Study ABROAD

BRING THE WORLD HOME

TRAVEL • EDUCATION • LANGUAGE • CULTURE • DIVERSITY
WAYNE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT .............................................. 1

LOOKING BACK OVER THE YEARS ............................................. 2
  David C. Butty
  Julie Figlioli

STUDY ABROAD AS A PASSPORT TO STUDENT LEARNING .................... 3
  Irv Jones

STUDY ABROAD 2021 ................................................................. 4

MILES TRAVELED ................................................................. 5-6

BELIZE / GUATEMALA • 2013 ...................................................... 7
  Valerie Kindle
  Joseph Figlioli

BEIJING, CHINA • 2018 ............................................................ 13
  Jeanette Jarrell
  Terri Johnston
  Joyce A. Bridges
  Marlene Bailey

COPENHAGEN, DENMARK • 2017 ............................................... 22
  Karisa McNally

PARIS, FRANCE • 2008 ............................................................ 25
  Holly Hanna

MUNICH, GERMANY • 2017 ....................................................... 28
  Gwenette Robinson

ACCRA, GHANA • 2003 .......................................................... 31
  Fateama Carr-Jacobs

DUBLIN, IRELAND • 2016 ......................................................... 34
  Patrick McNally

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO • 2011 .............................................. 37
  Alexis Holmes
  Keiara Younger

SINGAPORE, REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE • 2019 ............................... 42
  Margaret M. Makinwa
  Shantrell Trammell
  Jacara Charles
  Christopher Dyson

BARCELONA, SPAIN • 2011 ....................................................... 51
  Marla J. Edwards-Wheeler

ZURICH, SWITZERLAND • 2014 .................................................. 55
  Elizabeth Babcock
  Rasheeda Morgan

WALES, UNITED KINGDOM • 2016 ............................................. 60
  Flora Kibong

WCCCD STUDY ABROAD FACILITATORS ......................................... 63

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MISSION STATEMENT
Wayne County Community College District’s mission is to empower individuals, businesses, and communities to achieve their higher education and career advancement goals through excellent, accessible, culturally diverse, and globally competitive programs and services.

VISION STATEMENT
Wayne County Community College District will be known as a premier community college and innovator in the areas of high quality academic and career education, talent development in support of regional economic growth, diversity and inclusion, and technological advancement.

STUDY ABROAD MISSION STATEMENT
The mission of the Study Abroad Program is to promote the expansion of international educational opportunities for all underrepresented groups and disciplines, and at non-traditional destinations and to provide the opportunity for students to develop the knowledge, skills, experiences and attitudes to prepare them for the global society of the 21st century.

STUDY ABROAD HIGHLIGHTS
• Wide range of classes taught in English such as art, art history, anthropology, biology, business, communication, cuisine, dance, ecology, economics, education, engineering, health sciences, history, literature, music, tourism, political sciences and many more.
• Experiential learning
• Intensive language classes at a number of levels
• No language requirement
• Internships
• Field studies courses
• Small classes
• Outstanding foreign faculty
• Classes at foreign universities
• Scholarships
• Program organized field trips
• Conversation partners
• Cultural activities

STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM GOALS ARE TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH:
• Quality academic experiences
• Cultural immersion and exchange
• Life-long service learning
• Character development
In this premier edition of the Wayne County Community College District (WCCCD) Study Abroad - Experiencing the World: Stories from Afar magazine, we ask our students who have participated in the program to offer their reflections and how study abroad is impacting their social and professional lives.

As for me, looking back over the years seems like yesterday when we made our maiden trip to Ghana, West Africa. I have a lot of stories to reflect on as I think of each of the countries that have helped our students to become global citizens.

I believe that every student should study abroad because I believe that globalization is here to stay. Directing the WCCCD’s Study Abroad Program has taught me to be humble and proud. The Program has opened my eyes to the world beyond my African village of Jakakehn, Liberia, West Africa. I believe that it has opened the eyes of our students beyond the border of the United States of America to a new horizon by exposing them to different languages, music, the arts, and helping them to become global citizens.

