

This semester OCENET and OCDSB schools are hosting international students from 49 countries around the world...with international students in 21 high schools and 31 elementary schools throughout the OCDSB.

What's Inside

Aix Marseilles student exchange program (cont'd) **2**

Aix Marseilles student exchange program (cont'd) **3**

Woodroffe HS encourages international experiences

OCENET's new guidebook to Welcoming and Hosting International Students at OCDSB schools **4**

YPLS teacher is a role model for ESL students

Life as an International Student **5**

ICP Korea Forum 2019

Meet OCENET: Sean Oussoren **6**

ICP continues to grow

Tip Sheet #14 Backgrounder to National Education Systems **7**

OCENET Bulletin Board: Lynch Getty Award Recipients **8**

The Divisions of OCENET

OCENET celebrates its 20th Anniversary!



Over the past two decades, the Ottawa-Carleton Education Network has grown from a handful of international students to close to 1,000 international students from nearly 50 different countries today. Over the years, OCENET has brought several thousand students and hundreds of educators to the OCDSB.

OCENET is proud to be recognized both nationally and internationally as a leader in international education for its innovative programs.

In the words of Executive Director, Geoff Best: "OCENET continually strives to improve and innovate. We work hard to serve the inbound students well and, at the same time, we are encouraging more students to go abroad with initiatives like the International Certificate Program and the student and staff international education bursaries."

Aix Marseilles student exchange brings cultures together

The 2018-2019 academic year saw the realization of extensive discussions and planning by OCENET following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with L'académie d'Aix-Marseille, Région académique Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (France) to arrange for an international exchange of OCDSB students.

In its inaugural year the program had 30 students (15 OCDSB students and 15 French students) in the student exchange. In the Fall of 2018, the French students came to the Ottawa area for a 6 week visit to live with their Canadian host families. The French students attended OCDSB schools with their Canadian counterparts, and then, in turn, in the spring of 2019 the Canadian students travelled to France for 6 weeks to billet with their French host families. Most of the students are in Grade 10 when they participate in the reciprocal exchange. Students from 7 OCDSB schools were part of the first year of the exchange.

Now in its second full year, there are 60 students participating



Student exchange students show their enthusiasm at Lycée St. Charles in Marseille

continued on page 2

Aix Marseilles student exchange brings cultures together (cont'd)

“The exchange was definitely a great experience. I knew that I would enjoy and benefit from the program, but not to that extent.

What we did for six weeks in France was awesome.”

*- Mia, Grade 11
South Carleton HS student*



South Carleton students Mia (centre left) and Maya (centre right) enjoy a visit to a pumpkin patch with their Aix Marseilles exchange partners

“As a tourist you don’t really experience truly what life is like in another country. On an exchange by living in a French house with a French family and going to a French school, we have the chance to ‘live’ the culture.”

*- Sarah, Grade 12
Sir Wilfrid Laurier SS*

this school year, with 30 students from the OCDSB, and it is evident that the students are not only enhancing their French language skills but also experiencing another culture firsthand and making enduring friendships.

South Carleton HS

Now in Grade 11, South Carleton students Maya and Mia participated in the initial exchange last school year. Maya was encouraged to participate by her family, and in spite of some initial feelings of nervousness about the prospect of having another student from France live with her and her family for six weeks and then later going to live with a French family, Maya feels that it all worked out successfully and she became very close with her large host family. On the other hand, Mia has been to France before and wanted to experience a different area by going to Marseilles. Mia noted many differences in the French schools such as the longer school day with more subjects and fewer extra-curricular activities or team sports. The French students participated in many activities while they were at South Carleton including Leadership Camp, a Foods field trip and a Bandathon event. Both Maya and Mia would highly recommend the exchange and both will be using the experience towards the International Certificate Program (ICP).

South Carleton teacher and an ICP Staff Advisor, Jen Pattison was actively invol-

ved from the very beginning in assisting the Canadian students (and their parents!) enroll and prepare for the exchange. In her view: “What I love the most is the strong and meaningful connections that the students make.”

Sir Wilfrid Laurier SS

For 6 weeks, three students from Marseilles have attended Sir Wilfrid Laurier SS and not only experienced learning in a totally different school environment, but also living with a Canadian host family.

