

True American Experience

By Host Mom Wendie Cook from Canadian, TX

During the Fall Foliage Festival in Canadian, TX October 17-19, 2014 all businesses, schools and community facilities gathered together to support the city's biggest tourist event of the year. EurAuPair Community Counselors Carla Haygood and Linda Rader, along with the Cook family hosting au pair Jennifer from Germany, offered their hands and feet to support this community-wide project.

One of the highlights of the weekend was hosting SSG Travis Mills, one of only five surviving quad-amputees from Afghanistan,



Staff Sergeant Travis Mills was honored during a special ceremony.

who sustained threatening injuries while serving his third tour of duty.

SSG Travis Mills was hosted by The Citadelle Art Foundation for a weekend full of events which included school speaking engagements, recognition by local Congressmen, private dinners, a documentary film screening, interviews and visits by WWII veterans, flag ceremonies by the veteran Patriot Guard Riders and much more.

The Cook family, community counselors and their families were at the center of all events as the host mom serves as director of The Citadelle. The full group volunteered at the museum during the day, introducing the American hero and telling his story to more than 600 visitors to the community. Jenni and the kids also helped to host SSG at the boys' schools. The family even hosted their previous au pair Laura to participate in the weekend events. In addition, the group served as ambassadors to Canadian, TX during the opening ceremonies of the high-school football game in a

rival community as US Congressman Mac Thornberry's office recognized Travis Mills by presenting him with an American Flag flown in his honor over the United States Capitol.

The group's weekend participation throughout the community served as a wonderful example to highlight our community's patriotism and served as a wonderful, true American experience for Jennifer as she was working side-by-side with an American war veteran.

EurAuPair sends a big Thank You to Wendie Cook for sharing this inspiring story with everyone at the Gazette and for giving Jenni the opportunity to experience this event side-by-side with an American war veteran.



The Fall Foliage Festival in Canadian, TX.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- True American Experience
- You Know You Are an Au Pair in the USA When...
- EurAuPair's National Day of Giving
- EurAuPair Fall Photos
- My Dream Came True

About Us...

EurAuPair Intercultural Child Care Programs is a non-profit, public benefit organization designated by the U.S. Department of State to conduct the Au Pair cultural exchange program under the Fulbright Hays Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 and is intended "to promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries by means of educational and cultural exchanges".

EurAuPair Intercultural Child Care Programs

250 North Coast Highway
Laguna Beach, CA 92651 USA
Tel: 949/494-5500
Fax: 949/497-6235
E-mail: info@euraupair.com
Web: www.euraupair.com

You Know You Are an Au Pair in the USA When...

Annika Wittner from Germany who was an au pair with the Kaufman family in Chicago writes:

You know you are an Au Pair in the USA when...

• ...you always introduce yourself with: "Hi! My name is (your name), I'm from (country) and I have (amount of children you are taking care of) children!!"



Annika knows exactly what it means to be an au pair in the USA.

• ...you know that every American is somehow related to a German.

• ...you are drinking the water you used to swim in when you were little (chloride water) and you don't mind anymore.

• ...everybody is greeting you with a "Hi! How are you?" and most of the time you can't respond fast enough, so you say it first.

• ...you know what a S'More is.

• ...you spent all your money at the mall and you still have nothing to wear.

• ...you hate Dora, The Wiggles and Thomas.

• ...you go to PLAYDATES.

• ...you've seen more movies in one month than in your whole life at

home.

• ...you drive over 30 minutes to a friend and you think it's not far.

• ...you only have other au pairs as your friends.

• ...you can make bacon.

• ...you say "like" and "totally" every three words.

• ...you don't think it's wrong to have cake AND ice cream.

• ...you park as close to the store as possible, so you don't have to walk even one yard too far.

• ...you cherish moments of silence more than ever before.

• ...you notice yourself saying "GOOD JOB" a hundred times a day.

Continued on Page 3...

eur AuPair
Intercultural Child Care Programs
EurAuPair Gazette
250 North Coast Highway
Laguna Beach, CA 92651 USA
Return Service Requested

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Laguna Beach
California 92651
PERMIT NO. 963

EurAupair's National Day of Giving

Many of our community counselors have planned community service activities with their group of au pairs in the past. We know how much the American people value volunteering and giving back to local communities, so we thank our community counselors for sharing such an important value of the American culture!

To support their efforts and give a new dimension to this great idea, EurAupair has launched its first National Day of Giving. On November 8th 2014, au pairs, community counselors, area coordinators, and other staff members gathered in their communities across the nation and joined forces to do some good! Whether at a local food bank, donation center, soup kitchen and many more ... this was a day to give back.

Below are some stories and pictures of what we all accomplished. We would like to thank everyone for their participation and encourage all to stay involved in their communities throughout the year.

Au pair Kristin (Germany), who arrived to Alto, MI in September, has already found several outlets to become a volunteer. Community Counselor Vern Thelen and his wife Bonnie are one of four volunteer cooking crews at their church that provide funeral meals for families losing loved ones. When asked if she was interested in helping, Kristin did not hesitate to assist. She helped prepare a meal for 250 family members. From mixing six batches of cheesy potatoes to cutting pies, she had ample opportunity to put her apron to use.

