

AFS 15-20 minute school presentation
by Melinda Colquitt, Michigan AT, Sept, 2008

Try to get Global Connections info to teachers before you come for presentation, then talk to them about it when you're there.

Hand out info sheets-fill out if you think you might be interested as I go along.

American Field Service-a non-profit intercultural exchange program-kids from other countries come here, you go there, for a year, a semester, a summer

Mission: Spreading peace one person at a time

Started by ambulance drivers from World War II-non-combatants who were horrified by what they saw during the war but enjoyed working with people from other countries and thought if kids had a chance to get to know kids from other countries they'd grow up to be peacemakers

www.afs.org
1-800-afs-info

I'm Melinda Colquitt, former Huron and Pioneer world history teacher, retired two years ago, last class graduated in June, miss kids terribly so volunteering with AFS is a way for me to stay connected to you and tell you about a great opportunity, it's fun to be back just to talk to you

Kids at Huron who've come and gone-do you know any of them? From classes, sports, band, etc.?

Philippe
Paul

There are also 11 of them at Pioneer and 2 at Community

My niece-hosted kids from Thailand and Japan, went to Japan

When I began to work with AFS I realized that a very small number of families in Ann Arbor host exchange students and those families do it over and over again because it's so much fun-there's one family that's done it 14 times. Also a very small number of our kids go to other countries. Why? So I decided I'd try to come to every 9th and 10th grade class in Ann Arbor and tell you about it. I did Pioneer last year, I'm doing you this year and I'll do Skyline next year.

It's a wonderful and important opportunity. I think you know that we Americans are pretty isolated over here in the western hemisphere, don't know foreign languages, don't know geography, and generally just aren't very sophisticated

about the rest of the world. It's not really our fault-we're just so far away from other countries except for Canada and Mexico. But most kids in Europe and Asia and Africa know much more about the rest of the world and its languages and geography than we do. Getting involved with AFS would help you to prepare for the 21st century and the globalized world you're going to live in. Returnee say it has changed their lives and many of them go on to careers associated with what they learned during their time abroad.

There are three things you can do to get involved.

1. First (and easiest) you can make friends with the exchange students at Huron. (There are more than just these two, on other programs) You can imagine how scary it is for them at the beginning of the year not knowing anyone and having to do all their work in English. It would be fun to find out about their country and culture and maybe you'll get to be such good friends that they'll invite you to visit them in their country.

2. You can host an exchange student in your home. Many kids from other countries want to come here (why?) and we always need host families. This kid would be like a brother or sister to you and most remain friends for the rest of their lives, visit back and forth, go to each other's weddings, send their own kids back and forth.

3. You can be an exchange student yourself if you're between 15 and 18. There are 44 countries to choose from, programs that are a whole year long, a semester long and a summer long. What would be hard about the year and semester long programs? What about the summer programs? (community service, language study, sports, arts) Better to go at this time in your life than any other.

If you think you and your family might be interested please fill out the info sheet I gave you and I'll give you a catalogue.

Do you have questions? If you don't, there are several you should have.

- 1. How much does it cost? Scholarships, help with fundraising**
- 2. Credits-see your guidance counselor as soon as you begin to consider this**
- 3. I'll miss my friends**

Why you should do it

- 1. You'll gain new perspective**
- 2. You'll stand out to colleges**
- 3. You'll never have another time like this**
- 4. You'll have the adventure of a lifetime**