

States' 4-H International Exchange Programs FLEX Program 2012-2013, Final Report

Program Summary

States' 4-H International Exchange Programs (S4-H) hosted a total of 30 FLEX students in the 2012-2013 program year. These students lived with volunteer host families in 6 states throughout the United States. Placements were primarily in rural areas and small towns with families involved in local 4-H clubs and events. Students attended accredited public high schools and participated in enhancement activities to increase their knowledge of democratic principles, teach tolerance and respect for individual differences, increase their knowledge about a free market economy, and encourage community and civic responsibility.

Grant Activities & Program Outcomes

S4-H implemented an intensive English language program for three students with lower English test scores. They received over 60 hours of personalized instruction to improve their English comprehension and speaking abilities, equipping them to learn in an all-English American high school environment. All three showed marked improvement in their English during the course of the year.

S4-H hosted one student with a physical disability (mild Cerebral Palsy). The student initially struggled to adjust to life in her host community, but with support from S4-H, MIUSA, and host family, she matured through the course of the program and demonstrated remarkable personal growth. She returned to her home country with a sense of empowerment and confidence in her own abilities.

Each S4-H FLEX student is required to volunteer a minimum of 15 hours during the year. In 2012-13, FLEX students donated over 2,000 hours of volunteer service to their host communities and high schools. Twelve (12) students volunteered 100+ hours and received a recognition certificate signed by Assistant Secretary Ann Stock.

S4-H encourages FLEX students to actively take part in International Education Week by giving presentations about their home countries in their host schools and other community venues. S4-H held a contest awarding those who gave the most presentations. Participation was extraordinary with one student giving 39 presentations during the week. In total, FLEX students reported giving 169 IEW presentations, reaching an estimated audience of over 3,900 people in one week.

Overall, the 2012-13 S4-H FLEX program was a success that allowed participants to learn first-hand about American values. Year-end program surveys measured students' perceived gains during the program year. S4-H FLEX students reported a 63% increase (pre vs. post program) on the question, "I take responsibility to help improve my community" and a 56% increase on the question, "I think volunteering can make a difference in society." These items demonstrate achievement of the FLEX program goal that students learn about civil society, volunteerism, and the effectiveness of grass-roots efforts undertaken by everyday Americans to improve the world around them.

Composition of S4-H Board of Directors as reported on IRS Form 990:

Pat BoyEs, Chair; Lillian Larwood, Treasurer/Secretary; Kirk Astroth, Director; Rachel Richardson, Director; Deryl Waldren, Director; Mark Mains, Director; Debbie McDonald, Director; Renee Applegate, Director through Feb 2011; Stephanie Davison, Director through Feb 2011; Yoko Kawaguchi, President.

Other Key Employees: Michelle Fenske, S4-H FLEX Program Manager

Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Program Report

Project Title: Youth Programs Academic Year Disability Components Program

Agreement Number: S-ECAPY-12-CA-098

Grant Period: June 6, 2012 - August 31, 2013

Contact: Stephanie Gray, MIUSA Program Manager, (541) 343-1284

Mobility International USA (MIUSA) provided comprehensive support services, technical assistance and trainings to support the successful inclusion of students with disabilities in the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs 2012-13 academic year Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX), Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) and American Serbia and Montenegro Youth Leadership Exchange (A-SMYLE) programs. The Disability Components Program consisted of preparatory workshops for FLEX, YES and A-SMYLE students with disabilities, ongoing support services to placement organizations and students with disabilities, and disability inclusion trainings for placement organizations, all designed to enhance the U.S. academic year and academic semester experience of 30 FLEX, YES and A-SMYLE students with disabilities.

Outcomes of the project included:

1. FLEX, YES and A-SMYLE students with disabilities were introduced to the types of accommodations available for people with disabilities in the United States to help them build confidence and be successful on their exchange programs.
2. FLEX, YES and A-SMYLE students with disabilities returned to their home countries with increased knowledge and skills to become leaders and advocates for people with disabilities.
3. Placement organizations gained increased capacity to place and support students with disabilities in U.S. host families and schools.

In August 2012, 27 academic year FLEX, YES and A-SMYLE students with disabilities participated in a four-day preparatory workshop in Eugene, Oregon, designed to prepare students for disability-related aspects of their exchange experience. The workshop also enabled MIUSA to compile useful and accurate information regarding each student's disability-related interests, access strategies and needs, that was presented to each student's placement organization in a detailed post-program report. MIUSA also conducted a preparatory workshop for three YES semester students with disabilities from Malaysia in Alexandria, Virginia, January 25-26, 2013, immediately following the students' arrival orientation in the United States. Throughout the 2012-13 academic year, MIUSA provided support services to placement organizations and, as requested by placement organizations, to FLEX, YES and A-SMYLE students with disabilities, host families, and schools. Support services included technical assistance, referral to resources, and suggestions to address disability-related questions, resolve access issues and tap into local resources to enhance the experience of FLEX and YES students with disabilities. Lastly, MIUSA designed and conducted face-to-face and webinar trainings, and developed new resources, to increase the capacity of local, regional and HQ staff at placement organizations to place and support students with disabilities on sponsored programs.