



IFYE NEWS

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Established as International Farm Youth Exchange® in 1948

Postcards from Africa

Shared by National Program Director Melissa Haberstroh, below are some excerpts from each of the five 2023 IFYEs who are currently in Africa (Tanzania, Zambia, and Kenya). We hope that you will be able to view their first two months in their hosting country through their eyes as a snapshot to date of their IFYE experiences.

Hello from Arusha!

Kyle Newland

Ohio to Finland and Tanzania

Hello from Arusha. I am from the little village of Harrod, Ohio, and am currently on the second half of my six-month IFYE journey.

Let's start with the first family that I experienced in Tanzania. At my first family, I got the pleasure of staying at a coffee tourism plantation with my host father Lucas and his family. While at the plantation, I helped them run the business either by helping with tours, planting stuff in the gardens, or helping roast and make coffee. During the time with Lucas' family, I became really good friends with lots of the local guys that lived in the village. We would spend most nights either playing cards or talking about life and our cultures.

Now, I am with my second host family in Tanzania. The dad is a carpenter/architect and has plans for me to help with some of the builds. So, maybe someday if you visit the country, you will see my work. Most days consist of me and the father going into town and gathering supplies for his company and then heading to work or running errands. After work, it's pretty much the same as it is back home; we spend time with the family and relax. That's all I plan to spill the beans on this family for right now.

Like any exchange, there are challenges. Here in Tanzania, it's mostly the stuff I take for granted back home. Here, running water and just having power are a struggle in most places. This leads to us having to eat with flashlights and candles some nights. Then the food is just different, especially with the meat in which they love to have lots of fat and leave it on the bone. I will say that while these things were hard at first, I'm taking them in stride now and thoroughly enjoying my time here.



Mambo from Arusha, Tanzania!

Tori Rasmussen

South Dakota to Tanzania (Fall 3-month IFYE)

I am currently with my second host family, and have been here for over a month now, although it feels like longer and shorter both at the same time!



In this family, I have been blessed with two younger brothers. My mom is a teacher, while baba (father) keeps pigs, chickens, and has both banana and avocado trees.

At my first host family, I was blessed to have three older brothers and a nephew. They kept dairy cattle, had a bean field, and a large garden of greens such as kale and spinach.

My older brother Meshach started to give me Swahili lessons within my first week, and it evolved into such a routine that I ended up taking not one, but two Swahili exams in my time with him! On of my favorite moments so far! Another is how I was welcomed to the football field when I went with my brothers, and the whole group of people who played were ready and excited to teach me.

While this is an agricultural program, I've come to realize that this exchange is so much more than that. For me it has truly become all about the people. I know that I have family in a very real sense here in Tanzania now. My mamas, like back home, worry and check in when my brothers and I are out; my babas are never convinced I've eaten enough and always offer me more; and my brothers are quick to call me sister, and to try to solve any worry, fear, or problem I may have.

I have loved my experience so far and know that with more time left here I will find more and more joys, as well as more people to love and who will show me love!

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Jan Dennis Wood,
President
jwood@ifyeusa.org

Be a Volunteer

When I returned from my IFYE experience in Australia in 1973, I was involved with IFYE activities. Then, I married and focused on my spouse and the career-building stage of my life.

Nearly forty years later, I again volunteered to support IFYE, freely giving my time and energy to help an organization that was struggling to keep an exchange program running. I believe that I've made an impact. And I feel good about my contributions.

What would you get from volunteering for IFYE? You'll find yourself re-connecting with old friends and IFYE brothers and sisters. Catching up with them is really fun. And the friendships continue to grow. Just ask anyone who attended the 75th Anniversary Celebration. You will feel a great sense of satisfaction to be contributing to helping IFYE thrive and grow.

Working with our young adult Outbounds and Inbounds is a treat. You remember your own thoughts and words at that age and realize you want to make the exchange easier for them, if possible. They are so enthusiastic and interested in learning about a whole new culture. Even though most young adults today have travelled internationally, very few have lived with host families for several months nor have had the opportunity to learn the various aspects of the family culture in a host country. Today's IFYEs have their tribulations, but most of them gain the experience of a lifetime and it changes who they become as a person. Just like those of us who went before them, they return home changed. In most cases, these young people make more of a difference in their own families' worlds and their own life than without the IFYE experience.

You probably have expertise that will help IFYE to grow and to continue the exchange program, hopefully for many, many years to come.

Here are some Board committees that need new members in 2024:

- *Nominating Sub-committee of Executive Committee:* Helps recruit new Board of Directors members and Committee Members.
- *Finance Committee:* If you have knowledge of Finance and Fundraising, this committee is for you.
 - *Development Committee:* This new committee was created to assist with fundraising.
- *Marketing Committee:* the Marketing Committee prepares the annual giving campaign and assists with marketing efforts.
 - *Social Media Sub-committee:* Helps share all the social media concerning IFYE alumni through social media outlets.
 - *Website Content Committee:* Assists in overseeing the IFYE website and helps ensure the website

- content is appropriate and up to date.
- *Membership Committee:* Help develop new benefits for IFYE Association members.

The IFYE Board of Directors is an operating board and is mostly dependent on volunteers to serve on the committees and to help with the functions that keep the Association going and our exchanges happening.

Will you add more to your IFYE life by volunteering? Email jwood@ifyeusa.org, Nominating Committee Chair, to talk about your interest.

Farm Bill Status

Jan Wood and Barb Batie

Every American farmer knows the status of the 2023 Farm Bill – stuck We have no news to share; so, let's take the approach that no news is good news.

