

AFS Interculture South Africa News

Inspiring
Challenging
Learning
Discovering
Transforming

Supportive
Passionate
Caring
Understanding

Trustworthy
Reliable
Responsive
Experienced

Connecting
Sharing
Familial
Bonding

OCTOBER 2015

Message from the Chairperson



Dear Volunteers and Staff,

The year is almost over and we have all worked hard to achieve our goals. Looking back to the past 12 months as chair of the board... I must admit, so much has happened. The highlight was the level of commitment and support from our volunteers despite the financial challenges that we face. It is highly appreciated.

Now that our volunteer structure is in place and finalized, we must continue working on rebuilding our local chapters to engage more volunteers in order to achieve growth and impact.

Volunteers engage in different ways and I believe we should be flexible and open in our approach.

We must adapt a culture of ownership and engagement that provides ALL volunteers and staff with opportunities to grow, learn and take initiative to make AFS ISA a success.

Where is our Youth?

We need to come up with a youth empowerment strategy as requested by the AFS Youth Forum. Therefore, I would like to challenge our youth to organise themselves and be visible as well collaborate with others across the network.

How can we create a more engaging AFS ISA for the youth? We need your input, ideas and consistent engagement. Take lead and make a difference.

Exciting news for the African Continent:

Our Regional Group, AFS in Africa (AiA) now has a memorandum of Understanding which will form the basis of our Constitution.

AFS South Africa will Chair the group until 2017 and thereafter it will be on a rotational basis amongst the five founding Members, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa and Tunisia.

Watch this space!!



Do what you enjoy and are passionate about, join volunteers with similar interests, enhance your skills through volunteering or just support a good cause ,in our case promote a more just and peaceful society through Intercultural Learning . Let's continue to move forward as a strong RSA Team.

Wheel the change.

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Inland Regional Structure

Following the first Gauteng regional meeting held on the 20th of June 2015; a decision was made to demarcate the Gauteng Region.

The resolution was to divide the "**Non-Coastal**" chapters into four (4) Inland Regions with independent regional coordinators. The regional structure was reviewed once again at the second regional meeting.

The Inland Regional Structure

SOUTH	NORTH
<p><i>Regional Coordinator: Thoko Ngubeni</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gauteng South• Soweto• Tirisano• Eldorado Park• Observatory	<p><i>Regional Coordinator: Mmatepeng Temane</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mamelodi• Akaso• Atteridgeville• Rustenburg• Emalahleni
NORTH - WEST	EAST
<p><i>Regional Coordinator: Laurette Holme</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Johannesburg North West	<p><i>Regional Coordinator: Khumbuza Mbele</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daveyton• Tembisa
LIMPOPO	FREE STATE
<p><i>Regional Coordinator: Kathy Otto</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lebowakgomo• Phalaborwa	<p><i>Regional Coordinator: Malefu Mthethwa</i> <i>(Interim)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bloemfontein

The Inland Regional structure has now been finalised, please take note of each chapter and which region they fall under.

Exchanges between chapters in South Africa

Those of you who have been involved in supporting AFS in South Africa for many years will remember that, during the years that there were no international exchanges, volunteers set up and ran an exchange **between** different chapters, which were both innovative and successful.

Some of you may also remember Hal Denton, who spent some time in the South African office at the turn of the century (he is now AFS International's lawyer). He is a great advocate for the idea of storytelling and believes that AFS is expert at "hiding its light under a bushel". Hal's wife (who is a film maker) might be interested in producing something on that chapter to chapter programme.

The first thing would be to compile a list of people who could talk about the programme, what happened, what impact it had, etc.

So, if you remember anything about this programme, or were involved yourself, please get in touch with Dennis Lane @ dennis.lane@afs.org.

AFS Visible in 'Kasi' schools

Mamelodi Chapter

Our very first school relations saw the successful hosting of the 3 IPSCNH15 participants at Mamelodi High and Modiri Technical High schools, from July to Sept respectively.



The principals and their staff continued to ensure that participants got the best out of a typical township school. The vibe of intercultural learning experiences continued to flourish as students got to know about AFS for the first time.

They made the best out of this unique international encounter. There were mixed feelings of joy and sadness as Mamelodi High School bid farewell to their 2 students Clemens (Thabo) and Zimon (Nathi) on the 4th September 2015.



Students, staff and AFS volunteers went out of their way to make this surprise event a memorable occasion for the participants as they were showered with souvenirs, lots of love, food and refreshments.

The participant's speeches were moving; as they thanked the school for the wonderful experience and friendships developed through the AFS Intercultural exchange in Mamelodi-ya-Tshwane.

Sight-seeing and whale watching

Tygerberg Chapter

Tygerberg chapter organised a sightseeing tour to Hermanus where the students went whale watching.



They only saw one whale but they had a wonderful day

"My thanks to these ladies for taking the time and the effort to arrange something for their students, especially at this busy time of the year..." Mary v.d. Merwe



Isobel Pontac



Stephanie Pillay

Host Family Orientation

Tembisa Chapter

Shortly after the arrival of the YPscNN15 participants, Tembisa chapter held a Host Family Orientation.



The orientation was well attended by the local volunteers, participants and their host families.



Social Gathering in Soweto

Soweto Chapter

Soweto Chapter organised a social gathering for their participants and host families.