Sometimes people ask me if I have a favorite country. The answer I give them is that whether you live in Sydney, Australia; Salzburg, Austria; Mumbai, India; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Zurich, Switzerland; Accra, Ghana; Beijing, China; Athens, Greece; Rome, Italy; Dublin, Ireland; or Singapore, Singapore, we all belong to the same world.

Studying abroad gives students the opportunity to experience another culture, learn a new language, and interact with people from other countries. It teaches them to appreciate differences and diversities firsthand, and enables them to dismiss stereotypes and learn how to interact with people from other countries and cultures.

I like to thank our students, who, despite the hardship imposed on everyone by the COVID-19 pandemic, are able to share their stories in this international student literary publication. I ask you to follow our students and their experiences from their study abroad journeys made possible by WCCCD.

Thank you!
David C. Butty
Executive Director of WCCCD’s Study Abroad Program

Before coming to WCCCD I worked in the airline industry for 15 years. So when I was approached to be a facilitator for WCCCD’s Study Abroad Program, I was excited and nervous at the same time.

I was going to be flying to countries that I had only dreamed about to be responsible for a group of students from every walk of life. I was anxious to start my new responsibility!

There is a lot of work that goes into preparing for a trip. It requires organization, trust and patience.

From preparing the students, whom may have never been on an airplane, to collecting all the necessary documentation required, to learning about a new culture.

The best part is getting to know our diverse students and building relationships with them before we even leave. To this day, I still keep in contact with so many of our students who are now married and have children, and working in their field of study. I am just so proud of them; I feel like they are my own children, regardless if some are older than I am.

I take great pride in being part of this team and representing our college abroad.

Julie Figlioli
Study Abroad Facilitator
As Founder and President of Escape Study International, I have always wanted to share my knowledge of this complex world with college students who would benefit from my experiences as an airline executive. I have traveled the world and interacted with many global cultures, families, governments, and leaders of foreign countries.

In 2000, my company Escape Study International, began a partnership with Wayne County Community College District (WCCCD). Our objective was to launch an international study program that would offer life-changing experiences for our students while promoting intercultural understanding, cultural diversity, enlightened nationalism, as well as creating institutional relationships.

Research conducted by NAFSA: Association of International Educators has shown that students who have participated in studying abroad have better grades, experience less attrition, and graduate from college at higher rates than students who have never studied abroad.

I am committed to fulfilling the District’s goals and objectives of creating international education opportunities for WCCCD students. In partnership with WCCCD, I want to ensure students obtain instruction in the respective foreign country’s language, understand cultural norms and intercultural awareness, and develop cross-cultural competencies for WCCCD students.

When students return from their study abroad journeys, they tell fascinating stories of their experiences. They say their experiences are ‘transformational’ and have helped them gain new maturity and independence. Their studying abroad has also helped them develop a better understanding of their passions and long-term goals. They share a confidence that they are better prepared to meet the challenges of college matriculation and the responsibilities of life in general.

My sincere desire is that you embrace the testimonies of our students as they share their study abroad experiences in this publication. I have found over the past twenty years working with WCCCD students, that there is nothing 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 lasts a lifetime.

Thank you!

Irv Jones
Founder and President
Escape Study International
STUDENTS HAVE EXPLORED OVER 20 COUNTRIES THROUGH WCCCD’S STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM!

COMING 2021

Thailand

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL 313-496-2526
MILES FROM DETROIT (DTW) ROUND TRIP:

- Buenos Aires, Argentina: 11,040
- Sydney, Australia: 18,956
- Vienna, Austria: 9,018
- Belize City, Belize: 3,520
- São Paulo, Brazil: 10,188
- Beijing, China: 13,252
- San Jose, Costa Rica: 4,464
- Copenhagen, Denmark: 8,860
- Paris, France: 7,884
- Munich, Germany: 8,638
- Accra, Ghana: 11,196
- Athens, Greece: 10,492
- Guatemala: 3,922
- Mumbai, India: 15,886
- Dublin, Republic of Ireland: 6,948
- Rome, Italy: 9,232
- Guanajuato, Mexico: 2,574
- Amsterdam, The Netherlands: 7,852
- San Juan, Puerto Rico: 3,844
- Singapore, Republic of Singapore: 20,980
- Barcelona, Spain: 8,392
- Geneva, Switzerland: 8,376
- Swansea, Wales, United Kingdom: 7,182