Kristin also is a volunteer reader in the 4th grade classroom of her host sister Olivia. She typically will help in the classroom two times per month.



Au pair Kristin and Community Counselor Vern help prepare a meal at their local church.

Chicago Community Counselor Gila Peller and her au pairs chose to gather their host children and other children from the community to share their talent with the guests at Whitehall of Deerfield, a senior rehabilitation community. Each au pair chose a child to introduce to the guests sharing a brief biography of their host child, their talent and a bit about themselves. It was heartwarming to hear the au pairs consistently say they loved the warmth of the people in America and our culture. What a wonderful idea for EurAupair's National Day of Giving!



Aiden, 9, played Ode to Joy on cello, piano and recorder. You can also see au pair Maria from Spain in the picture.



Hailey, 11, performed a hula hooping routine after au pair Laura from Germany shared some info about Hailey and herself.



South African au pair Elzet introduced Sophia, 8, and her taekwondo graduation poomsae to the trailer of the new Hunger Games movie.



Au pairs Lisa, Lorena and Community Counselor Lisa visit and help A.J. from the Morning Show.

San Diego Community Counselor Lisa Dupre writes: My San Diego au pairs Lisa from Germany as well as Lorena from Mexico and I helped A.J. from the Morning Show with Energy 103.7 collect a year's supply of toys for Rady's Children's Hospital. A.J. went up in the crane on Friday November, 7th and could only come down once he had over 100,000 toys. What a fun event!!



Community Counselors Katrin Dick, Eve Khanthawichai, Rebecca LaChanse, Kelley Land and their group of au pairs volunteered at the ECHO food bank in Springfield, VA. Thank you, All!

Community Counselor Amy Stewart and au pairs Alexandra (Romania) and Chloé (France) met at the Crisis Assistance Ministry in Charlotte, NC. The non-profit agency focuses on preventing homelessness and preserving dignity for the working poor by providing assistance with rent, utilities, clothing, and furniture. The au pairs and Amy helped sort out clothing and other items for the store where people can shop for free once a month.



Thank you Amy, Chloé and Alexandra for donating your time and helping at the Crisis Assistance Ministry in Charlotte, NC.

St. Louis Community Counselor Dee McMillion shares: We had our meeting at the local food pantry Circle of Concern with my German au pairs Juliane and Margarita.

We worked in the warehouse sorting food, checking expiration dates and stacking shelves. I think after three hours we were all experts where to find the expiration dates and we decided we have never touched so many canned foods in our lives. But it was fun, we met other volunteers and we were just happy that we could help.



Margarita (left) and Juliane (right) checking the donated food items.



Community Counselor Kim Siers, au pairs Heloise (France) and Talia (Germany), together with the Koopal host family spent the morning at the Carthage Crisis Center in Missouri. The Center is a homeless shelter, has a food pantry and clothing closet and assists the residents in finding jobs and get back on their feet. Some veterans are also housed. Talia posted the group's plans on the Missouri Southern State University's International Club Facebook page, which resulted in having three foreign exchange students, Yuka, Pinar and Achmed join them!

The group spent the morning preparing food, putting donated food away in the pantry, sorting through the donated clothes, picking trash up, organizing the toys on the playground and helping around as they could at the center. They also walked around to nearby businesses to spread the word about the free Thanksgiving dinner the center is offering to those who need a place to celebrate the holiday.

Back row left to right: Community Counselor Kim Siers, Yuka and Pinar (foreign exchange students), au pair Heloise and host mom Stacie Koopal. Middle row left to right: Achmed (foreign exchange student) and au pair Talia. Front row: Alexis and Madison, the Koopal twins.

Many au pairs from the Orange County, CA area, their Community Counselor and Area Coordinator, as well as a few host families joined the "Feeding the Hungry of Orange County" event. After a prayer, everybody served the people who attended by handing out food or carrying the groceries to their car. It was very rewarding to give back to those in need and a great activity for EurAupair's National Day of Giving!

In the photo are: Dulcie (France), Maria (Mexico), Tonia (Germany), Poovashie (South Africa), Sarah (Germany), Lena (Germany), Lisa (Germany), Miriam and Area Coordinator Cynthia.



...Continued from Front Page

- ...you wonder why you slept the whole night long so uncomfortably and you notice the next morning you slept on a Barbie, a lollypop, sand toys etc.
- ...you know now exactly how difficult it was for your parents to have little kids and you feel like saying sorry for all you've done to your mom and dad every day.
- ...you start to love Disney movies again and can repeat every passage of them.
- ...you've learned what it means to be patient.

- ...you know what a CC is.
- ...you are DRIVING to the bus stop to pick up your kids, which is only 200 meters from your house.
- ...the kids call you mom, because you spend too much time with them.
- ...you think \$160 every weekend just for shopping and coffee are not that much.
- ...one cup of coffee doesn't make you awake anymore, it just makes you alive.
- ...you miss the good ol' days when you were able to go to the bakery and

get real bread with real crust.

