



Westgate Teacher Fellowship Fund

Re: Grant Report 2011

From: Leslie A. Travis

Date: September 1, 2011

Dear Westgate Committee Members,

It is with great pleasure that I present this report. The program I attended in Strasbourg, France stands out as one of the most challenging and rewarding language and cultural enrichment programs I have participated in. I hope the following gives you an idea of my experience.

I arrived in Paris, France ten days before my program in Strasbourg began. This time allowed me to visit dear friends and family and prepare myself linguistically for the University of Strasbourg program. Recognizing the great opportunity this program offered, I wanted to be as prepared as possible to rise to the learning challenges and opportunities.

People made my experience rich in language and culture. On a clear Saturday afternoon I arrived in Strasbourg where I was greeted by my host family, Tatiana, originally from Russia, and her husband, Michel, a retired journalist. These two people would become the two daily constants that allowed me to process my day's activities and

thoughts over a delicious dinner prepared by Tatiana. Another American grant recipient stayed with us as well. Anna and I travelled back and forth to classes together and conversed in French constantly about our lives, our experiences, our plans, etc. This quotidian backdrop to the University program ensured a rich linguistic and culture immersion experience. There were other foreign teachers of French in the program. The majority were American coming from all corners of our country. They provided vital input to our class questions and discussions. Then, there were also our professors. Each one talented, experienced, and committed to developing the best teachers of French possible. They were helpful, encouraging, and resourceful. And finally, the people of Strasbourg graciously shared with us their city and stories.

During our two week program, my colleagues and I attended morning and afternoon classes in language, film, technology, theatre and literature. In addition we visited cultural sites, including the European Parliament and the Council of Europe. During our free time we tasted traditional Alsatian cuisine, visited art and history museums, toured the country side, and of course, shopped.

As a result of this experience, I have begun writing numerous lessons based on my experiences in PowerPoint form so I can show my students how meaningful travel, images and learning can be. The ideas generated through our classes, discussions with our professors, colleagues and host families have given me multiple perspectives to consider, represent and further explore.

In conclusion, I thank you for this incredible opportunity. This experience was made possible for me through your vision and your resources. Your dedication to that vision is exemplary, and as a Chatham teacher I am profoundly grateful.

Very truly yours,

Leslie Travis

Chatham High School