Our Farm Bill Committee continues to follow up with Congresspersons and Senators who serve on the House and Senate Agricultural Committees.

- When we have something significant happening in IFYE, including orientation and IFYEs returning for debriefing, we send emails with attachments to the staff members with whom we've been working.
- We took all our Outbound IFYE representatives to visit with their Representatives or Senators during the June 2023 IFYE orientation.
- Congress was not in session when our August returning IFYEs arrived for debriefing.
- We have emailed the Agricultural Legislative Aides a few of the IFYE videos from IFYEs in Action. We will continue to do the same over the next few weeks or until we hear good news for IFYE.
- In the meantime, the Committee is asking that you continue to send support letters to your own Representative and Senators regardless of whether they are or not on one of the Ag Committees. Tell them about our 75-year-old Association!.



Shown to left (L to R) Nora Larson (to Switzerland and Kenya), Elisabeth Dalke (to Norway), and Tori Rasmussen (to Tanzania) meeting with their South Dakota Senator John Thune, during June Orientation prior to heading to their respective host countries.



IFYE and USDA Renew the 2019 Memorandum of Understanding

IFYE’s efforts to renew the Memorandum of Understanding with the USDA have proved successful as we have received the document with Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack’s signature. IFYE President Jan Wood and Interim Executive Director Carolyn Hansen began the effort to gain a renewed agreement in December 2022. The agreement is for a term of five years. We appreciate the efforts of USDA staff to assist with this process.

The goal of the MOU is to “promote the common goals of advancing the public interest through developing a highly prepared workforce for unique careers within the industry of international agriculture through rural-based international exchanges.”

To view more information regarding the renewed and/or the 2019 MOU between IFYE and USDA, please visit <https://ifyeusa.org/news-events/ifye-and-usda-renew-the-2019-memorandum-of-understanding.html>

*Postcards from Africa
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Zambia

*Meghan O’Reilly, Ohio to Taiwan and Zambia
Abby Schmidt, Missouri to Zambia (Fall 3-month IFYE)*

Since landing at the Lusaka Airport on September 17th, after almost two months in this country, I have made numerous friends and have learned about the wide variety of agriculture industries in Zambia.

To date, there is one day that stands out in my memory. It is the day that we traveled with Rockview University students to a satellite location in Kapiri. This location was a learning farm for the university. We traveled here with two goals: (1) Take up and bring the drip irrigation to the new campus location and (2) Check the hogs and take blood samples in order to relocate the animals to the new piggery.

We also gathered approximately 10 bags of cassava to bring back to the city. This trip took a total of 11 hours of driving, meaning there was time for good conversation and taking in the sights in the bush along the way.

*Bye for now!
Meghan*



Part of 10 bags of cassava we brought back from our trip with Rockview University ag students



Since arriving in Zambia, I have had the opportunity to work on an organic agriculture training center in Kasisi. I have also had the chance to attend some classes at Rockview University in Lusaka, Zambia, learning about agriculture and the Zambian legal system.

My most memorable moment so far has been an outing we did with some fellow coworkers at the Kasisi Agricultural Training Center (KATC) We got to interact with agriculture students and learn about their agricultural education system while having fun in true Zambian fashion.

*Tsalani bwino! (Bye)
Abby*

Continued on next page

Kenya

Nora Larson, North Dakota to Switzerland and Kenya

One week in Kenya. Started the day by snoozing my alarm(s). Culture shock has become a recognizable foe. All the new things siphon remaining energy. That, and I was having an interesting dream and wanted to be there for the resolution. Weird? Yes ... but hey, I'll count it as a perk to this whole "antimalarial pills may cause vivid dreams thing." At this point I don't remember all the details.

Church is a short drive or walk to the village. This was my second time at Kenyan Mass. The first was the morning after I landed from a 30+ hours of travel. I was much more awake today. My host mom is a part of the choir and I sit, stand, and dance as appropriate. I like that our seats are by the keyboard. Two talented gentlemen swap in and out sometimes in the middle of a song (one might go receive communion or something). They are fun to watch! Mass is 2ish hours long. I don't understand much but can follow the readings in English in my own Bible. Last week one of the passages was from the book of Sirach which led to a blank stare followed by a clarifying conversation with Mrs. Bor. An interesting experience for this Presbyterian gal.



After church, we walk to prayer small group which meets at rotating houses. The general format is sing, pray, read a passage three times (Swahili, English, and again in Swahili or Nandi), pray, sing, eat. This week we had big bowls of corn and beans for lunch known as "Githeri." Mrs. Bor rushed us off quickly to catch a ride to welcome a new baby to the family.

It is tradition to make an event out of visiting the mom and baby, offer gifts of food, and formally celebrate the growing family. If possible, mothers are given three months of maternity leave. Our ride was ready for us by the time we made it back to the house. Mama T was behind the wheel of a five seat Toyota. I squeezed in back with the others. The same gospel tunes my grandpa used to play came from the speakers. The sound of Tennessee Earnie Ford created a somewhat reassuring background to the chaos that is Kenyan traffic.

I learned that "Mama ____" is a respectful way of addressing anyone who has had a child: "Mama (insert their kids name here)." It can be the oldest kid's name, the most well known in the village, or the name of the sibling you know. For men it is the same except you say "Baba." Interesting how it is the reverse at home where I'm known as "Judy's daughter" or "one of the Larson girls."

A quick pitstop for masala chai, bread, and a few more gifts for the family and later we got back on the road, this time with one more sister. About forty, hot, and bumpy minutes later we arrived and unfolded ourselves from the Toyota.

