



Youth For Understanding USA
www.yfu-usa.org

Exchange Students as Resources

20 Ways They Can Contribute

Exchange students and exchange returnees have much to contribute to their host and home schools -and they would like to contribute! The key to having most of the following ideas work is for a teacher or administrator to be the catalyst or facilitator.

1. Be a tutor or conversation partner for another student or an assistant in a foreign language class or a resource for students working on country projects.
2. Be a member of a panel of international students and exchange returnees talking about their cultures and experiences as part of an International Day at the school.
3. Help initiate a pen pal and/or video exchange with the home or school.
4. Organize an exhibit in the library focusing on "my country."
5. Publicly recognize exchange students that the school has hosted over the years through a flag display or on-going exhibit of one artifact from each country in the school entrance.
6. Be part of a library brown bag lunch series on "Schooling Around the World."
7. Be part of a school, system, or region-wide day-long forum for American and exchange students on an international issue such as the environment or hunger.
8. Be part of a school mock United Nations team sponsored by the YMCA/YWCA or another organization.
9. Help organize an evening "Exchange Fair" to publicize exchange opportunities to students and their parents - and include international desserts!
10. Organize an international dinner and talent show, "Global Market," or celebration fiesta from another country for the community-perhaps working with foreign language classes and/or an International Club.
11. Participate in morning announcements by speaking in another language or ask questions on the "Country of the Week" - perhaps emphasizing geography and involving an appropriate prize.
12. Help make a video for the school in which people, representing cultures of all kinds, talk about prejudice and ways to overcome it.
13. Write one of a series of articles entitled "Bringing a Global Perspective to High School" in the school or local newspaper.
14. Help organize a "World Beat" dance with music from around the world.
15. Demonstrate games, sports from home/host country in physical education classes.
16. Help construct graphs in a math class showing comparative information about countries represented by exchange students, returnees and immigrants, using the "Population Data Sheet" published each year and available from Population Reference Bureau, www.prb.org.

17. Help organize an art exhibit with a common theme, illustrated by people from different cultures.
18. Visit an elementary classroom, preferably at least twice, so children get to know a visiting exchange student or returnee. Teach counting or a simple song in a foreign language, share some food and be ready to answer questions.
19. Visit a middle school classroom and talk about a day in the life of a 12-14 year-old in the home or host country.
20. Be a constant resource in a social studies class, as the following scenario suggests:
As he read the autobiographical statements students wrote the first day of class, Mr. Rowe, the teacher of American government, noted that Celeste was just back from a summer in Switzerland as an exchange student, Jacques was an exchange student who had just arrived from France to spend the year in the U.S., and Amin had come from Egypt to live with his university professor uncle and go to high school. "How," wondered Mr. Rowe, "can these three students add to my class?" He knew there would be many opportunities for comparisons in general class discussion, whether the topic was the structure of national government or economic policy. The Presidential election unit could include a day for comparative reports by the three internationally experienced students on election processes in their host or home countries. When they studied the concept of leadership, perhaps Amin could tell about Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak and Jacques could talk about DeGaulle and Mitterand. "Why don't I know any Swiss leader?" he asked himself. An idea for a project occurred to Mr. Rowe which would enlarge the use of international resource persons and involve all students: During the mock Congress in the second trimester, an outside project could require students to interview internationally experienced persons in the schools or community on their perspectives on a current domestic issue. The results could be written up as short papers. The third trimester could focus on local government, the judicial system, and international relations. Perhaps Celeste would be interested in doing research on Swiss cantons, Jacques on the influence of the Napoleonic Code in North America, and Amin on the fundamentals of Islamic law. Class might end with a mock U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on four futures for American Foreign Policy, using a unit from

The Choices Program, Watson Institute for International Studies
111 Thayer Street, Rm 320
Box 1948, Brown University
Providence, RI 02912

(www.choices.edu) - and asking Celeste, Jacques and Amin to be international witnesses.

Written by Angene Wilson, Professor, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Kentucky, and YFU Volunteer and Trainer.