

# AFS 75th JANUS

Newsletter for AFS Alumni & Friends – July 2022

## AFS Celebrates the 75th Anniversary of High School Exchanges

75 years ago, the first students set off on the new AFS high school exchange programs.

Through the vision of our founders, AFS was transformed from a humanitarian ambulance service created in the two World Wars to what it is today—a groundbreaking international exchange, volunteer, and intercultural learning organization, with more than 500,000 alumni and operations reaching nearly 100 countries.

A question posed by Steven Galatti, the Director General of AFS in a reunion in New York City in September 1946 set things in motion:

**“What, if any, is the position of the American Field Service in peacetime? I have believed for some time that the AFS can further international friendships, if it can do this through the organized exchange of scholars between this country and those allied countries with whom we have served.”**

AFS volunteers from World Wars I and II officially endorsed the creation of a student exchange program, the American Field Service International Scholarships (AFSIS), known today as AFS Intercultural Programs.

In 1947, 28 secondary students from France, Czechoslovakia, the Netherlands, Norway, England, and Syria went to the United States on an AFS scholarship program. They were joined by 22 college students from France, New Zealand, Czechoslovakia, Greece, England, Estonia, and Hungary. Many generous people were quick to offer their hospitality and acted as host families for foreign students, a concept that remains fundamental to AFS’ network today.



*AFS exchange students on a bus trip during their program. from the September 24, 1952 issue of World Week.*

The idea of student exchanges did not first come up after World War II. As early as 1919, The AFS Fellowships for French Universities were established to fund an exchange of students from the U.S. and France. AFS founder A. Piatt Andrew described the purpose of the program as a way to continue peaceful ties between these two countries after World War I. The fellowships came to a halt when AFS was reactivated as a volunteer ambulance corps shortly after the start of World War II under Galatti’s leadership.

**The second World War helped build a better foundation for future AFS student exchanges.**

AFS increased its numbers and strengthened its ability to organize, send, and communicate with volunteers serving worldwide. Galatti and other former AFS Ambulance Drivers confidently returned to the idea of cross-cultural educational exchanges after the war, but on a much larger scale—and focused on a younger audience, secondary school students.





An AFS exchange student in Paraguay in 2022.

Documents within the AFS Archives capture how these brave young AFS participants reached their final destinations: for the first 22 years, until the summer of 1969, they traveled by ship. One of the fondest memories for many AFS alumni are still the bus tours within the U.S., a unique opportunity to get a deep understanding of the United States, and to build life-long friendships along the way.

Numerous important milestones would go on to mark AFS high school exchanges. In 1950, U.S. Americans first started going abroad, while in 1971 AFS established Multinational Programs, ensuring that young people from around the world would get to meet and exchange with each other. The educational component of the program was further strengthened in 1984 when the programs' Educational Goals were defined, offering structure to the experiential, lifelong and non-formal learning of AFS participants.



Daniel Obst, current President and CEO of AFS Intercultural Programs with exchange students and volunteers in 2022 in Athens.



AFS exchange students participate in a language festival in Honolulu, Hawaii, USA in 1978.



Director General Stephen Galatti with participants at a farewell party in Salt Lake City, Utah, U.S. in 1959.

Over the years, AFS alumni have made an impact across industries and at the forefront of important international issues and social causes further confirms this. Our alumni include presidents like Gabriel Boric in Chile, Jan Eliasson, who served as the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Christine Lagarde leading the International Monetary Fund and Samantha Cristoforetti, the first woman to command the International Space Station.

“ The American Field Service believes in youth—in its ability to see clearly, to see through the fog of propaganda, to see with the eyes of the heart. This is so of the youth of all nations...and it is to this proposition that the entire AFS is now devoted. ”

—Steven Galatti’s words ring true even today.

Today, AFS runs international exchange programs, education initiatives, volunteerism and advocacy, to empower young people from all backgrounds with essential global skills—and the passion for making a difference. We deliver mission-driven impact three ways, as our network of 55 organizations across five continents works to:

- Develop active global citizens to take action
- Globalize schools and institutions
- Expand access to intercultural education with scholarships and outreach.

“We’re proud of our 75-year-long experience in creating a more just and peaceful world through intercultural exchange. Prioritizing an open exchange of people and ideas continues to be essential for the world—and for AFS—today. That’s why AFS will continue the legacy of our founders, and empower more young people to engage with others to spark curiosity, build friendships and take action to make the world a better place,” concluded Daniel Obst, President and CEO of AFS Intercultural Programs, at the Network Meeting in Athens, Greece in May 2022 which gathered 200 leaders of our global network.

Support the AFS Volunteer Ambulance Drivers Impact Fund

We welcome your contributions at [afs.org/donate](https://www.afs.org/donate) directed to the **AFS Volunteer Ambulance Drivers Impact Fund** in honor or memory of a beloved Driver. This fund ensures that AFS remains strong and vital as a volunteer organization. Your gifts will be applied where the funds are needed most, such as supporting volunteerism in AFS and helping AFS achieve our goals to develop global citizens, globalize schools and institutions, and expand access to intercultural education.