Greetings are extremely important to Kenyan culture and take time. This pale Dakota gal wasn't questioned but welcomed with open arms and handshakes. The house was so beautiful! The home I am currently living in is also nice but this one felt like a home fancier than most I've seen in the States. Those who have been to Africa, and Kenya specifically, have spoken about the drastic contrast between wealth and poverty. I can't quite wrap my head around the fact we were enjoying corn and beans a few hours before a grand multi-entree meal.

After a meal, we went and visited the mom and new baby. The ladies of the family passed the little one around while swapping stories of their kids and well-wishes for the future. After a while, I joined the guys and kids in the living room to watch football. They wanted to know about US sports ... I did my best but probably let the real sports followers down. Sorry, Uncle Tim.



Also had an interesting conversation with a sister who does event and Agritourism things. She has her own company that handles corporate events as well as hosts international trips for Kenyan farmers and policy makers. The group tours countries that may have potential development inspiration for farms and/or farming policies.

Kenyan Chai is my new favorite thing. Water, milk, tea, spices, slightly sweetened, yum. It's also consumed up to three times per day so there is no scarcity. We finished our tea and said our goodbyes after a nice afternoon. This time a sister stayed but Mama T gave a family friend a ride back into town. I can't tell how much is planned and how much just happens organically.

Understanding more of the language would give me a better picture of how things work. Kenya has two official languages: English and Kiswahili (just Swahili in English). There are also many tribal languages and a sort of local slang which is a mix of Swahili and English. People often switch between two or three languages in one interaction which is rather confusing when trying to learn new words! It is now late in the evening and raining outside. I was going to go to bed early but decided I should document the day instead.

Goodnight for now. It's been a long day ... hopeful that my dreams are relaxing ones.



IFYE Program Diamond Anniversary Celebration

Pat Eisenmann Donahue, Co-Chair



IFYE marked its Diamond Anniversary as members gathered October 6-8 in Louisville, KY to celebrate 75 years of rich experiences, thousands of exchanges, and millions of memories. One hundred thirty IFYE alumni, SPIFYEs (spouses) and friends gathered, reunited and enjoyed a full weekend. For this particular year, the Board opted for a weekend celebration to mark this special occasion instead of a full conference. Joining in for the weekend was earliest IFYE program participant in attendance, Joan Engel Wieckert (Kansas to Denmark in 1952) and the newest, 2023 Inbound to Missouri/Nebraska, Seoyeon Song from South Korea.

Kentucky Hospitality and a Special Tour: The hospitality room quickly became a hub of activity as IFYEs gathered the first afternoon, evening, and late into Friday night. Breakfast on Saturday was followed by a tour of the Hermitage and Woodland farms owned by 1969 Kentucky IFYE to Thailand, Steve Wilson and his wife, Laura Lee Brown. Nearly half of the celebration participants toured the Hermitage and Woodland Farms. They were greeted by Wilson's granddaughter who welcomed them for a taste of Kentucky agriculture including horses, buffalo, food, and beautiful gardens. One participant commented, "Saturday tours were outstanding; great way to get to know the area."

Reception: A pre-banquet reception kicked off the evening complete with harp music provided by Emily Fife of Bloomington, Indiana. Displays of pictures and other memorabilia in the reception hall were categorized in groups including Friends and Family, Agriculture, Transportation, and Connections. The display was created by Cora Rhode, 2022 IFYE from Colorado to Switzerland and Devon Couy, England and Virginia Warner, 1971/72 Pennsylvania IFYE to New Zealand. Other IFYEs shared scrapbooks and their own special memorabilia.

Buffet Dinner: Elegant tall centerpieces with delicate lights adorned dinner tables and, as per tradition, the evening opened with ringing the IFYE bell. Doing the honors were Co-Chairs Bob Ellis, 1971 Indiana IFYE to The Gambia, Pat Donahue (Eisenmann) 1971/72 Ohio IFYE-YDP to Botswana and Seoyeon Song, 2023 inbound to Missouri/Nebraska from South Korea. Following a special IFYE blessing by Doug Pierson, 1977 IFYE to Poland, dinner began with a buffet of four food stations, each with an international flavor. During the meal, guests were entertained with a slide show of pictures from over the years contributed by IFYEs from all decades of the program. IFYE President Jan Wood, Bob and Pat led a special toast to 75 years of IFYE, thousands of exchangees and memories. The program for the evening was entitled "Decades of Memories" developed by Virginia Warner, featured slides illustrating the many changes over the years.



Recognitions: Four surprise recognitions were presented by the IFYE Board to individuals who have made exceptional contributions to IFYE over the years. Recognized were: (Standing L to R:) Bob Ellis, 1971 Indiana IFYE to The Gambia; Keith Ferris, 1969/70 Michigan IFYE to New Zealand; Roger McCoy, 1968/69 Missouri IFYE to New

Zealand, and (Seated) Virginia "Ginny" Warner. Many IFYEs wore their native costumes and cheered as their exchange decade was recognized.



Tribute Tables: Members of the IFYE Family, present or not, participated in Tribute Tables contributions honoring individuals who had made a difference in their lives. Contributions totaled over \$6,000 and all names were read as part of the program.

A Song of Peace: To close the evening, 75th Celebration attendees gathered in a circle passing the light of candles until the circle was closed and ended with all singing the traditional "Song of Peace."

Memorial Service: Sunday morning service included honoring IFYEs who have passed in the past year or about whom IFYE USA learned of their passing. Ray (Illinois to India 1964) and Carol Ropp from Illinois, who organized the event, read all 40 plus names. With each name, IFYE Family members who knew the deceased, stood in honor.