French exchange students Salome, Margot and Raphael offered many observations about their time in Ottawa. Each of the French students were eager to visit Canada as none of them had been here before. They find Ottawa to be welcoming and a very nice city. Each of the students from Marseilles commented that

their school days are longer in France but they do not have team sports or after school activities such as drama at their schools. Several of the students commented that they liked not having to make a long commute to get to Sir Wil. What the French students missed the most was food from home, and Rapael, in particular, has not warmed up to Ottawa’s cooler weather. The French students have really enjoyed being welcomed as a member of their Canadian host families and look forward to reciprocating by hosting their exchange partners when they travel to France for 6 weeks in March of 2020. All of the French students agreed that a 6 week exchange period was just about the right amount of time to be on an exchange of this type. The Sir Wil exchange partners are eagerly an-



Salome, Kassandra, Raphael, Sarah, Nico, Margot (l-r) model their new Canada/France exchange hoodies in the front office area at Sir Wilfrid Laurier SS

continued on page 3

Aix Marseilles student exchange brings cultures together (cont'd)

participating the opportunity to reunite with their new friends in a few months and to live with their exchange partner's family. The transition to living in France for several weeks will be easier as the Canadian students have already formed close friendships with their French counterparts.

A key motivation for the Sir Wil students is improving their French language skills. Also, with the help of their Guidance counsellors, all of the Sir Wil students have adapted their timetables for next semester to facilitate the exchange, such as taking online courses, where possible.

One of the Sir Wil students noted that her friends have also become friends with the exchange students, and it is most likely the same sharing of

friendships, culture and ideas will occur in France.

Earl of March SS

Exchange partners Maia from Earl of March and her exchange partner, Maud, have become close friends because of the exchange program. Maia feels she has discovered "a second sister who lives all the way in France" and Maud considers her Canadian host family her second family.

Maud applied for the exchange with encouragement from her parents and because she wants to improve her spoken and written English. She is keeping up with her schoolwork from France as well as completing classwork for her courses at Earl of March. She noted how teaching styles are very different than teaching at home. Maud does not think that teenage life is significantly different in Ottawa and

thinks "teenagers are teenagers" everywhere. Because it is a novelty for her, she really likes the snow and is now getting accustomed to Ottawa's cooler temperatures.

Maia is looking forward to March when she will live with Maud's family for 6 weeks as part of the exchange. She has always appreciated opportunities to learn about other cultures and has wanted to go to France for a long time. Maia is enrolled in the ICP and part of the exchange experience will contribute towards her ICP certificate.

Exchange inquiries?

If you are a student or parent interested in finding out more about the process for applying for the Aix Marseilles student exchange in the future, contact Sean Oussoren, International Education Coordinator: sean.oussoren@ocdsb.ca.



Maia (right) from Earl of March and her exchange partner Maud (left) at Major's Hill Park with Parliament Hill in the background

"My host family has been truly amazing, and we do lots of activities and visit other places together. It has not been difficult to adjust to life in Ottawa."

- Maud, Grade 11
Aix Marseilles exchange student

Woodroffe HS encourages international experiences for students

Woodroffe HS has a long tradition of offering international study tours to its students. In the Spring 2018 issue of *Global Connections* an article featured Special Education teacher Jamie Hughson taking students with cognitive challenges on annual study tours to North American cities. Now Woodroffe is involved in two other innovative international initiatives.

Costa Rica

Teacher Holly Newsome has led study excursions for Woodroffe students

to Costa Rica for many years, but during March Break 2020 she will be leading a trip that is open to high school students from across the whole district. Currently 14 students in Grades 10-12 from four OCDSB schools are participating. This district-wide approach was pioneered during the summer of 2018 on a trip to Iceland, and gives students from all schools increased opportunities for international experiences. For more information on the Costa Rica trip, contact: holly.newsome@ocdsb.ca.

Netherlands Exchange

Started in November 2017 and now in its second round, Woodroffe HS hosted 25 students in October from Canisius College in Almelo. The Dutch students billeted with local families and participated in several cultural activities focused on music, including events which honoured Canada's special historical relationship with the people of the Netherlands. Teachers Terry Duncan and Courtney Callaghan had lead roles in organizing the exchange and believe these exchanges have a powerful impact on the students.

