



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

IFYE UPDATE – August 2025

Global Connections Blossom: IFYE Delegates Kick Off 2025 Exchange in Washington D.C.

The spirit of international exchange truly came alive in Washington D.C. as a vibrant group of young global ambassadors gathered for the IFYE orientation. Held from June 11-16, the orientation is a crucial springboard for both inbound delegates arrived in the U.S. and U.S. American participants preparing for their own transformative journeys abroad.

Among the 2025 IFYE ambassadors were U.S. American outbounds Lillian Tiziani from Michigan, who traveled to Chile, and Anna Lent from South Dakota, who traveled to Taiwan. The inbound delegates included "Lesley" Yun-Jung Liao from Taiwan, who was hosted in South Dakota, and four young individuals from Chile: Leonor Durán went to Nebraska, Maria "Francisca" Valenzuela went to Illinois, Joice Contreras went to Colorado and Wyoming, and Bryam Acevedo went to Kansas and Missouri.



Inbound and outbound IFYE ambassador's delegates exploring Washington DC.

Throughout their orientation the IFYEs focused on practical skills in preparation for their travels. They attended classes on documenting their experience by John Niska, Managing stress by Macy Williams, Agriculture in the U.S. by Lindsey Abentroth, cultural immersion with Amaris Daniels, and language labs with Traci Sherlock. The IFYEs also got a chance to meet Juan Gabriel Valdés the Chilean Ambassador at the Chilean Embassy. The group also explored Washington, D.C., with a scavenger hunt and a tour of iconic monuments.



Picture of Ambassador, Juan Gabriel Valdes with IFYEs and some Embassy staff.

As orientation concluded, the IFYE delegates departed Washington D.C. not just with newfound knowledge, but with strengthened bonds and a profound sense of excitement for the exchange ahead. To see a glimpse into their incredible journeys and all the discoveries they made, be sure to follow IFYE USA on Instagram and Facebook.

Shaping the Future: 2026 Program Updates

With the conclusion of the 2025 program, the IFYE board is excited to announce our commitment to a 2026 exchange program! Our goal is to host 10 inbound and send 10 outbound IFYEs next summer. We've already reached out to our partner countries and are in the process of confirming their interest in exchanging with us. This means it's time for states to start thinking about hosting an IFYE in 2026. If your state hasn't hosted before but is curious about the experience, we can connect you with a neighboring state to co-host an IFYE, allowing you to "dip your toes in the water." You can see what our current IFYEs accomplished on their Instagram or Facebook pages. The application for outbound IFYEs will be available in early September, once we've finalized our exchange countries. Applications will be due March 1, 2026. Download the 2026 IFYE Brochure [here](#).

2025 Conference Summary

More than 120 IFYEs, SPIFYEs (spouse of an IFYE), KIFYEs (kid of an IFYE), and guests gathered in Ft. Collins, Colorado, for the 2025 National IFYE Alumni Conference from May 29 through June 1. Using the theme, "From Peaks to Plains," the co-host states Nebraska and Colorado brought together a wide variety of speakers and tours covering local and regional history, arts and culture, local food and specialty beverages, and some good old-fashioned IFYE fun.



Our annual business meeting summarized the association's activities for the past three years and brought alumni up to speed on the 2025 program and 2026 program plans.

When totaled, our Silent and Live Auctions and the Fund a Cause effort netted \$14,880 to help fund IFYE programming. In addition, the conference generated a modest profit of \$1,403.61. Proceeds will be divided, according to IFYE policy, between Colorado, Nebraska, and the IFYE Association of the USA, Inc.

While no host for the 2026 conference has been confirmed, we do have one state interested in hosting it in 2027 and will keep all of you posted. Thanks to all who attended!

Ways to Give

Have you made your 2025 contributions to IFYE yet? We are grateful for the 22 IFYE alums who have given \$8,930 through the "Fund the Cause" auction at the national conference or by mailing a check or giving online.



\$64,491 in annual giving funds have been received through the end of July 2025. The 2025 budgeted goal for donations from IFYE Alumni is \$121,100. Thank you for your support!

IFYE now accepts in-kind gifts of stock. Take a look at your portfolio. If you own non-retirement assets with a low-cost basis, consider gifting some shares to IFYE. [IFYE Stock Donation | Ways to Give | IFYE](#) details the transfer instructions your financial advisor or custodian will need to facilitate the gift.