The 75th Anniversary Celebration was officially closed with the lowering of the IFYE flag in front of the Holiday Inn Louisville East during the celebration weekend.

12th World IFYE Conference in Austria

Anna Parker, Bob Ellis, and Dale Yonker

The site of the 2023 World IFYE Conference, hosted by Austria, was a Youth and Family Hostel in Velden am Wörthersee. There were 24 countries represented by 311 guests, 73 of which were from the USA.

Well-planned activities kept the IFYEs, SPIFYEs (spouses), and F-IFYEs (friends of IFYEs) busy during August 27 to September 2, 2023. Three days of the conference included multiple bus tours to locations in Austria and Slovenia, which appealed to diverse interests that included agriculture, archaeology, machinery, military, and winery locations. One highlight was visiting the Lipizzaner Stud Farm.

A special IFYE multidenominational service was held in Klagenfurt with time to also tour the Farmers Market.

Back at the conference location. “The European Afternoon” was fun and instructive for attendees. During the afternoon, culture, crafts, dancing, food, and drink were introduced. It was an informal, social event, a great way to meet and greet both old and new friends.

- *Scottish Dancing* - After a brief welcome and explanation of the events, Scottish dancing was encouraged. Many of the Scots were wearing their kilts or their clan banner across their torsos. After demonstrations, everyone was invited to participate. Combined international groups did two Scottish round dances. Many looked “winded” by the end of the long songs.
- *Food samples and drinks* - Different European countries had tables with “Taste of . . .” set up. Representative specialty food samples and drinks were available. The IFYEs were glad to explain when and why the specialties were popular in their countries.
- *Instructions for crafts and games* were available. Knit samples made that afternoon were put together for a blanket/afghan to be given to a charity.
- *A game from Switzerland* included a die, bulky mittens, scarf, hat, knife and fork and a packaged bar of chocolate.
- Slovenia, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium, Wales, Northern Ireland, England, Sweden, Isle of Man, and Norway also highlighted something special about or from their countries.

The IFYE Spirit was alive among the attendees and indicates that it is alive in each home country. Everyone was appreciative of the opportunity to attend the fabulous conference in Austria. They are looking forward to attending future conferences in their regions and the next World Conference.

13th World IFYE Conference in 2028

The tradition of rotating World Conferences was agreed upon during a meeting at the World Conference in Sweden in 2003. This year, the World IFYE Board agreed that New Zealand will host the 13th World IFYE Conference in 2028.



Joyce Drewiecki (L) received an award for having attended all 12 world conferences

Pre-World Conference Tour - Thirty-six IFYE Family members participated in our tour to Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, and Germany prior to the 12th World IFYE Conference in Velden, Austria.

Highlights included:

- *Vienna area*: City tours of Vienna and Bratislava, Slovakia, great Austrian food, and tours of an apricot orchard and a schnapps distillery. Some tour members even visited the Lipizzaner Stud Farm.
- *Hungary*: A national park and an organic golf course. It was quite a surprise to learn that our guide, Attila, had participated in the IFYE exchange in the 1980's to England!
- *Salzburg, Austria* where we visited a fish farm and had walking tour of the city.
- *Germany* to visit the Eagle's Nest with a short break from the intense heat.
- *Graz, Austria*: a pig farm and market followed by a chocolate factory and our farewell dinner.
- On our way to Velden and the 12th World IFYE Conference, we stopped by a pumpkin seed oil producer and then at a huge vinegar manufacturer.

Post-World Conference Tour – Our tour to Italy had 19 participants. We left our bus in Venice to take private water taxis to the city to meet our local tour guide for the tourist sites.

Verona - With an early morning start from Verona, we headed to a family-owned Italian Brown Swiss farm. Then, it was time for a walking tour of Verona (Yes! We visited Juliet's home of Romeo and Juliet!!) and then on to Modena.

Modena is famous for fast cars, Pavarotti, ham, cheese and balsamic vinegar! Of these, we visited a Parma ham producer, parmigiano cheese facility and a balsamic vinegar producer. (*Fun Fact - Balsamic vinegar tastes great on gelato!!*)

Overnighting in *Montecatini Terme*, an early morning train ride took us to Florence for a tour of all the famous sites. Then, back to Montecatini Terme for free time and overnight. After breakfast, we had a farm visit to wheat, lentils, oats and other cereal crops. They also made pasta on site which we could purchase. Our next stop was a winery and olive oil farm for lunch and tastings. Then, back to Montecatini Terme for an overnight stay.

Taking a high-speed train from Florence to Rome, it was time to visit all the historical and famous sites of Rome. Two nights in Rome gave us time to visit the Vatican Museum and have a guided tour of St. Peter's Square and Church.

Both pre- and post-World Conference tours coordinated by our IFYE Association were planned by Explorations by Thor from Lexington, Kentucky, with coordinating help from our own Bob Ellis. Ed.

A Multi-Generational IFYE Story

As this is IFYE's 75th Anniversary one of the articles we wished to feature in this IFYE NEWS is one of how earlier IFYEs may have influenced later family members to also become IFYEs. Although there are several incidents of more than one IFYE in a family, this generational article includes information from IFYEs over four decades and five individuals. Ed.

Tom Trail
(Idaho to Nepal 1956)

Jo Ann Smith Trail
(Virginia to Sweden 1956)

Ruth Trail
(Idaho to The Netherlands 1982)



Stephanie Graham-Esparza
(South Carolina to Costa Rica
1993)

Raine Esparza
(Texas to Thailand 2023)

Raine Esparza

2023 Texas to Thailand

My name is Catherine Raine Esparza, though I go by my middle name "Raine." I recently graduated from the University of Kentucky with a Bachelor's degree in Natural Resources & Environmental Science. I minored in Sustainable Agriculture and graduated summa cum laude from the honors college.