WCCCD Study Abroad Trips from 2003 – 2020
BELIZE / GUATEMALA
2013
EDUCATIONAL PARTNER: MIXIMO NIVEL INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE CENTER
Have you ever ridden a horse up a mountain? Well, I have and I’d like to tell you how this happened. In the fall of 2013, Dr. Sandra Robinson, who was the Provost for the Mary Ellen Stempfle University Center of Wayne County Community College District at the time, asked me to stop in to see her after my class. After class I stopped in her office, and the first thing she asked me was, “Did I have a passport?” I said yes, having no idea where she was going with this. Her next question was, “Would you like to go on a study abroad trip?”

As it turned out, Dr. Robinson wanted me to represent the Mary Ellen Stempfle University Center for the Study Abroad Trip. The trip was to Belize and Guatemala; we would travel during the holiday break from school, for seven days. I agreed to be the representative for the Mary Ellen Stempfle University Center, and Dr. Robinson submitted my name immediately.

The Friday after Thanksgiving, we were on our way to Central America! We would travel from Detroit to Dallas, Texas; from Dallas to Belize; from Belize to Antigua, Guatemala; and then to Antigua.

I was very excited about my trip, especially since I had never traveled to Central America before. I was in awe of each country and really appreciated the freedoms we have here in United States. We stayed in Antigua, Guatemala, where we also went to school during the trip.

But let me tell you about my horse ride. We were touring ancient Mayan sites by van, and we were also going to look at a volcano. I just assumed that we would continue to view the volcano in the vans. Much to my surprise, when we got to the mountain, there were men with horses waiting for us. I didn’t want anyone else to know my fear; I haven’t ridden a horse since I was a teenager. Now, here I am thousands of miles from home, facing a real dilemma. Do I ride the horse or do I walk back?

Mr. David Butty, along with Julie Figlioli and Beverly Paddock who were our chaperones for the trip, were trying to get everyone lined up to ride the horses. I was trying to figure out a way that I would not have to get on a horse. Mr. Butty saw that I wasn’t in line to get on a horse and called out to me. I told him that I was deathly afraid of riding a horse and that I needed to find another way to get to the mountain top or to return to the vans, only to notice that the vans were gone.

Now what was I to do? I really wanted to cry, but I didn’t want to embarrass myself. Mr. Butty told me that he would ride along side of me to reassure me that the horse wouldn’t run away with me. Well I really didn’t have much of a choice; I could either ride the horse or stay on the mountain side until someone could come back to get me. With Mr. Butty’s encouragement, I finally got on the horse. So that is how I rode a horse up the mountainside of a volcano in Guatemala.

The 2013 Study Abroad Trip through WCCCD was a life enlightening experience. This was the first time that I had traveled to Belize, Guatemala, and El Salvador. After my trip, I had a better understanding of the devastating poverty that is present in those countries, and why they will walk thousands of miles to get to the United States. I have a better outlook on immigration.
GLOBAL STUDENT:

Valerie Kindle
WCCCD Alumni (now Mayor of the city of Harper Woods)

continued
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- Valerie Kindle
I went on the Study Abroad Trip in 2013, and we visited Belize and Guatemala. I was scared at first to experience a new culture and language barriers, but the overall experience was amazing. I am very interested in architecture and the buildings were very beautiful. When walking around the cobblestone streets, you see all the different styles of buildings. They range from modern to colorful older buildings with traditional Latin architecture that you can greatly appreciate. I really admired the amount of work put in to restoring and bringing the grand glory back.

Another thing that I admired was how proud they are of their culture. I walked around the bazaar where they had a lot of handmade items which were all so colorful. When we stayed there, we learned salsa dancing which was hard. I really enjoyed the traditional food we ate, as well. We went to the countryside to a coffee bean farm. Everything was at a much slower pace with everyone walking from place to place. There were cool little stands on the side of the roads. This experience has taught me that there is another way of life out there. We are used to everything being commercial and so fast paced. This trip taught me to slow down and take in the different cultures. Many people often overlook how beautiful other cultures really are. I feel that many people in America should learn about other cultures because this experience has opened my eyes and increased my respect for other cultures.
I feel that many people in America should learn about other cultures because this experience has opened my eyes...