AFS WWII Ambulance Drivers  
LAST POST



Andrew J. Foley  
ME 32  
(1922–2022)



Sol W. Sanders  
CM 97, IB 59-T  
(1926–2022)



Thomas Dolan IV  
IB 1  
(1923–2021)



James H. Brewster  
CM 47, IB 60-T  
(1922–2020)



# AFS Partner Organizations Celebrate the 75th Anniversary



U.S. President Eisenhower meets AFS bus trip participants on the White House lawn in 1954.

## AFS-USA

- Over the 75 years of exchange programs, AFS-USA has built a network of 275,000+ alumni, with more than 32,000 of those currently being under the age of 40. In that period, more than 150,000 students traveled to the U.S. for an AFS exchange.
- AFS-USA continues to provide opportunities for intercultural exchange that develop the global competence needed to create a more just and peaceful world. With a vast network of students, parents, families, volunteers, educators, staff members, donors, program alumni and others, the AFS effect continues to stretch across borders and divides.
- AFS-USA will mark this anniversary in a number of ways, including organizing a large annual Volunteer Summit in St. Louis in November, launching a matching gift campaign, sharing stories and communications campaigns across all platforms with alumni, hosted students, host families, volunteers, staff, educators, and more.

Find out more at [www.afsusa.org/impact](http://www.afsusa.org/impact).



AFS exchange students hosted in Washington D.C. area in 2021-22.



## AFS France

- Through 75 years of activity, 13,631 students sent abroad, 15,435 students hosted in France, and thousands of volunteers and host families involved in their local communities, AFS Vivre Sans Frontière (AFS France) has played an enormous role in promoting intercultural understanding. Not only through mobility programs, but also through all interventions with schools. Thousands of young people, from all social backgrounds, have therefore been able to think about prejudices, stereotypes, discriminations, and relationships with people they think are different from them. They were able to develop the social skills that are essential for their personal and professional development, and finally to become global active citizens.
- AFS France will mark the 75th anniversary on November 19, 2022 with an AFS Global Intercultural Education Symposium. AFS alumni and experts in the fields of education and peace-building, will lead an engaging discussion with two roundtables: “Geopolitical changes in Europe and the rest of the world: what place and role for an organization such as AFS?” and “Internationalization of education and intercultural competencies: what are the challenges for AFS?” National Board members of AFS Vivre Sans Frontière will attend, as well as around 100 volunteers from local chapters.



Deroisy Marie-Françoise, French AFSer in 1952.



French AFS exchange students recently returned from their programs abroad.







Students hosted in Slovakia in 2022.

## AFS Slovakia

- The first Slovak students participated in an AFS exchange in 1947, as nationals of Czechoslovakia. An independent AFS Slovakia office was established in 1990 and then transformed into a citizens' association Intercultura Slovakia that has been active since 2010. In these last 12 years, AFS Slovakia has sent 244 students abroad and hosted 129 students from around the world.
- Even though the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted study abroad programs, AFS Slovakia continues its operations and a record number of Slovak AFSers are planning to study abroad and come to Slovakia.
- The war in Ukraine has mobilized our volunteers, reminding us of our roots and the importance of helping those in need and suffering. We want to teach others more than ever that the only way to contribute toward peace in the world is through an open and peaceful dialogue, and mutual understanding of cultural differences.



AFS exchange students hosted in Slovakia in 2020.

## AFS Netherlands

- AFS Netherlands has sent 4,500+ participants since 1947, and hosted close to 5,000 participants since 1950.
- AFS Netherlands relies on the talent and dedication of volunteers in communities throughout the country. Since 2021, AFS Netherlands is part of a broader AFS Lowlands in collaboration with AFS Belgium Flanders.



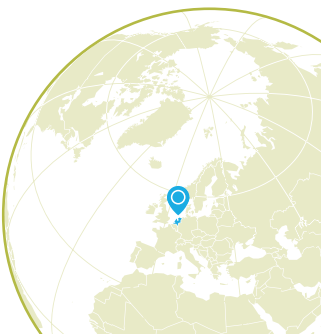
AFS Conference in 1955 was held in Amsterdam.



Young Workers Exchange in 1987.



Host Family in Netherlands in 2016.







Milan Stamm, Jaroslava Moserova, and Arnold Kotyk land from Czechoslovakia in New York, 1947.



Holiday card designed by AFS student Jaroslava Moserova.

## AFS Czech Republic

- The first Czech students participated in an AFS exchange in 1947, as nationals of Czechoslovakia. An independent AFS Czech Republic office was established in the 1990s and since then it has sent more than 1,000 students abroad and hosted approximately 1,300 students from around the world.
- Jaroslava (Jara) Moserová was one of the first AFS students to participate in a high school exchange in 1947. She designed this holiday card, which was sold to raise funds for the American Field Service International Scholarships Program. While she was studying at the Art Students League in New York City during her second year abroad, the Communist regime that had been established in her country made the presence of AFS there impossible, and the organization ceased to exist for nearly half a century. After the Velvet Revolution in 1989, Jara contacted AFS and actively helped regenerate the organization in Czechoslovakia. When the country peacefully split in January 1993, Jara founded AFS Czech Republic (AFS Mezikulturní programy, o.s.) with two other Returnees from the 1947-1948 program year.