I am originally from San Antonio, Texas, and both of my parents are criminal defense attorneys. I have a younger brother named Michael who is studying art at the University of Alabama, and my mother was an IFYE to Costa Rica from June to December 1993.

In the future, I plan to work in environmental restoration or conservation, especially with regards to preserving habitat to preserve biodiversity—I am especially interested in anything that preserves habitat for insects or amphibians.

IFYE as learned from my relatives - I always knew that my Aunt Jo Ann and Uncle Tom Trail had done a lot of international work and that my cousin Ruth had been involved in the same program my mother had been for international exchange. But it wasn't until more recently that I knew what the organization had been specifically. For most of my childhood, I knew that my mother had lived in Costa Rica for several months because I had heard stories and seen pictures and because she taught us how to prepare ripe plantains for breakfast which she learned in Costa Rica.

Currently, I am in Thailand as a 2023 IFYE (having arrived September 17 and will be here until December 10). I have been traveling along with IFYE, Delaney Smith, through the provinces of Buriram, Lamphun, Chachoengsa, and Kanchanaburi,



Host family friend, Delaney Smith, and me making Pad Thai.

Our host families have been very kind and we have been able to tour several community farming operations and national parks, as well as immerse ourselves culturally by learning how to cook Thai food and participating in festivals and volunteer opportunities.

My IFYE experience relates to my chosen career because I've been able to see a lot of approaches to sustainable agriculture and environmental preservation while here, including being able to tour a conservation area for the eastern sarus crane, which was nearly extirpated from Thailand.

Key Takaways - So far, I would say that my **key takeaways** as an IFYE are improved understanding of Thai culture, improved communication skills (especially over a language barrier), heightened understanding of small-scale agriculture, and a greater ability to navigate unfamiliar or uncertain situations and adjust plans on the fly. Some of my best memories are visiting the waterfall in Erawan National Park and making a wish on a lantern before the Yi Peng Lantern Festival in Lampoon.

I am looking forward to visiting Phuket, where I will stay with my last host family, and to exploring Khao Yai National Park.



Writing a wish on a lantern to hang up in preparation for the Grand Lantern Festival.



On the Lantern Bridge

Stephanie Graham-Esparza

South Carolina to Costa Rica 1993

My Aunt Jo Ann and Uncle Tom Trail always fascinated me, growing up. They had lived in so many countries and had such great experiences. Uncle Tom would always send me coins from various countries, and they would give me cool souvenirs from their travels. They really inspired me to travel and broaden my horizons. I love that they met each other through IFYE. My cousin Ruth has travelled extensively and it's always fun to follow her adventures on Facebook. They are all very pleased that Raine is continuing the family IFYE tradition.

Present Day

I live in San Antonio, Texas with my husband Joseph and our three cats. We have two children, Raine, age 22 (currently an IFYE to Thailand) and Michael, age 19, who is a sophomore at the University of Alabama. Joseph and I are both criminal defense attorneys. Joseph and his law partner have their own private law firm in San Antonio. I am an Assistant Public Defender in the rural counties south of San Antonio.

Joseph and I have hosted seven high school exchange students over the past four years. We love learning about different cultures and sharing our American culture.

My IFYE Experience in Costa Rica

I was an IFYE to Costa Rica from June-Dec 1993. I lived with 5 different families for the first 5 months, then traveled with other IFYEs (from the US and other countries) for the last month.

My first month was a bit of a shock to me, as the conditions were not as nice as I was used to. However, the situation improved as time went on. I also met Hilde Skejsol, an IFYE from Norway who was staying nearby, and we became good friends.

Best memories/key takeaways of my IFYE experience

- Costa Ricans are a very friendly people. They were always very curious about America and willing to share their culture. During my time there, I frequently spent time at the local high schools, participating in their English classes.
- At one host family, I held English classes twice a week for elementary age kids. They were so much fun, and they were so excited to learn English and meet an American.
- I really enjoyed the natural beauty of Costa Rica. One time my family and their friends and I hiked for six hours to get to a volcano. Then six hours back! It was a fun day, and I was exhausted after, but the Costa Ricans weren't even tired. They were used to walking everywhere and were in great physical shape.
- During the last month, several of us IFYEs traveled down to Corcovado National Park, near the border of Panama. We hiked for 3 days in the wilderness, each day having to be sure to get to the Ranger Station by nightfall. We heard howler monkeys, saw Tapir tracks, smelled wild pigs and saw a venomous snake by our feet! It was amazing. (See below.)
- One time I went to visit Hilde, my IFYE friend from Norway. She was staying near Limón, where lots of bananas are grown. She met me and we rode back to her village on a small train the locals use. On the train she was robbed by a man who grabbed her camera bag, ripped it off her waist, then jumped off the train! That was a shock.
- Then, during my visit, we went to a banana plantation and rode on the machinery they use to transport the big bunches of bananas.



Teaching English in my host family's home



Ruth Trail

Idaho to the Netherlands 1982

Ruth knew she wanted to be an IFYE from a young age as the family attended IFYE conferences and made friends at these, as well as all the time she spent with her family living in various countries with her parents and brothers.

