Wayne County Community College District
Students Reflect on Study Abroad
Trip to Rome, Italy

By DAVID C. BUTTY

For art lovers and curators, Rome is a cherished place. It is the city of Michelangelo, Raphael, and other world renowned artists whose creations are considered among the greatest works of art ever created. It is a city filled with art and history; where many go to brush up on their ideas and understanding of architecture and design. The arts, the ancient ruins, and everything that the city has to offer moved Tracey Jackson to describe her participation in the Wayne County Community College District’s (WCDCD) recent study abroad trip to Rome, Italy as one she will never forget and will talk about for years to come.

During the trip, her fellow WCDCD schoolmates became her family away from home, and Jackson learned to appreciate her own country more now that she was in a foreign country. “Although it was the rainy season in Rome, the rain did not put a damper on this wondrous educational experience of my lifetime! It was almost as if it were a dream and, when I reflect back on my pictures and videos of the beautiful sites we visited, I still am not quite ready to awaken,” she said.

Jackson was one of 32 students from WCDCD who spent a week of intensive educational and cultural study in Rome as part of the District’s study abroad program. In the past, WCDCD students have visited and studied in Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, The United Kingdom (England), France, Ghana, West Africa, Greece, and India. The trip to Rome was made possible through an educational partnership with Sapienza University, one of Rome’s oldest institutions of higher learning.

“My trip to Rome has enlightened me in so many ways and has afforded me the opportunity to not only see the world in a broader sense but to also change my own world, and my way of thinking as it relates to other cultures. Even though I was not very fluent in the language, I do know that “smiling is certainly universal” and I did a lot of that,” Jackson added.

“I made friends with other students during the trip, too! I feel very special to have been selected to go to Rome. Every day, when I look into my own back yard I know that there is a much bigger yard to explore beyond my own.”

Beyond the accelerated language classes that were a key component of the trip at Sapienza University, students took cultural and historical tours of places such as the Basilica, the Pantheon, St. Peter’s Square, the breath-taking Sistine Chapel, rode the Metro, climbed the Spanish Steps, visited Vatican City, the Trevi Fountain, and the National Gallery of Modern Art among many places.

Victoria S. Loomis said the city and its people captured her enthusiasm. “We walked for hours and hours. It was an unbelievable opportunity to get the real “feel” of Rome. Looking in shop windows, peering through restaurant doors, passing natives on the streets, seeing the very fountains that define Rome, put me in a frame of mind which I have never experienced before. I actually felt that we had turned back the clock and lived a slice of Mona Lisa Contigue, left, Cera McGuffie, Mia Jones, Tracey Jackson, and Miesha Haynes brave the weather during an educational tour.

St. Peter’s Square with the Basilica at the Vatican in the foreground.

A scene from the Vatican Museum.

Group photo at the Roman Forum.
of life before Christ. Although there are many other fascinating places and events, I appreciated being able to study Italian. The classes were intensive but they enabled me to have some sort of a working knowledge and basic communication. We learned a lot in only one week. I know that the three coins I tossed into the Trevi Fountain assure that I will return. I will not only cherish this adventure, I already long to repeat it. Thank you WCCCD for this gift. I will treasure it always."

For Guadalupe Martinez, the art and culture left him with treasured memories. “The art as well as the culture was a major thing that I took away from the trip,” said Martinez. “The whole city itself was a piece of artwork, from the ancient ruins to the modern look of some buildings and transit systems. Rome in any light could be painted and look amazing, with all the fountains, the gardens as well as Spanish Steps and the Coliseum.”

Chesaree Garvin, who had never been on an airplane before said the turbulence was a bit scary. “I clenched to my seat and held onto the closest hand I could grab,” she said. “After a week in Rome, I would say that I discovered that the language was great and the people were very friendly. I had so much fun and cannot thank the college enough for this opportunity.”

The trip overwhelmed Ben Ra-Wright. He writes, “I never thought that I would one day stand at the top of the Spanish Steps and see all of Rome stretched out around me with my own two eyes. I could have never imagined that I would have the privilege to pray in the Vatican and feel the walls of the Coliseum with my own fingertips.”

Annie Kue is thankful for the opportunity. “Personally, it was a wonderful experience I will never forget. Wayne County Community College District has opened a life time door for students such as myself through its study abroad program which allows us to become better students and enlightened human beings. Rome has given me the opportunity to gain knowledge of different things, ideas, lifestyles, and cultures. The study abroad program is important for people like me who would never have had an opportunity to see these great works and understand them without the college’s help. “Thank you, for this great opportunity.”

Buongiorno. Come si chiama? Ciao!