Qualified Charitable Distributions from your IRA are another tax-efficient gifting option. See [Donate from Your IRA to IFYE®](#)! For more details.

Farm Bill Update

If you are watching the progress of the Farm Bill, there isn't any. We do know that Congress has passed the "Big, Beautiful Bill" and is working on appropriating those monies.

The U.S. House Committee on Agriculture has had several hearings regarding various aspects of the bill, including the nutrition programs, but has not yet held an overall session to finalize the bill (called a "markup" and includes a final vote).

A few days ago, Jan Wood had a phone meeting with a staff member of the House Committee on Agriculture. She was told that when the August Congressional recess is finished, the committee will resume the final work on the Farm Bill. It is expected to pass quickly.

At that time, the IFYE Board of Directors will be asking for all IFYEs to step up by writing emails to their Representatives and Senators asking them to vote for the passage of the Farm Bill that includes the International Agriculture Cultural Immersion and Exchange Program.

When the Farm Bill is passed by Congress, we will likely be asking that you send similar emails to the Committee on Appropriations and to the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture seeking release of the monies. At that point, IFYE will be able to submit a proposal to the USDA for funding.

It has been a long and winding road to where we are now. While we are not done, we are in a good place. Keep the faith!

Awards Presented at Annual IFYE Conference in Loveland, Colorado

The recent Annual IFYE Conference in Loveland, Colorado, was not only a celebration of friendship, culture, and international exchange — it was also a time to honor the extraordinary dedication of individuals whose efforts have left a lasting mark on the IFYE community.

As the IFYE community reflected on these honors, it was clear that the legacy of **"Peace Through Understanding"** thrives because of individuals like Marj Loyd, Mark Zeug, Jan Dennis Wood, and Sheri Swackhamer — people whose generosity, leadership, and vision continue to connect cultures and change lives around the world.

Outstanding Contributions by IFYE Alumni – Marjorie "Marj" Loyd



Marjorie "Marj" Loyd

Marjorie "Marj" Loyd, a 1968 IFYE from Kansas to Israel and resident of Topeka, Kansas, was recognized for her decades of tireless service to the IFYE program. Throughout her years of involvement, Marj has served on numerous international committees, contributed to a variety of leadership roles — including President of the IFYE Foundation — and was one of the original members of the Organizational Capacity Campaign (OCC). She continues to serve IFYE USA today as a member of the Program Advisory Committee and as part of the Kansas IFYE Alumni Orientation Committee, helping prepare

inbound and outbound IFYEs as well as supporting the State's 4-H International Program. Her steadfast commitment and leadership have inspired generations of IFYEs.

Plaque of Appreciation – Jan Dennis Wood

Jan Dennis Wood, a 1972 IFYE from Ohio to Australia, received a Plaque of Appreciation in recognition of her three years as President of the IFYE USA Board of Directors and her continued work to have IFYE recognized in the 2025 Farm Bill — an effort now in its fifth year. Jan's persistence and leadership have been instrumental in advancing IFYE's visibility and advocacy at the national level.



Jan Dennis Wood

Plaque of Appreciation – Sheri Swackhamer

Sheri Swackhamer, IFYE Ambassador and a 1983 participant from Virginia to Italy, was recognized for her seven years of service on the IFYE USA Board of Directors. During her tenure, Sheri served as Chair of the Marketing, Membership, and Alumni Communication Committees. Known for her thoughtful ideas and insightful questions, Sheri helped guide the Board's work forward in intentional and strategic ways, leaving a lasting impact on the organization.



Sheri Swackhamer

Outstanding Contributions by IFYE Alumni – Mark Zeug

Also honored was Mark Zeug, a 1967 IFYE from Minnesota to India, for his generous financial support to the IFYE program, ensuring its strength and sustainability for years to come. Mark's gift was made in loving memory of his late wife, Helene Hatsuno Horimoto Zeug, a remarkable and influential leader of 4-H in Hawaii. Helene's passion for youth development and cross-cultural exchange continues to live on through this contribution. Accepting the award on Mark's behalf were two of his IFYE sisters to India, Bev Hain and Nancy Maxwell Rich, who shared heartfelt words about his enduring dedication to the IFYE mission.



Mark and Helene Zeug