

IMPACT



Ada County, 5880 Glenwood Street, Boise, Idaho 83714; 208-377-2107

The International Connection

The Situation

The Marshall Memorial Fellowship program was created in 1982 to provide the next generation of European leaders with a deeper understanding of the political, social, and economic institutions in the United States, and to build a network of young European leaders in politics and the media.

Fellows in each country are selected through a rigorous national process, which includes one-on-one interviews, application and essay. Fellows then travel to the United States in multinational groups of 15-18 for four weeks of briefings, site visits, dialogues, home stays and firsthand experiences in six cities and towns around the United States. Along the way they might stay on a cattle ranch, discuss the pros and cons of the American judicial system with city public defenders and police officers, volunteer in a soup kitchen, meet with business leaders about the new high tech regional economies, talk with welfare recipients about the impact of welfare reform on their daily lives, attend a church supper, meet with civil rights leaders, or lead a high school social studies class. This unique experience is designed to provide fellows with an in-depth, multifaceted view of the United States. To give them an opportunity to learn more about their own country's role within Europe as they travel and interact with individuals from eleven other countries.

June 2000, the German Marshall Fund contacted the Ada County Extension office in hopes of connecting with some farm families to host six visiting fellows. Their time and activities during that

week had already been arranged. Housing was provided for the visitors from Europe. In March 2001 a representative from the German Marshall Fund again contacted the Extension office to arrange for host families and a tour schedule.

Our Response

First, farm stays were arranged with 4-H families and 4-H alumni. The goals were to learn about American Agriculture and to become part of a farm family to see how it lives and works.

Second, a picnic was held to welcome the fellows to Boise area, provide a safe place to get acquainted for host families with their guests, to provide direction to their homes and communicate about their schedule.

The schedule included tours of farming operations, the State Department of Agriculture, Boise City Hall, and a water treatment plant. They also attended a lunch.

Program Outcomes

A total of 11 fellows visited Boise, six in 2000, and five in 2001. They visited from the countries of: Denmark, Spain, Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany, Romania, Bratislava, Netherlands, and France. These visitors are young professionals from media and government.

In 2001, three families hosted the fellows and included them in their lives for a weekend. Interviews

and surveys were used to gather data at the end of the visit.

Fellows called the home family stay a great experience. All of the fellows were grateful for the opportunity and the time spent with their families! All had “very” positive comments about their Idaho families.

The Friday night picnic was good, “very nice” they had not eaten all day and were very hungry. It was wonderful way to meet all the families and the walk through one of Boise’s city parks.

Having cars offered them opportunity to travel and visit places that they learned about. They were surprised at the great distances between cities. Their previous impressions were much different; they learned a lot about the West.

The families responded that the visit “...was such fun! Thank you for including us.” They found that they were very interesting professionals and have kept in touch with them after their return home. As facilitators we learned about bridging a culture gap. The fellows had been traveling for an extended time across the United States and they were tired when they arrived in Boise. The European culture they live in does not plan or attend functions as early as the Idaho farm community does. Time of day was a significant barrier to having them attend tours and activities.

An impact of this project was the development of a new partner. The Grange is very interested in taking a greater role in the German Marshall visits. In the world economy, Idaho has important contacts in Europe. It is so easy to maintain contacts with the Internet and e-mail. Already next year there are plans to include a focus on career development with the 4-H youth.

Cooperators and co-sponsors

- Idaho State Department of Agriculture, Julie Pipal arranged tours of the Warm Springs Wet Land Project, The Seed Laboratory, the Animal

Health Lab, the Bureau of Weights and Measures, and an Idaho luncheon

- Boise City Hall, the Mayor’s office arranged a tour of city hall
- Landers Street waste water treatment plant arranged by Katherine Chertudi of the Boise City Public Works Environmental Water Quality
- Seven Idaho Farm families
- Leadership Idaho Agriculture, Rick Waitley
- Ada County Cooperative Extension

The Future

Recommendations are:

- To gather information about the fellows before they visit
- To have a list of restaurants that are open until midnight to help accommodate their normal schedule and not arrange for early morning tours.
- Help them dress for the Idaho heat in July.
- Share some of the arrangements with Kuna Grange #59.

For More Information

Barbara Abo
Ada County
5880 Glenwood Street
Boise, Idaho 83714
208-377-2107
Email ada@uidaho.edu

Kevin Laughlin
5880 Glenwood Street
Boise, Idaho 83714
208-377-2107

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