

School News

Hosting students

Hosting an exchange student can sound pretty scary. What if it doesn't work out? Isn't it expensive? Who pays any medical bills? Don't you have to be a rich family? The truth is, it may be easier than you think and is sure to be a rewarding experience for the whole family. Just ask any of the 1,637 families who have hosted AFS students in Canada since the program began in 1978. They are likely to tell you that it was one of the best things their family has ever done.

"Each year, AFS Interculture Canada brings nearly 300 foreign students from more than 30 countries to Canada and volunteers around the country go about finding host families," said Julie Finlay, a volunteer in Georgetown. "Right now there are students all over the world waiting to be notified that a family has been found for them," she said. The students, 15 to 18 years old, are carefully screened by AFS Interculture Canada before they are accepted on the program. AFS Interculture Canada looks for young people who are flexible and adaptable, with good academic records and a genuine interest in sharing their own culture and learning about a new one.

When looking for host families, AFS Interculture Canada has one main criteria: the family should provide a nurturing and supportive environment. "The main thing the family must provide is a family-type atmosphere. That does not necessarily mean your traditional nuclear family," said Julie Finlay. "Exchange students just need the same commitment and caring that all teenagers do. These are kids who are really interested in the world around them. All they need is a family that is willing to open their

home and share the Canadian way of life." In addition to the careful screening process, the students are all medically insured by AFS Interculture Canada.

One reason some families are hesitant to host a foreign student is the fear that it won't work out. "That is a fair concern," says Julie Finlay, "but the wonderful thing about AFS Interculture Canada is that it provides a tremendous support network for the family and the student. In fact, the hallmark of AFS Interculture Canada is the caring and support it provides to all its participants. When students come to Canada, ongoing support is provided at the local level to both students and the host families. Because there are sometimes language and cultural barriers, it is important that the student and family not feel alone. We are careful not to interfere in the experience, but the student and the family know that we are here if they need us," said Julie Finlay.

AFS Interculture Canada prides itself on fostering friendships that usually last a lifetime. The experience also brings the world a little closer to home and can be especially important for younger family members.

Families can host for six to 12 months. If you are interested to find out more about the hosting program call today the AFS Interculture Canada representative in the area, Julie Finlay at (416) 877-9075 or the national office, toll-free at 1-800-361-7248.

AFS Interculture Canada is a not-for-profit volunteer organization which purpose is to promote global education and international development through intercultural exchange programs. Interculture Canada also sends nearly 300 Canadian students abroad.



Fitness fever

Daniel Sztachta (front, left) was getting weary nearing the end of this fitness demonstration he, fellow student Jason Lescak (front, right) and other students gave to parents during St. Francis of

Assisi's Open House held last Thursday night to demonstrate what children studied and learned during education week. (Herald photo by Lisa Boonstoppel-Pot)



Battle of the Books

Halton Hills Public Library in Georgetown was the forum for the Regional Battle of the Books competition Thursday involving elementary schools from Halton Hills, Burlington, Oakville and Milton. Pictured above, the St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School team goes up against Oakville's New Central

Public School on their respective knowledge about books. St. Francis of Assisi team members include (left to right) Diana Stevens, Lisa Williams, Christy Busby, Sarah Macdonald, Mike Doyle and Daniel Young. Absent from the photo is team substitute Julie Vagg. (Herald photo)



Special school project

Displaying the bags of refuse Harrison Public School students filled from litter in Cedarvale Park in Georgetown last Thursday are Grade 5 students, (left to right) Lisa Earle, Jackle Grant, Janine Gridland, Samantha Arundell and Stephanie

Myshraill. Students cleaned up garbage from the playing fields and streams, which the school makes use of for outdoor learning and recreation, as part of a special school project. (Herald photo by Lisa Boonstoppel-Pot)

Contest winners

Georgetown High School student, Sara-Lynn Wray, placed in the top 25 in a University of Waterloo French Contest in which approximately 200 students from across Ontario participated recently.

Sara-Lynn received a book prize for her participation in the contest. The annual contest awards the first place winner a one-month all-expenses paid trip to the summer language institute at the University of Tours, France.

This year's winner was Lori Newton of North Park Secondary School in Brampton.



Portuguese cooking

Parents visiting St. Francis of Assisi School last Thursday night got to taste traditional Portuguese food students studying Portugal helped make. Holding up the tasty fare is (left to right) Rui Botelho, Edward Beek and Adrian Carreiro. The Open House was held to display student projects representing what they'd learned during education week. (Herald photo)