



**IFYE Association of the USA, Inc.**  
*Peace Through Understanding*

**IFYE UPDATE**

**SPECIAL EDITION**

**August 1, 2017**

*Presidential comment: It is my pleasure to introduce you to the new IFYE Executive Director, Ken Gordon.*

*This special edition of the IFYE Update is devoted to providing you an opportunity to meet Ken.  
-- Art Deisher --*

***Ken Gordon is IFYE's New Executive Director***

If it weren't for suffering with hay fever in his early days on the farm in Indiana, the IFYE Association of the USA's Executive Director, Ken Gordon, may have stayed farming. However, Ken pursued another path, but one not far from agriculture.

Ken farmed 1,800 acres with his father and brother before leaving to obtain his bachelor's degree in journalism at Ball State University. He began a career as a photojournalist and many of the stories and photographs he produced for the newspaper revolved around farming. Not long after he began working for newspapers, he was offered an opportunity with the Indiana Farm Bureau and became media relations manager for the statewide organization. In that role, he increased the awareness of the organization's efforts in Washington D.C. and in the Indiana Statehouse. During his time at Farm Bureau, Ken pursued his Master's degree in public relations at Ball State University and finished his advanced degree after joining CIBA, now called Syngenta.



*Ken and Cheryl at home on their Ohio farm.*

Ken joined Syngenta as public relations manager and served in that role for nearly 10 years. He managed issues for the company and its "Leadership at its Best<sup>sm</sup>" program. The program brought up-and-coming leaders from various commodity associations to the company headquarters in North Carolina for training in association management, public speaking, media relations, communications-style training, and later a second trip to Washington D.C. for lobbying training. It was during this time that Ken honed his leadership and media relation skills and worked with media in the U.S., as well as on location in Germany and the U.K.

Ken accepted a position with Ashland Inc., and moved to Ohio, where he currently resides. He served six years as the company's global media relations manager, focusing on trade media that aligned with Ashland's business units. He also served as spokesperson on many occasions and facilitated media interviews with business leaders. While in Ohio, Ken returned to his roots by buying a small farm near Plain City, Ohio. There, he and his wife, Cheryl, grow mushrooms, lavender, and herbs for the local farmers' market. Ken and his wife have two daughters, Kelsey, 26, and Abby, 22.

When Ashland Inc. underwent reorganization after buying another firm, Ken took a position as public affairs manager for Momentive, a global chemical company. At Momentive, Ken acted as corporate spokesperson, managed internal and external communications, and hosted a Congressional visit to a Momentive manufacturing site emphasizing the job value related to products produced at that location. In addition, Ken helped manage the philanthropic efforts for Momentive.

Ken left Momentive to work on a business team with local county officials. The business team efforts allowed him to work with many local business owners and help them hire appropriate people to fill the open jobs in the county. During his work with the county, Ken saw an opportunity to work with disadvantaged youth and help them develop job skills and prepare them for interviews. It was while doing this work that he became aware of the opportunity with IFYE and a way to return to his roots in agriculture.

Ken has a diverse background and many experiences that he will put to use in helping grow the association and program. He will be at the upcoming annual meeting in Orlando, so plan to attend and meet our new executive director.

### **Say Hello to Ken in Florida at the IFYE Conference**

**Ken will be attending the 2017 National IFYE Conference in Florida that begins on Wednesday, Aug. 30, and concludes Sunday morning, Sept. 3. There is still time and rooms are available for the conference. (Rooms will likely be released Aug. 9, so don't delay.) Details are on the IFYE Website and in the last issue of the IFYE Update. The amount needed to operate for the rest of 2017 which includes the exchange program and administration is sizable. However, if each IFYE Alum would donate \$10.00 per month we would exceed our budget!! That's correct, if each alumnus could donate \$100 per year or \$10.00 per month, your choice, financially we would meet our needs.**

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