- ...you don't walk into the bank, you use the drive-through to get your money.
- ...you use Purell instead of washing your hands.
- ...you get four plastic bags for the can of milk and the one pack of Oreos at Stop and Shop (well, at least they pack it for you).
- ...you feel guilty of murder, when you forget the snack for school.
- ...your teeth have never been this white (thanks to the chloride).

• ...the kids want something NOW!

- ...you start apologizing for walking by someone in the grocery store.
- ...you realize that every American has been to the real (or fake) Oktoberfest. And when they let you know, you have to admit you've never been there yourself.
- ...you think that your home country is just the best country in the world!!

Thank you so much, Annika, for describing what it means to be an au pair. We very much enjoyed reading your definition!

EurAupair Fall Photos



New Jersey Community Counselor Magali De Value and her group of au pairs went pumpkin and apple picking at the farm for their October

meeting. In the picture, from left to right are Epiphanie (France), Nathalia (Brazil), Pia (Germany) and Roos (France). It was a perfect day to walk around the farm, pet some farm animals (they almost stuffed a baby bunny in their purses to take home) and snacking on delicious treats!



Denver Community Counselor Carrie Walker and her group of au pairs went to an art studio and painted really awesome pictures. Nice job, girls!

Oakland and San Francisco au pairs with Community Counselors Josefina Andino and Julia Konopasek enjoyed a campfire with s'mores and ghost stories as their monthly get-together.



On a beautiful September day Chicago Community Counselor Gila and her group of au pairs went to Skokie Lagoons. They rented kayaks and with a tour leader rowed through the beautiful Forest Preserve for 1 1/2 hours. They were 2 per kayak; only one courageous au pair dared be alone. Everybody had a great time and enjoyed the day. In the picture, left to right: Laura (Colombia), Julie (France), Elzet (South Africa), Community Counselor Gila, Laura (Germany), Maria (Spain), Rita (Spain), Nathalie (Germany), Nathalie's friend.

The Orange County, CA au pairs had a spooky monthly meeting at Knott's Scary Farm.



On a beautiful, chilly fall day New Jersey Community Counselor Marita Falconer and her au pairs toured the grounds of a historical home, now a museum. In the photo are Kayla from China, Carmen from South Africa and Melisa from Germany.



On Saturday, September 20th EurAupair Community Counselors Bertha Murillo and Alexandra Boutiette as well as two au pairs represented EurAupair at the Des Moines, IA World Food & Music Festival. Many families stopped at the beautifully decorated booth, asking about EurAupair services. Interested families inquired about the program, took brochures or postcards for further information and participated in the raffle in order to win a \$600 discount. Attending the World Food & Music Festival was a big success. Thank you to Bertha, Alexandra, Nela and Sophie!

Chicago au pairs Lucienne (Germany) and Thalita (Brazil) enjoyed making Jacko lanterns at Community Counselor Barbara Salzmann-Hogberg's house.



My Dream Came True

By Joana Godinho, a previous EurAupair au pair from Portugal who is now a Community Counselor in Washington, D.C.

I was inspired by Barbara Ehrenreich's work, the author of "Nickel and Dimed" and decided to take on a similar challenge. I knew then the au pair program would be the perfect match to enrich my career in journalism. I wanted to start my life from scratch in a foreign country and document how exchange programs play a key role as a cultural broker for newcomers.

It was in May of 2007 that my U.S. journey started. I first moved with a family in Chicago, IL, and then moved to Minneapolis, MN, with a different one. Believe it or not, both families consisted of a single mom and two toddlers - a boy and a girl in each family.

I have countless stories to tell about how I survived three Minnesota winters! I remember waking up at 6am and getting

in and out of my car through the trunk because the doors had frozen shut. Or trying to fish in the frozen lake. Or trying to walk with high heels on ice instead of listening to the locals' advice "In Minnesota you dress comfortably, you don't get fancy." But more importantly, I learned how to bridge the European-American culture in the heart of America.

I found my cultural experience fulfilling and decided to extend my stay in the Midwest. After the program, I enrolled in a 2 year Master program at Bethel University in Saint Paul, MN. Most applicants after the program prefer to go to NYC or Los Angeles, CA. I also considered it. But today as I look back, I think that living outside of my comfort zone was the component that made the difference in my journey and allowed me to grow

as a person and as a professional.

I have so many good memories in my luggage. I traveled to more than 25 states and gained a strong understanding of the country's culture. I met friends who have become family and they are a good reason to go back every year. My understanding of U.S. culture and overall experience, during and post-program, really helped me to land in great job opportunities upon graduation such as WCCO (CBS), History Channel, CNN, and AJE. Currently I am a staff guest producer at CCTV America. I've flown to Bali to field produce an exclusive interview with Mexican President Pena Nieto, and at home I was assigned to produce the interview with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry.

Here I am, almost eight years later after all of the roller coaster.

It is good to remind young people on how a simple exchange cultural program can make the difference in their lives even if they go a small town in the Midwest. I am thankful.

Thank you, Joana, for sharing your story with us. More memories are to follow with your own group of EurAupair au pairs!



This picture shows Joana traveling in San Francisco, CA.