Chapter Launch

Observatory Chapter

Observatory chapter was officially launched on the 12th September 2015, with a total of 10 volunteers.



Including a number of South African languages; most of the volunteers within the chapter are fluent in either; French, Spanish and Portuguese.

Pizza Evening

Gauteng South Chapter

Two host families from Gauteng South and their participants had a pizza night on October the 9th.



Greetings from Nosipho Duma

"Hello

I hope you are doing okay because I'm great. America is so different for me and it is nothing like how I imagined it to be, well some of the things I thought about it.

I'm having a blast experiencing new things and new food, just had my first Chinese food a couple of days back.

The weather in South Carolina is so humid I thought I will faint the first day I arrived here, but I guess I'm getting used to it.

My school is so huge and different, well I went to my first football game on Friday and it was a great experience although I didn't know what was going on except for what tackling is.

I've made a lot of friends in school, in the neighbourhood and in the bus. Oh and I take the yellow bus to school in it's the coolest thing ever.

Everything is just so cool even their accents. They totally love my accent you should hear them complimenting it, they are also fascinated by my name it's crazy.

I'm having a great time experiencing new things like sitting on the right side of the car and it feels like you are the one driving. I don't miss you yet but you'll be hearing from me every month.

With warmth"- Nosipho

Orientations

• YPbzNH14 Departure

Pax showing off the certificate awarded to them after a successful completing Weltwaerts programme with different CPO's in South Africa.



• YPbzNH15 Arrival

Pax and the volunteer are posing for a picture after finishing their orientation and getting ready to the projects.



• YPbzSH15 Mid - Stay

Pax are sitting discussing in a class room after a presentation made by a local village guide in Lesotho during the community engagement visit.



A letter to participants

Do not hurry

Dear student, you have just arrived eager to this country that welcomes you and you feel a tingle as if many butterflies were fluttering in your stomach.

Although it's sure you have tried to document yourself and prepare for the new experience, you will always find something that will surprise you. You are going to learn a lot of new things, but do not hurry.

You are feeling very diverse and contradictory emotions, expectation concerning the new; uncertainty and insecurity facing the unknown; hope to be loved by the people you are going to live with for a year; you are also highly motivated to make friends, and why not to say it, you will sometimes feel homesick.

Bit by bit you'll steep yourself into a rich and diverse culture, which will surprise you, but above all it will conquer you.

Write the funny stories that happen to you....It would be amusing to publish them! I'm going to tell you one which recently happened to me... (I'm living in this country since not so long ago).

I tried to get to the Market theatre, and when I asked different people where it was, everybody answered "after the robot to the right", or "you should reach the robot". I asked myself where a robot was. Such a high technology.... I didn't know that in South Africa they call robots to the traffic light.

I realized it the third time... The question was, I got to the Market Theatre and watched "Animal Farm", a great success.

Enhancing our sense of humor, it's a good strategy to cope with very different situations; to laugh about oneself and our own limitation is the best way to break barriers and make friends.

Don't forget that after the rain there will always be the sun" and enjoy the positive aspects that the AFS Program offers you.

Love
Begona Oiz

Nurturing school relations

The Mamelodi chapter chair won the hearts of parents, staff and members of the School Governing Body during parents' meeting held on 23 August 2015.

The platform was an opportune moment for an official introduction of AFS programmes to these important stakeholders. Parents welcomed the programme and were excited about their school and community hosting international students.



The SGB Chairperson, Mr Masemola equally appreciated the relations with AFS and highlighted the importance of such exposure for the benefit of the school children and the community at large.

This session marked the beginning of a long term relationship and many more Intercultural learning experiences.

My Volunteer Summer Summit (VSS) Experience



EFIL Volunteer Summer Summit Blossin, Germany 2015

It is always a great pleasure to attend the Volunteer Summer Summit (VSS). The build up to the summit already is so much fun.

The interaction with the preparation team on social media and fellow delegates is amazing that by the time you all get together you feel like you know each other already.

Upon arrival I met and mingled with a lot of volunteers. Some I have met at previous summits or elsewhere in the world at other AFS events, it was great time to catch up, others were new that we met on the day.

I am always amazed at the amount of work that goes into the preparation and efficiency that goes with it. We were welcomed and introduced to the German culture in a fun way.



The theme of the VSS was Global Citizenship. It really does not matter where in the world you are; we all face the same challenges and issues just at different levels.

So as global citizens were we grouped and given various topics to explore. I was in a group that looked at Youth unemployment.

This is a world problem ranging from those that are sitting with over qualified students that just keep on studying because their fees are covered by the state.

To those that do not have qualifications because they cannot afford education. You also have a lot of young people moving around in the world in search of jobs.

We also had various workshops that we very empowering. The beauty of VSS is that one gains ample knowledge from various people of all age groups and experience and material that is being shared.

My highlight was the community projects. I was in a group that went to paint a youth centre. Talking to the director and hearing the amazing work that he does in the community was just so touching. Some people went to the refugee camps.

In the true AFS style we all had support contact people, we have small group of not more than 10 people where we could reflect

and off load. I always come back being empowered and more energised to do my volunteer work to the best of my ability just by interacting with other volunteers and see how much they give of themselves.



It is a great place to remember what having FUN in AFS is and of course making global friends.