In 1982, Ruth was an IFYE to the Netherlands where she spent six months living with seven host families mostly on dairy, pig, and potato farms. She enjoyed the challenge of learning Dutch. She says, "It was hard to learn Dutch as everyone wanted to practice their English with me." She used sign language with a host mother who didn't speak a word of English. Ruth also spoke at a conference in the Netherlands about her IFYE experience and its impact on her life.

When she returned from the Netherlands, she pursued a degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management from WSU. Ruth has been working as a Senior Sales Manager at an historic hotel in Seattle and uses her skills learned in 4-H and as an IFYE. In her work, she meets people from all over the world, finds something in common with people she meets, and continues to be flexible.

She also continues her connections with friends made here in the USA and globally.

Tom and Jo Ann Smith Trail

Tom and Jo Ann Smith Trail's IFYE experiences began in Idaho and Virginia, respectively, where they were involved in 4-H, went to National 4-H Club Congress, and became interested in learning more about different cultures and how people lived and worked.

The following are some of their experiences in leadership development "as a citizen of the USA and the world."

- Tom consulted short-term with USAID in Malawi, Sudan, Lesotho, Swaziland, other African countries, Central Asia, and in South America in the 1980s and 1990s. He worked on five continents over his 40 years with the Cooperative Extension Service, including during his sabbatical.
- The Trail family spent several years in South America while Tom worked on the Heifer Project in Ecuador with the Peace Corps, three years with the University of Minnesota Swine Project as an Extension Agent in Animal Science. He also taught at the Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile in Santiago. In addition, he spent two years through the University of Nebraska in Bogota, Colombia as an Extension Training Specialist training the local trainers to teach the local farmers.
- In 1979, Tom took a sabbatical from Washington State University (WSU) to teach Extension at Lincoln College in New Zealand's South Island. The three Trail children attended to a local high school.
- In 1986, when Tom went to Malawi for four years to help establish a national extensions service at Bunda College, Jo Ann taught at a British International School in the country.
- Upon returning to Idaho, Jo Ann began working at the U of I's International Friendship Association with international students and people in the community.

Whether hosting, training, working in Idaho Legislature (1994 - 2012), or aiding through international scholarships, Tom and Jo Ann kept culture and international relations to the forefront of their interests and activities.

To learn more about their life, both in the USA and abroad involved with developing leaders and becoming citizens of the world, click here: <https://ifyeusa.org/about/mission-vision-guiding-principles/guiding-principle-6.html>



(Note: Tom passed away November 2, 2023.)

My Time in the USA as an Inbound IFYE

Seonyeon Song, South Korea

As a six-month Inbound IFYE, Seoyeon Song has been able to experience host families and other activities in both Missouri and Nebraska, as well as taking part in the 75th IFYE Anniversary Celebration in Louisville, Kentucky October 6-8th. (Ed.)

My life in South Korea

I live in Jinju, South Korea, a four-hour drive south from Seoul, the capital of Korea. My family consists of my parents, one younger sister, and me. My father works in civil engineering-related projects, while my mother is employed at the 4-H Korea headquarters.

I am currently a second-year university student majoring in Agricultural Engineering at Gyeongsang University. While pursuing my studies, my mother recommended the IFYE program, which led me to learn about it and eventually come to the United States this year. As for hobbies, I usually engage in playing musical instruments, playing games, and having conversations with friends at cafes for leisure.

My Time in Missouri

My first hosting state was Missouri where I had four host families. Although all agriculture-related, they were not all farming families.

In my first host family, I had experiences like weeding the vegetable garden, setting up tomato stems straight, feeding the cows, helping with cow herding, and even assisting in building fences on the farm.

My second host family didn't engage in farm work separately. As my host father was a veterinarian, I got to witness animal surgeries for the first time.

The grandmother in my third host family raised goats. I fed the goats daily, picked blackberries, made salsa sauce from homegrown tomatoes, visited "John Deere" to see and learn about agricultural machinery firsthand, and even rode a combine. I also went to a state fair for the first time which was a great experience.

In the fourth family, I observed the process of making round bale hay while driving a tractor. I also visited livestock auction houses visiting the sale of horses and cattle.

Nebraska

Now, I'm staying with my first family in Nebraska, where I got to drive a "gator" (John Deere UTV), observe the feeding of bees, closely inspect bee hives, and experience the "Homecoming" culture that we don't have in Korea. Barb Batie even hosted a small Autumn party, where we went on a hayride, made s'mores, and had a lot of fun.

75th IFYE Anniversary Celebration

I was able to attend the Anniversary Celebration in Kentucky in October along with Barb Batie. I was honored to ring in the Celebration along with the Co-Chairs, meet some of the 2022 Outbound IFYEs as well as others of the IFYE Family of all ages. I was also able to tour the Heritage and Woodlands Farms.

Special Memories to take home to Korea

Among the many memories I will take home with me in December are:

- My host families
- Others I have met here
- The enjoyment of "party culture" that isn't easily experienced in Korea
- Recipes for the foods commonly eaten in the U.S. I'll cook them from time to time to reminisce about the memories. Also, at each house I visited, they always prepared Korean dishes for me.
- The hayride at Barb Batie's



*Top Left: The Ottes, my first host family in Missouri and me
Top Middle: Me, driving the John Deere "Gator" in my first host family in Nebraska
Right: Learning to make salsa in my third host family in Missouri*

Program Update

Melissa Haberstroh, National Program Director

mhaberstroh@ifyeusa.org

“It’s a funny thing. Coming home. Nothing Changes. Everything looks the same, feels the same, even smells the same. You realize what’s changed is you.” F. Scott Fitzgerald

In August, we welcomed three IFYEs from our two-month program home to a debriefing in Washington, D.C. Each of them spoke of the life-altering aspects of being an IFYE and hoped that they would be able to retain some of the new-found growth when they were faced with “home.”



