

Parent Values French Exchange Program

My daughter was a student of the French Language for 5 years. Studying French helped her grow in many ways. First, she had to learn to think in a totally different manner when it came to language. This was not like English and therefore, was a wonderful challenge for her intellectual growth.

She also learned, in depth, about another country/culture. In today's world, knowing about the world beyond our borders is essential. We are not an island and we must expose our children to as many multicultural experiences as possible.

In addition, because she was fluent in the French language, she had the opportunity to participate in a French exchange program. Living with a family in France for a week and then touring Paris opened her eyes to many new experiences. I believe one of the most important lessons she learned was how very unique and special her own country is in many respects. Later in the year, her French exchange student stayed with us for a week, and our whole family was able to benefit from learning more about life in an another country. I have two other children that were inspired to further study the foreign languages they have chosen at their respective schools.

Finally, preparing for the French exchange trip taught my daughter and her classmates how to develop a fundraising plan/ goal and then to execute the plan so that they could be successful. Many of the parents got to know each other better during this time, which was a pleasant by-product of the students' efforts. One of their activities involved a sale at the high school, too, which raised further awareness of the French students' need to raise money, and the other students were very supportive. So another benefit was it positively brought the school together to help out fellow students.

During difficult times for schools, the French programs may seem like an easy place to cut but its detrimental effects will truly outweigh any cost savings. Students need to speak/understand another language not only for their own growth but for the success of our country. Globalization is here and we need to prepare our students for the challenges and opportunities that accompany it.

Linda Hussey