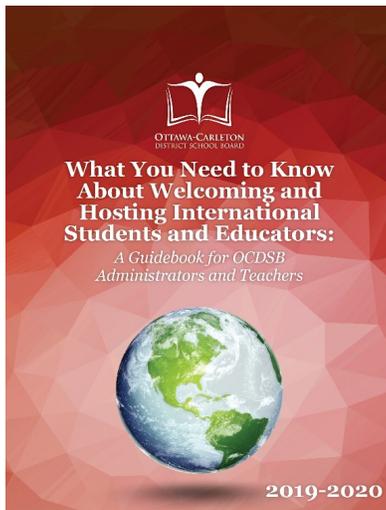


Woodroffe students visit a butterfly sanctuary on a study tour of Costa Rica



Students on exchange from the Netherlands are greeted at the Ottawa Airport by their host families from Woodroffe HS

OCENET publishes a new international student guidebook



The cover of the new OCENET guidebook for welcoming and hosting international students and educators

OCENET is pleased to announce the recent release of a new and updated guide for administrators, guidance counsellors and teachers who work with international students and educators.

The new guidebook, entitled "*What You Need to Know About Welcoming and Hosting International Students and Educators: A Guidebook for OCDSB Administrators and Teachers*" is 35 pages in length and now addresses both Long-Term students as well as Short-Term and Group Program students and educators who attend or visit OCDSB schools.

This updated and wholly revised edition provides background information on OCENET's goals, its structure, and the types of programs it offers. This resource booklet also provides information on the many ways OCENET serves as the international learning partner for OCDSB schools and outlines the numerous benefits of a school hosting international students and educators.

In addition to providing OCENET and Homestay contact details, there is information on accessing the international student database, timetabling

international students, a checklist for helping international students with course selection, and suggestions for ways to encourage international students to get involved in school life. Many other facets of OCENET's roles are addressed in the guidebook. A section entitled "International Student Exchanges for Canadian Students" provides direction on ways to accommodate OCDSB students going on an educational exchange.

A detailed and extensive *Table of Contents* in the guidebook will assist administrators to quickly reference information they may require.

Both printed copies and pdf versions are available by contacting OCENET.

ESL teacher is a role model for YPLS international students

by **Dahlia Liwsze**

The Young People's Language School (YPLS) helps international students learn English before they enter Ontario high schools.

A former ESL student herself, Jenny Lee never thought she would be an ESL teacher. That became a reality in January 2018 when she began teaching part-time at YPLS: "I am a role model to the students. They can see themselves in me because I personally know that it can be a very long process to learn a new language and adapt to and settle in a new culture.... I learned that my position could be meaningful to other

students."

Lee came to Canada from South Korea as a Grade 11 student in 2007. After high school, she completed teachers' college at Queen's University followed by supply teaching at local school boards.

Some of her favourite things about teaching at YPLS include lesson planning and getting to know the students: "You get to see the same students again and again and get to know them.... I get to see students from other countries, and they're happy to talk about their cultures. Comparing cultures is fun. I'm from Korea, and I get to compare and

share my culture too." She also appreciates how there is never a shortage of teaching materials and art supplies at YPLS and says the Smartboard is "a really great teaching resource and fun to make lessons (with)."

In addition to teaching, Lee sometimes helps supervise YPLS activities on Friday afternoons: "I'm new to Ottawa too and have only been here for a year and a half. So I'm exploring with the students, and it's also my first time going to Tag Zone, bowling, and a tour of Parliament Hill."

Outside of the classroom, Lee enjoys creative pursuits. "I love art and drawing. I really like reading children's books, and one day I want to create one."



As a former international student and now a teacher, Jenny Lee is an inspiration and role model to her ESL students at OCENET's Young People's Language School

Life as an international student in Ottawa

Each issue of *Global Connections* highlights the experiences of international students or educators who visit Ottawa and attend OCDSB schools through OCENET. In this issue the focus is on four international students who are attending AY Jackson SS this semester.



OCENET international students (l-r) Irene, Ana, Hugo and Clara enjoy attending AY Jackson SS because of the warm welcome they received from the students and staff at the school. They also really appreciate the many opportunities to participate in a wide variety of lunch time and after school extra-curricular activities, clubs and sports. Each of the students highly recommend participating in an international learning experience to learn about a different language and culture and to become more independent.

Irene

In Grade 9, Irene is from Zaragoza, Spain, and wanted to come to Canada because she is interested in other cultures and in improving her English. Also, Irene had briefly visited Ottawa four years ago and really liked the city. She really enjoys being a student at AY Jackson and has made many new friends. Irene is very appreciative of her Canadian host family and has become close friends with her host sister who welcomed her and introduced her to friends, and they often bake together. While Irene has learned lots of new English expressions, she finds reading Shakespeare to be a challenge. She would encourage others to be an international student.