AFSers in Czech Republic today.

## AFS Hungary

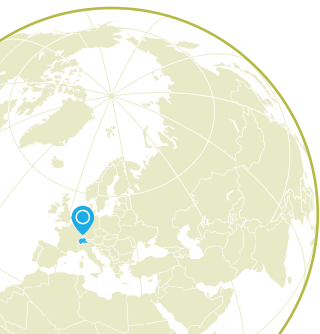
- While Ilona Kuun from Hungary was among the first AFS students to travel to the U.S., AFS Hungary officially started its activity in early 1990's, when the former communist political and economic structure ended. A new generation of young people emerged and played an important role in all areas of society. The first AFSers from Hungary had the unique opportunity to discover the “free world” in real life, not just from books and visitors. Since the first years a lot has changed, but some things have the same importance. Learning different cultures and being connected to people with different backgrounds creates value for you and makes you less receptive to unilateral, exclusive propaganda.
- “Being part of the American Field Service Program definitely changed my mother’s life. The story I remember most was how much she wanted to be part of the program. The government at first refused to let Ilona leave the country, but she started crying and after pleading her case she was granted a visa. I know she enjoyed her stay in Indiana and was grateful for the education she received there,” shared her son, Charles Paikert. Ilona lived in Syracuse, NY, U.S. as Helen Paikert until she passed away in 2016.
- Since launching in 1990, AFS Hungary has sent 1,813 students to 56 countries on the flagship exchange program, and hosted 2,657 from countries like Thailand, Italy, U.S. and many more.



AFSers in Hungary today.



Dorka, Hungarian exchange student in Denmark 2021.







An AFS Norway student on the exchange in 2019.

## AFS Norway

- AFS Norway has sent approximately 12,800 participants since 1947, and hosted approximately 6,800 participants since 1951 on AFS exchange programs. The organization highly values its volunteers, approximately 400 of them, who are organized in 17 chapters across the country. They are the heart of the organization, as they operate the exchange programs from the selection process, to providing support to students and host families with local activities, and participating in regular trainings and seminars.



Regina Honu, social entrepreneur and advocate for girls from Ghana, studied abroad in Norway in 2000. In 2018 she won the AFS Global Citizen of the Year Award, and since 2020 she has been serving on the AFS International Board of Trustees.



## AFS New Zealand

- AFS New Zealand has sent and hosted approximately 10,000 students respectively on its exchange programs. After a hibernation period when programs were stopped due to the Covid-19 pandemic, exchanges are picking up again with New Zealanders already abroad in 2022, and the first foreign students expected to arrive in 2023 to the country.
- The organization has numerous plan of marking the anniversary throughout the year, from a Tauranga – a lunch get together for Board members from the 1980s, to a BBQs and dinners for volunteers to reconnect and celebrate, and presenting the AFS Model T Ford Ambulance vehicle during Anzac Day, a national day of remembrance that commemorates those “who served and died in all wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations” and “the contribution and suffering of all those who have served.”
- In the words of a Maori Wisdom, or Maori Whakatau, that AFS New Zealand embraces,

*He aha te mea nui o te ao*  
*What is the most important thing in the world?*

*He tangata, he tangata, he tangata*  
*It is the people, it is the people, it is the people*



Patricio from New Zealand on his AFS exchange program in Costa Rica.



Celebrating the 75th anniversary of AFS during Anzac Day.







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## Baer's Legacy Lives on in AFS



William Whitaker Baer Jr.  
(ME 32, CM 76).

William Whitaker Baer Jr. (ME 32, CM 76) was an AFS Volunteer Ambulance Driver who served during World War II. This May, more than 20 years after his passing, a bequest was made to AFS, as a token of appreciation for the organization's impact on his life and to support its impact on the generations to come.

Originally from Wilmette, Illinois, Baer was attending Amherst College when he enlisted with AFS. He was initially sent to drive an ambulance for the British Middle East Forces before transferring to the British Central Mediterranean Forces. His exemplary service earned him a mention in dispatches according to George Rock's *History of the American Field Service, 1920-1955*. To be mentioned in dispatches means that the high command was notified of a member of the armed forces' gallant or meritorious action in the face of the enemy, recommending them for certain decorations.

Mr Baer passed away in 2001, and this year his estate contributed a bequest to AFS. In that way, he joined the company of other AFS Drivers like Thomas Barbour, Thomas Hale and Charles Craig, and other supporters of AFS like Shirley Bowring, Laurel Grant, Richard M. Imes and Martha Brethauer who contributed to AFS in such a way. AFS is deeply grateful for such planned giving, as it demonstrates the transformational impact of an AFS experience and enables us to provide more scholarships, learning opportunities and support to our host families, students and volunteers worldwide.

*If you would like to remember AFS Intercultural Programs, Inc. in your will or trust, you may include that in your official documents. Please don't hesitate to contact us for more information at [miladinovic@afs.org](mailto:miladinovic@afs.org).*