

The Educational Outreach Program Award Towards Excellence

Chicago youth open a window to the world at the Alliance Française

Upon stepping into Room 210 at the Alliance Française on a Tuesday evening, you would be surprised to see an enthusiastic group of Chicago Public School students doing their best to answer questions *en français* with energy and humor. You'd never guess they had already spent a full day at their home high school before traveling from all over the city to make their way to the Alliance. Yet, they come every week with a big smile, a loud "bonjour!", serious dedication and goals in mind.

Becoming global citizens in France and at Concordia...

While the students come every week for different reasons, one thing they have in common is that they embrace a unique opportunity when offered—the opportunity to reach outside their world to discover a new one and in turn, see their own world from a new perspective. Thanks to its generous supporters, the Educational Outreach Program is able to provide this opportunity, and the lessons taught are well worth the effort.

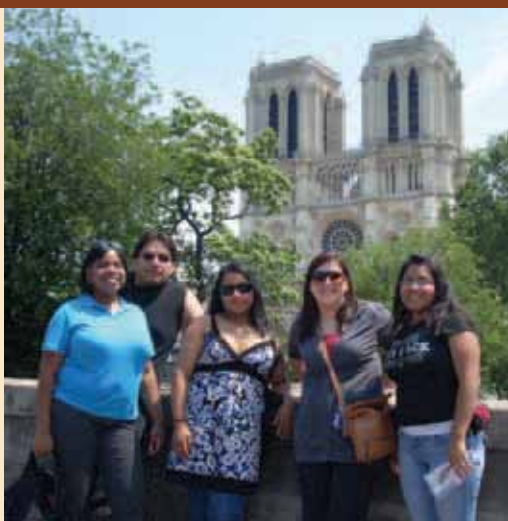
"...even though France and America are different countries, one thing that will never change is that people are people no matter what race or nationality they may be."

2008 scholarship winner

This year, as in previous years since 2001, the Alliance will send a select group of its most dedicated students on an all-expense paid trip to France or Concordia Language Camps in Minnesota. For most of those selected, this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to expand their knowledge, see the world in a new light... and, of course, *parler français*! Weekly classes at the Alliance help prepare the students for their journey.

"Being around native French teachers at the Alliance and hearing them speak helped me understand the French people I met in France. The first day I walked to the gardens of the Tuileries and saw people crowding around a street. I walked up to them and asked "Qu'est-ce qui se passe?" They answered me, and it amazed me that I understood what was going on. A few minutes later a man asked me the same thing and I was able to tell him. I felt so accomplished it made my day."

2008 scholarship winner



From Lafayette to Omaha Beach, friends forever...

After seeing Paris, winners of the 2008 scholarship trip to France ventured to the countryside to see the *châteaux* of the Loire and the beaches of Normandy, where they found an unexpected connection.

"I felt so proud to be American when they played our anthem and raised our flag... it was such an emotional sight to see all the crosses and the stars of David in the cemetery and know that each of those represented a life lost. This trip was an endless discovery."

2008 scholarship winner

A new outlook on life and new cultural ambassadors...

All of the scholarship winners agreed that this opportunity has, in some way, changed their lives.

"This experience is something that I will never forget. I constantly talk about it, and I will share it with my children and grandchildren because it made me discover a new world, new people, new knowledge for me personally and the opportunity to share it with others back home. Not only did I accomplish something personally but I felt like I opened the door for others as well."

2008 scholarship winner

The "Award Towards Excellence" program is an Alliance Française Outreach initiative administered in partnership with the Chicago Public Schools since 1998. The outcomes of this Alliance Program are significant—over 90% of the students in the Award Towards Excellence Program go on to university study.

To learn how you can help support this important Alliance initiative, please contact Jack McCord at 312.337.1070 ext 103.

