Welcome to the Wayne County Community College District (WCCCD) Division of Study Abroad monthly newsletter; a medium through which students who have participated in the Study Abroad Program share their stories, their experiences and their insights.

Over the years, our Study Abroad Program has touched the lives of more than 500 students who have had the opportunity to travel to more than 20 countries on six of the seven continents.

The past two years have been challenging due to the pandemic, but we hope the time you spent with your family and friends were filled with joy and wellness. The study abroad team welcomes you back as we slowly return to a normal life and wishes you a safe and happy holidays! Please take a moment to enjoy our newsletter with your friends and family.

David C. Butty
Executive Director of WCCCD Study Abroad Program

The WCCCD’s Study Abroad Program allows students to:

• Learn beyond the traditional classroom;
• Gain global learning competency;
• Embrace broad learning in multiple disciplines;
• Gain comfort in working with people from different cultures;
• Hone their listening and communication skills;
• Develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills;
• Learn to be a global leader;

About
STUDY ABROAD

“Nothing is more valuable than giving a student the opportunity to gain language fluency, developing critical intercultural intellectual skills, and forming lifelong connections that span the globe and last a lifetime.”

Irvin P. Jones
Escape Study International

STORYTELLER
Study Abroad

I graduated from Wayne County Community College District’s Dental Hygiene program in 2009 and now teach future dental hygienists in the program from which I graduated. Recently in the summer of 2020, I earned my Master’s degree in Student Affairs from Arkansas State University.

One great memory, among many others during my educational journey at this institution, was earning a Study Abroad scholarship to Paris, France. Experiencing the culture of this beautiful historic city was once in a lifetime. This trip opened my eyes to cultural diversity, which is such an important aspect in today’s and tomorrow’s society.

Holly Hanna | Global Student

Also, this experience enriched my professional career by supplementing my cultural awareness. Lastly, this rare life event afforded me the ability to reflect and share memories for the rest of my life.

I fully support and encourage taking part in this experience because studying abroad contributes a great deal to student development in the higher education experience. A student not only grows personally and academically by seeing foreign cultures, but also develops both socially and professionally.
Valerie J. Kindle | Mayor of Harper Woods

Harper Woods Mayor, Valerie J. Kindle, began her post-secondary education at Wayne County Community College District (WCCCD), years ago. She said, “It was a no-brainer that when I decided to complete my Associate Degree that I would return to WCCCD. Besides being conveniently located in my community and near my job it was a win-win for me,” she said. While at WCCCD, Mayor Kindle majored in Criminal Justices and Business.

“As Mayor for the City Harper Woods, Michigan, by securing my associate degree at WCCCD and my the completion of my bachelor's degree from Ferris State University, I believe had a very significant impact on my ability to serve and lead my city. My business courses assisted me in making sound decisions during these trying economic conditions that so many of our communities are facing. My criminal justice courses help me to deal with the crisis level impact from the pandemic,” she added.

Her memories of WCCCD, she said began with her induction in the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) honors society and staying on the Dean's list. “But what I will always treasure is my Study Aboard Trip to Belize and Guatemala. Can you imagine a community college offering its students an opportunity to visit a foreign country to learn the language and culture? The caring and engagement of my professors made my learning experience top notch. These are the highlights of my educational memories at WCCCD.

Her advice to those aspiring pursuing their post-secondary education is simple. “Never give up and you are never too old to try. Quoting the late South Africa President Nelson Mandela, she added, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

The pandemic not only halted WCCCD’s Study Abroad Program, but also brought every travel abroad to a screeching halt. However, the College was not going to let COVID-19 derail its study abroad program. We had to go virtual as we found a way to still connect our students with the world, this time virtually to Ethiopia. Ethiopian Ambassador Abdulaziz M. Ibrahim, a seasoned diplomat with over 25 years of leadership, addressed more than 100 attendees about his country in the Horn of Africa by giving insights into the social, political, economic, and the diverse cultures of the country.

Corin Halliday, who attended the virtual Study Abroad to Ethiopia, said, “if you had asked me year ago what I thought about Ethiopia, I never would have considered it a tourist destination. But after listening to Mr. Ibrahim, I would be more than happy to visit if ever given the opportunity. It is a complex place enriched in deep culture, with over 80 languages spoken and 200 different dialects, they also have eight different heritage sites recognized by UNESCO. They have their own unique calendar, alphabet, and an array of delicious food!”

Corin added, “Ethiopia is labeled as one of the oldest nations in the world, and it is also known as the home of the first ancestor of humanity, and as the cradle of humankind, according to archeologists. Ethiopia is not only rich in culture, but also in coffee, my personal favorite.”

“For someone who has an interest in history and culture, such as I do, Ethiopia would be a wonderful place to visit,” he continued. “After learning all I did about this beautiful country, I can now look at in terms of the country that was the beginning of everything. Some may even say that, essentially, we are all Ethiopians.”

Avis Robinson, agrees that the virtual Study Abroad to Africa was an eye-opener. “It was very exciting, but I want to go in person. The virtual Africa experience was enough to inspire one to want to actually visit Africa; Ethiopia in particular, because of the beautiful landscapes and incredible cultural diversity. The Ethiopian Ambassador, Abdulaziz M. Ibrahim provided an in-depth lecture on the cultural diversity, educational and political systems, the arts, and languages in one of the largest and oldest countries in the Horn of Africa.”