Ana

Like Irene, Ana is also from Zaragoza and in Grade 9. Her older sister was also an international student and attended AY Jackson. At first she was a little nervous about living with a new family, but has been amazed at how her Canadian host family has become like a second family to her. She does miss some of her favourite foods from home, especially Spanish bread with olive oil. She likes all of the course options that are available to Ontario students. She really, really enjoyed Halloween. Ana feels she has become more independent and that studying abroad has been the best decision ever for her.

Hugo

Hugo is on a one year scholarship and is in Grade 11. He is from a city near Madrid. Hugo figured out very early on that the way to avoid any feelings of homesickness was to get involved in school activities to make new friends. He enjoys AY Jackson because it offers a wide variety of clubs and sports both at lunchtime and after school. This experience has helped him realize how appreciative he is of his family and friends in Spain, and he is excited to be an international student because he views each day as a new experience. He is thinking of eventually pursuing a career in law.

Clara

From near Dusseldorf Germany, Clara is in Grade 11 and was inspired to study abroad by family and friends who have also been international students. At first she found the many differences in the Canadian school system to be a challenge, but she has come to like many aspects of school life at AY Jackson, including the online school calendar, Google classroom, the school "spirit" that sports teams and activities help create, as well as "AY Jackson" school clothing. Clara feels this learning experience has made her a more independent and confident person.

Korean Cultural Centre hosts 6th Annual Korea Forum for international certificate students

On December 5th, International Certificate Program (ICP) students from 14 OCDSB high schools attended the 6th Annual ICP Korea Forum to learn about Korean culture. Students delivered presentations on the history of Korea, the Korean economy, the music and fashion industry, as well as technology and innovation. In addition, ICP students from four OCDSB high schools who had just recently returned from South Korea presented on their experiences at the Jeju Youth Forum, November 1-4.



Director of the Korean Cultural Centre, Mr. Y. Kim (far left), with all of the student presenters at the ICP Korea Forum

Photo credit: Ahhyun Choi

Meet OCENET: Sean Oussoren



Sean Oussoren,
International Education
Coordinator

Each issue of Global Connections includes a feature interview with one of the OCENET team

1. What are some of your main roles at OCENET?

I feel fortunate to wear several hats at OCENET. My primary role is supporting the students and teacher advisors in the International Certificate Program, a voluntary program that recognizes and honours students who demonstrate a commitment to being motivated, engaged and active global citizens. This role has me hosting workshops, arranging events and sharing opportunities (local and international) for students to engage with the global community. My other roles relate to increasing global connections within our schools through student exchanges.

2. What experiences do you bring to your position as International Education Coordinator?

In addition to working in three different schools in Ottawa during my 21 years as an educator, I've been able to learn about other cultures by living and teaching in Ecuador, Portugal and China. These experiences have highlighted for me the importance of communication, collaboration, flexibility and patience working with

students, parents, colleagues and community members in these varied locations. I also love learning languages and in addition to English I am conversant (I don't think I would ever say I'm fluent) in French, Russian, Spanish, Portuguese, some basic Mandarin and am now learning Japanese.

3. What aspects of the job do you enjoy the most?

I love having the opportunity to meet and work with students and adults from different backgrounds in a variety of settings. Whether it's supporting students and parents involved in the ICP or our exchange programs, or getting inspiration from our amazing team of ICP teacher advisors and students, I find that each day presents new opportunities, new moments of joy and new puzzles to solve. I feel very grateful to the amazing team at OCENET who have welcomed and guided me over the past few months.

4. What new projects are you working on at OCENET?

I hope to build upon the success of the International Certificate Program and work with our International Educa-

tion Advisory Committee to bring new opportunities for developing global competencies to the elementary panel. There are some amazing learning engagements happening in our schools and I would love to develop a way to share these ideas and inspirations across the district. I'm also working with our ICP teacher advisors to further grow our ICP program in our high schools - sharing recruitment and retention strategies, encouraging more students to sign up, and providing more opportunities for ICP students from different schools to learn from one another.

