

A Home Away From Home: ETC Exchange Students Experience American Traditions And Give Back This Holiday Season

ETC Exchange Students from around the world spread holiday cheer throughout the U.S.

PORTLAND, OR, UNITED STATES, December 15, 2016 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Dedicated to spreading international understanding and global goodwill, Education Travel & Culture (ETC) looks back on the valuable time spent in 2016 fostering friendships, building memories and helping international students achieve goals and set a foundation for the future. Each year ETC provides inbound program opportunities for high school students throughout the world to study in an American high school and live with an American family. In addition, the ETC family is proud to participate in community building and cultural events like Giving Tuesday, International Education Week and holiday parties. Each event is planned with ETC's mission in mind: To promote international understanding and goodwill.

Community service and the spirit of volunteerism is regarded as a beloved tradition and civic duty in American culture. This year ETC participated in a global event known as Giving Tuesday. ETC encouraged Local Coordinators, host families and students to find a way to give back to their communities during the holiday season and the results were incredible. Exchange students, host families and Local Coordinators across the U.S. took initiative by participating in events, organizing community service projects and helping families in need. Students donated time and used a variety of talents to give back to communities and bring joy to people in need. In Warrenton, VA a group of exchange students, Local Coordinators and host families gathered to help decorate the town's Gumdrop square. The students were thrilled to have a personal touch on a local holiday treasure. In Mesa, AZ international students and host families packed and prepared nutritionally complete meals for malnourished children with an organization called Feed My Starving Children. Inspired by the students, the ETC staff along with family and friends volunteered with the same organization and spent the day packing meals for children in the Philippines. Providing international students with the opportunity to experience this tradition is one of the ways ETC is able to promote goodwill and international understanding.

Each year ETC participates in another event recognized around the world known as International Education Week. During this week, students are encouraged to make a cultural presentation for



ETC exchange students volunteer for Feed My Starving Children for Giving Tuesday

classmates and teachers, a local youth group or an after school club. This year, many of ETC's exchange students prepared engaging and informative presentations and shared them with their schools, youth groups, elementary school children and other organizations. One of ETC's main goals is to encourage and foster international and cultural understanding. For this reason, ETC celebrated International Education Week for the entire month of November.

Throughout the month, numerous cultural parties were held all over the U.S. Students dressed in traditional attire, prepared special dishes and brought unique items from their native countries to share with other students and families. Students loved learning about the different cities in France and were surprised to hear that there are many variations of the French Baguette. Exchange students from Mexico shared items from different holidays celebrated in the Mexican culture. One student impressed the entire group with a brightly colored and highly detailed, handmade piñata. Students had the unique opportunity to meet, learn from and converse with people from a number of different cultures. ETC believes deeply in the importance of understanding different cultures. This was a tremendous opportunity for the exchange students to get a glimpse into another culture while learning the value of understanding and appreciating the beauty of diversity.

An exchange student's experience in the U.S. would not be complete without a traditional American Christmas, and for that reason, ETC makes sure the holidays are remembered. Host families and Local Coordinators work hard each year to make sure the exchange students

have a very merry and memorable American Christmas. For some, Christmas is snowy and white and for others its warm and sunny, but all over America people celebrate Christmas with nativity scenes, Christmas lights, hot chocolate, family gatherings and lots of Christmas music. Students, Local Coordinators and host families are celebrating by decorating Christmas trees, stuffing shoes with little goodies and hosting parties. One student in North Carolina had the opportunity to cut down a real Christmas tree, decorate it, and top it off with a star for the first time. Sharing traditions and holidays



Charlotte, an exchange student from Germany shared her culture and traditions with classmates for International Education Week



James from China helps decorate the Christmas tree with his host family in North Carolina

with international students is just one way to create life long memories and share the American dream with others around the world.

For everyone at ETC, 2016 has been a memorable year. ETC is blessed to have such passionate and dedicated volunteers who are encouraging and support international students. Staff feel honored to work with such bright students and have the opportunity to watch them achieve goals while experiencing American Culture. Looking back on the past year, ETC is grateful to have the opportunity to share American culture with exchange students while providing a high quality educational program.

About Education, Travel & Culture:

Education Travel & Culture is a non-profit [501(c)(3)] educational exchange organization. Its purpose is to promote international understanding and goodwill by providing high quality educational and cultural exchange programs in the United States and abroad. ETC provides inbound program opportunities for high school students throughout the world to study in an American high school and live with an American family.

For more information, FAQs or to apply to become a host family visit www.edutrav.org or email Field Director, Brenda Ferland at bferland@edutrav.org

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