August 2023 Debriefing: (L to R) Stephan Rolle (Georgia to Germany), Elizabeth Schroeder (Colorado to Norway), Melissa Haberstroh, and Elisabeth Dalke (South Dakota to Austria).

Since we didn’t have any three-month summer participants this year, our next debriefing will be held in December. While we’ll be covering the same topics (reverse culture shock, sharing their experiences, and reflections), I’ll be eager to hear how IFYE has been a catalyst for change in the three-month and six-month IFYEs. I suspect that it will be like many at the recent 75th IFYE Celebration have remarked: “life changing.”

While it’s not quite over (although it is racing by), I have already spent a great deal of time reflecting on the 2023 IFYE Program. There are eleven IFYE Representatives in 2023: three, as I mentioned, in the two-month program (June-August); five in the fall three-month program (September-December); and three in the six-month program (June-December). Our Outbound IFYEs traveled to nine countries: Germany, Switzerland, Finland, Austria, Taiwan, Thailand, and three renewed countries in Africa (Tanzania, Zambia, and Kenya).

Thirteen states and approximately 72 host families welcomed sixteen IFYEs from Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Finland, Austria, Taiwan, Thailand, Slovenia, and South Korea (both six-month participants).

Our IFYE Orientation Team (Hannah Nordby, Amaris Daniels, and Traci Ross Sherlock) conducted four remote orientations and the national orientation held from June 14-19, 2023 in Washington, D.C. Outbound IFYEs visited the Capitol and met their respective Representatives and/or Senators before sessions on the REAL Color Personality Assessment, Culture Shock, Communication Styles, Travel Safety, Photography and Journaling, Emotional Intelligence with Caroline Homan, and an Alumni Panel Discussion featuring Jackson Tubbs, Sheri Swackhamer, Pat Hutsell, Jan Wood, and Bob Jenkins.

A highlight for the IFYEs was the Public Transportation Challenge which had teams of inbound and outbound IFYEs working together to navigate the trains and buses of the Metro system to arrive at Federal Triangle, the starting point for a Cultural Gems Scavenger Hunt. The evening was spent dining in various ethnic food restaurants (Ethiopian and Cambodian, for example) and followed by a Moonlight Monument Walk.

As the National Program Director, my job is to recruit, train, and manage the program (make sure all of the documents are in order, flights are booked, and host families screened). The unwritten, yet some of the most gratifying roles have been teacher, cheerleader, and sometimes counselor to the IFYEs.

One of my personal goals for this year was to use the technology most of us didn’t have as IFYEs. WhatsApp, social media, and the IFYE website are used to share the lives of the IFYEs and their host families through their own words and creative captures of their IFYE experience. Video, photographs, and writings from all of the 2023 IFYEs can all be found on the [Foreign Exchange Program](#) page of the IFYE website. The [IFYEs in Action!](#) page and [IFYE YouTube Channel](#) offer a glimpse into the day-to-day lives of the IFYEs both here and abroad.

I was honored to officially welcome two African countries back to the IFYE host country roster this year. Immediately following the August debriefing, I traveled to Zambia and Tanzania to meet the country coordinators, discuss program details, and visit the families that our IFYEs would later become part of. It was also an opportunity to officially sign the memorandums of agreement for each country.

This year, five IFYEs are being hosted in Africa: Tori Rasmussen (SD) and Kyle Newland (OH) in Tanzania; Abby Schmidt (MO) and Meghan O’Reilly (OH) in Zambia, as well as Nora Larson (ND) in Kenya. You can read about their experiences in “Postcards from Africa” starting on page one of this IFYE NEWS..

As we celebrate this Thanksgiving holiday, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all of the partners who made this 2023 IFYE Program a success.

Reminder of ways to donate to IFYE USA

Sheri Swackhamer, Marketing Committee Chair

sswackhamer@ifyeusa.org

- At age 70 ½ and older, you can give directly from an IRA to IFYE USA through a **Qualified Charitable Deduction (QCD)**.
 - Typically, this is handled through a signed form request to your bank or investment firm where you specify how much you want to withdraw as your donation to IFYE USA.
 - Then, the funds are sent by check directly from the bank/firm to IFYE USA.
 - No income taxes need to be paid on this method of withdrawal directly from your IRA. However, you also do not get to itemize this IRA withdrawal on your income tax return as a charitable deduction.
 - *Speak with a tax adviser or your preparer to see what might be the best way for your donations to be handled on your Federal income tax return.*
- Use some of your **required minimum distribution (RMD) IRA funds** before the end of the year to make a significant donation to IFYE USA. Check your RMD age with your tax preparer as this year begins with age 73 and will move up to age 75 by the year 2033 for those born in 1960 or later. Others below the age 73 should have already begun their required IRA distributions.
- **Gifts of appreciated stocks or securities** can be handled through our brokerage advisor, Roger McCoy (Roger.McCoy@RaymondJames.com). Tel: 816-632-7501 or Toll Free 888-446-1699.
- Remember IFYE USA in your **Estate Planning** by naming IFYE USA as a beneficiary or percentage beneficiary (5% or 10%, etc.) on a taxable account.
 - IFYE USA will not need to pay taxes on those inherited funds gains due to our non-profit status.
 - An individual would need to pay their income tax rate on U.S. savings bonds gains or the capital gains tax rate on inherited brokerage funds gains.
 - Once the donor has passed away, the beneficiaries receive a step-up in the cost basis of an investment to the donor's date of death.
- IFYE USA may also be named as a **percentage beneficiary or in total on a life insurance policy**.

