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, who sustained threatening injuries while serving his third tour of duty. SSG Travis Mills was hosted by The Citadel 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 Citadel. 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.

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!”

• ...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 “Hello! 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...
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.

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!

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 Khranthawichai, 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.

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), Pouwatie (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

On Saturday, September 20th EurAupair Community Counselors Bertha Marulla and Alexandra Bontiette 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!

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 bridge between European and American cultures. I also knew then the au pair program would be the perfect challenge for me.

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. I learned to start my life from scratch in a foreign country and document how exchange programs play a key role as a cultural bridge between European and American cultures.

In Minnesota you dress comfortably, but 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 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!