naomi around her birthday to celebrate her legacy.
- Liane Mattson, our retired director, was honored as a Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques in 2022! This award is given to both French and international individuals for their significant contributions to education.
- Michelle was an L&F teacher and found host families before she started working here! And... she was Leah's teacher!
- Hannah's family has hosted two students through L&F!



LEADER WORKSHOP 2023

We held our Leader Workshop in person for the first time in three years!

Over 40 teachers traveled to Minnesota in January, despite all the snow! Staff presented sessions including: family stay preparation, L&F updates (processes, procedures, and insurance policies), and travel in a post-COVID world. An expert-leader panel allowed longtime L&F teachers to share their tips and tricks for traveling with groups. In the afternoon, teachers had time to connect and collaborate with fellow leaders and L&F coordinators and staff. Some of the more "entertaining" activities included a fun travel hacks session from retired L&F teacher, Deb Dargay, and a few rounds of trivia with Kara Parker from *Creative Language Class*!



Above: Jessi Clayton, Garfield HS, WA, Benedicte Corbett, CR Jefferson HS, and Lisa Nicol, CR Washington HS, IA, plan their combined trip to the South of France while Karen Morgan, Waterford Union HS, WI gets one-on-one time with Michelle. Far left: Nicholas Preisinger and Kim Fynboh, Maple Lake HS, MN, get some planning time with Jennifer. Left: Rachael Simmons, Spokane HS, Izze Dulion, Squalicum HS, and Sonya Morrison, Sehome HS, WA find a spot all tucked away for their planning time.



STAFF SUMMER TRIVIA

As we're hard at work wrapping up final plans for our summer programs, there are also summer plans of our own we are excitedly making. Here are some of L&F's most anticipated plans! Can you guess which plans belong to each staff member?



1. I am excited to connect with family and friends this summer. A wedding in Missoula, MT, concerts-- Beyoncé and Muna, camping, and swimming in the many lakes and rivers around the Twin Cities will make for a lively fun filled summer!
2. I am celebrating my daughter's graduation from high school and preparing to see her off to college this fall. It will be a big transition for our family!
3. Something I am easily most excited for this summer is seeing both Taylor Swift and Louis Tomlinson (from 1D) live! The concerts are two weeks apart, blocks from each other... and both in Chicago, where I definitely do not live... :)
4. I'm excited for some good relaxation this summer, after our many summer travel groups come home! I'm planning on lots of long walks with the dogs, board game days with friends and family, afternoons at the neighbor's pool, and trying to get to books that have been piling up on my TBR list. Add in a trip or two to Wisconsin, and I'm sure I'll find lots of fun!

Did you get them all right? Find the answers hidden somewhere in the newsletter!



LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

We are working hard on some much needed updates to our promotional videos, both for travel and hosting programs (for you to share with your students to get them excited)!

If you have any fun memories captured on video of your students abroad or students being hosted in the US that you think would be enticing for an interested student or family, please send them our way!

Videos can be sent to info@languageandfriendship.com