Please consider one of the above giving methods when you are planning your end-of-year donations. Thank you.

From a First-Time Host Family

Sheila Allen - Georgia

Dr. Arthur Allen is a retired Ear, Nose and Throat doctor. My name is Sheila, and I am a retired dental hygienist. We own a small hobby farm in South Georgia. Currently we have 400 pecan trees, 200 blueberry plants, and 60 acres in longleaf pines.

Jan Woods, a family friend, sent an inspiring letter asking if we would be interested in hosting an IFYE. We are fortunate to have had the opportunity in our lives at this time to be able to spend time with Marie-Therese.

Our first host family experience

Marie-Therese Gruel was very easy to have in our home. There were a couple of surprises.

When the U.S. Custom officer called and wanted to verify that Marie-Therese was coming to stay with us in South Georgia. Luckily, I answered him to his satisfaction. Then, a couple days later, Marie-Therese tested positive for COVID.



Fortunately, she had an easy time with it and recovered quickly.

Activities we did with Marie-Therese

I love to spend time in the tractors, it was wonderful that I could teach Marie-Therese this skill. Dr. Allen and her made German pretzels together. Since it was October, we subjected her to the local city version of a southern Oktoberfest. She was able to teach us a couple things about the food and beer. The Sunbelt Ag Expo is one of the biggest in North America; we were able to attend and learned there were several German manufactures there.

Special Memories from Marie-Therese's Time with us

I was able to teach Marie-Therese about quilting. She picked out a couple of blocks that had special meaning to her and that she wants to frame when home.

We were also able to can some blueberry jam, from our blueberries. She also made my honorary grandson's day when we went to watch his baseball game. (He has a small crush on her).





IFYE 75th Diamond Anniversary Campaign

Please use this form when donating by check to our 75th Diamond Anniversary Campaign.



Investing in IFYE is investing in our young adults and the world they will lead. Investing in IFYE helps to build a stronger world! Thanks for your donation!

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I give IFYE USA permission to share my generosity via appropriate reports and marketing materials. Only your name will be shown. All personal information is protected.

I prefer my gift(s) remain anonymous.

Please contact me. I have questions about giving.

The IFYE Association of the USA, Inc. shall make its services, facilities, and programs available to all persons regardless of race, color, creed, gender, gender variance, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or national origin, and the Association shall not in any way discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, gender variance, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or national origin.

75th Anniversary Fundraising

IFYE Association of the USA, Inc.
PO Box 216
Williamsburg, MA 01096-0216

POSTAGE

GOAL: \$150,000



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Moving? New 911 Address?
Send mailing label corrections to
IFYE NEWS (return address above)
OR
vwarner@ifyeusa.org



75th Anniversary Campaigns Goal = \$150,000

In Memoriam

The passing of the following individuals has come to our attention since publication of the 2023 Spring/Summer IFYE NEWS

LM = Life Member

SPIFYE = Spouse of an IFYE

Lucille A (Marshall) Ambrosino
(California to Australia 1952)
March 12, 2023

Mike Ambrosino (SPIFYE to Lucille Ambrosino) February 25, 2020

Warren “Bud” Ames III (New Hampshire to New Zealand 1980)
October 13, 2023

Robert Van Clief Armstrong (New Jersey to England 1954)
October 3, 2022

Virginia (Edgington) Aupperle
(Ohio to Australia 1959)
October 13, 2023 LM

Glenda (Lamb) Copyak (Wyoming to Switzerland 1963) LM

Thomas Croft (Montana to Argentina 1957) June 23, 2022 LM

Ruth (Benson) Drummond (Montana to Sweden 1953) May 11, 2023 LM

Jane (Dunlap) Fisher (New Hampshire to Switzerland 1951)
September 22, 2001

Judith (Green) Foulke (Pennsylvania to South Korea 1973)
January 7, 2022

Rita E (Bott) Greene (West Virginia to United Kingdom 1948)
May 11, 2022

Ira Wallace Hatch (Utah to Ecuador 1957) June 5, 2015

Charles “Chuck” Havlicek
(Nebraska to Nepal 1971)
September 18, 2023 LM

Kenneth “Ken” W Holton (SPIFYE to Prue Holton – Connecticut to Costa Rica 1959) October 15, 2023 LM

James “Jim” Killen (Montana to Jamaica 1961/62) January 23, 2023

Cleon Krill (Host Family – Ohio)
December 15, 2021

Linda (Holliday) Labrie (Montana to Turkey 1963) July 2, 2023

Lonnie W Luther (Arkansas to Finland 1967) August 9, 2023 LM

Leslie “Les” Mergelmann (Colorado to Iran 1968) May 12, 2023 LM

Patricia (Shaffer) Quinn (Kansas to Brazil 1963) September 1, 2023

Andrea (Cox) Stanley (Nebraska to Poland 1978) August 4, 2016

Melvin “Mel” J Thompson
(Michigan to Turkey 1953)
June 9, 2023 LM

Thomas “Tom” F Trail (Idaho to Nepal 1956) November 3, 2023 LM

George Wappes (Indiana to Switzerland 1955)
September 7, 2023 LM

Edward M Watson (West Virginia to Israel 1963) March 2, 2023

John L Werner (Indiana to West Germany 1963) May 31, 2023 LM

Kelso Wessel (Indiana to Bolivia 1955) September 16, 2023 LM

Ray William (Washington to Ceylon [now Sri Lanka] 1968) July 23, 2023 LM

Stewart Young (Maryland to France 1952) December 22, 2023