5. What are some of your interests outside of work?

I love spending time with my family, and our time living overseas followed by a year-long sabbatical to travel the world was a highlight of my life so far. We continue to explore travel and cultures near and far, and look forward to one day living overseas again. Closer to home, volleyball, badminton and biking around the city to and from work (even in the winter) keeps me active and invigorated. I love food in all its forms (eating, preparing, and eating). Building things out of wood and learning from my many mistakes in the process is something that also provides me with joy (and some frustration!).

**STUDENTS:
OCDSB/OCENET
International
Study Abroad
Bursaries**

Information is
available at:

[www.educationfoundationottawa.ca/
helping-students-2/
bursary/
ocdsbocenet-
international-study-
abroad-bursary](http://www.educationfoundationottawa.ca/helping-students-2/bursary/ocdsbocenet-international-study-abroad-bursary)

International Certificate Program (ICP) continues to grow



On the evening of Thursday, June 20, at Sir Robert Borden HS, 87 OCDSB students were awarded the OCDSB International Certificate to recognize their commitment in successfully completing the requirements of the program. As keynote speaker of the ceremony, CBC news-anchor Adrian Harewood emphasized the importance of intercultural awareness. Almost 500 OCDSB students are currently enrolled in the ICP.

OCENET Tip Sheet #14

Background to National Education Systems



International students attend schools in Canada for a variety of reasons, with the most common being the opportunity to improve English language skills and to experience living in another culture. International students who attend OCDSB schools currently come from almost 50 different countries. Teachers may find the following background information helpful for understanding the educational systems their international students experience in their home country:

China:

Full school year, non-semestered, September to June; winter holiday January
Elementary Grades 1–6; junior middle Grades 7–9; high school Grades 10–12
National Higher Education Entrance Examination (GAO KAO) for university entrance

Germany:

Full school year, non-semestered, September to June
Secondary school Grades 7 or 8 to Grades 12 or 13, depending on state
Gymnasium high school for university preparation – university entrance examination *Abitur*
Usually students will not be granted equivalent credits upon return to Germany

South Korea:

Full school year, non-semestered, year March to February with holidays mid-July to late August and all of January
Primary Grades 1–6; middle school Grades 7–9; high school Grades 10–12
Public and private; vocational and academic.

Mexico:

Full school year, non-semestered
Primary Grades 1–6; junior Grades 7–9; high school Grades 10–12 (not compulsory)
Vocational or academic (preparatoria) high school

Colombia:

Full school year, semestered: Semester 1- February to June. Semester 2- July to November (southern states have school year more akin to ours), with holidays according to southern hemisphere (December–January)
Elementary Grades 1–5; high school basic Grades 6–9; mid secondary Grades 10–11
State test of admission to university

Brazil:

Full school year, non-semestered, February to December
Fundamental Education I — Grades 1–5
Fundamental Education II — Grades 6–9 (equivalent to our junior high)
High School — Grades 10–12 (called Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3)

For more information on education in these countries and others, visit WES—Canada (World Education Services) at <http://www.wes.org/ca/wedb> to access their database.



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OCENET Bulletin Board

Lynch-Getty Global Student Award

Recipients for 2018-2019

- ◆ Violet Schuyong Cai - Earl of March SS
- ◆ Uyanga Darkhanbaatar - Gloucester HS
- ◆ Amanda Robyn McCarthy - Bell HS
- ◆ Jueun Park - Earl of March SS

Each student received an award of \$1,000 and a plaque from OCENET.

All OCDSB Grade 12 graduating students are eligible. Applications will be posted in March 2020 at: <https://www.ocenet.ca/en/page/show/lynch-getty>



What's going on at
OCENET? Follow us
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Canada Homestay Network
Incorporating Canada Homestay International
Serving Canada from Coast to Coast

Thinking About Becoming A Homestay Host?

Among the many benefits of being a Homestay host:

- make a significant difference to the life of a student from another country
- learn about people from other cultures
- make friends across the world
- introduce your children to an intercultural experience
- share Canadian culture and life in Ottawa
- Host Support 24/7
- receive an honorarium to cover expenses

Visit "Hosts" at
www.canadahomestaynetwork.ca

Divisions of OCENET



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YOUNG PEOPLE'S
LANGUAGE SCHOOL

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL

Academic English
Leadership and
Outdoor Education Programs
Summer Study

If you have an international education story that should be included in *Global Connections*, let us know.

Please direct any comments, questions, or suggestions to:
ross.laing@ocdsb.ca



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