- Joseph Figlioli
BEIJING, CHINA
2018
EDUCATIONAL PARTNER: UNION UNIVERSITY OF BEIJING, CHINA (COLLEGE OF TOURISM)
I am the oldest of six children. I am a mother, a grandmother, and a great-grandmother. I am a proud graduate of Detroit Public Schools, and a proud alumna of WCCCD. I am now a student at Wayne State University in the Honor’s College pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts, with a focus in Photography.

When you have come upon a certain age like me, you feel as though you have lived all the life you had coming. I have gone a long way in the pursuit of my education, even to the point of beating death in the process. I have challenges that are debilitating at times, but lying in bed wasn’t helping either, so I returned to school.

As a young girl and the eldest, my father, who only had a third-grade education, placed emphasis on our getting at least a high school education. At that time high school graduates were not that common, but having a diploma guaranteed your placement in a high paying blue-collar job.

The auto plants allowed me to earn good money right out of high school, and I was able to help the family, but I still never had enough to help myself. I learned and repeated, as many of us do, the lessons of family over everything, or no one is left behind. I repeat these lessons with my grandchildren. We can only give to our families what we have experienced, and while we want them to do better than ourselves, we don’t always have the tools, skills, or information to guide them.

I aged, and became unemployable in the areas for which I had trained, or had experience in. My ability to walk or stand for long periods of time affected my quality of life, until WCCCD came into my life. I was scared, having not attended classes in over 40 years. Shortly after I registered, my son and my mom were diagnosed with their own specific mental health issues. This again was a challenge; do I do what is best for me or do I leave school to attend to the needs of the family? I chose to do both to the best of my ability by the grace of God. I have excelled despite the fear, anxiety, and the constant pain of my own physical situation.

The reward for perseverance was the trip to Beijing, China. I wrestled with the fear of my condition causing havoc (it did), the fear of my son having an episode and I not being here to help as much as any parent can (he did not), and the fear that something might happen to my mom in my absence (she was fine and celebrated another birthday).

The trip was necessary for both me and my child. It showed us that our control over anything is limited. A power greater than I allowed me to keep up as well as I did. A power greater than us kept him from having an episode while I was gone. A power greater than I took me to China, where I walked, talked, and roomed with people I had not met before. Many of us had the same concerns, or conditions. The younger people took care to include me as much as they could, and those of us with similar situations looked after each other when we had to slow down a bit.

This experience to China was beyond any dream I have ever had for myself. I am thankful to WCCCD and the many people that helped make this possible for me; that believed in my ability and worthiness. I am hoping this gift will help me to continue to share with the youth around me the necessity to push past fear and open oneself to engage with a stranger.
This experience was beyond any dream I have ever had for myself, so I am thankful to WCCCD and the many people that helped make this possible for me.

- Jeanette Jarrell
I’m 32 years old and studying Mortuary Science. I was just accepted into Wayne State University and am beyond excited! I have a 13-year old son, and we love to go hiking, kayaking, and fishing whenever possible. I’m an avid traveler and want to see as much of the world as possible. I’m always looking for my next adventure and try to just go with the flow.

Traveling to China had always been a dream of mine. Seeing the culture firsthand, eating the authentic cuisine, learning more about the people, and especially being able to see and walk the Great Wall of China. When I found out I was accepted to take part of the Study Abroad program, I cried tears of joy. I felt so absolutely incredibly lucky. The entire experience was a whirlwind of emotions, and I ended up making some really great friends during the trip.

One thing that has stuck with me from the entire experience, aside from how absolutely exhausting it actually was to climb the Great Wall, was the people there. They were all so welcoming and warm. They were just as excited about us being there as we were to be there. Our tour guide Jason mentioned to us that for a lot of the people in China, it was their first time ever seeing Americans. Our skin color and even our different hair colors were just absolutely shocking to them in a good way. Families would come up to us, place their babies into our arms, and ask us to take pictures with them so they could remember meeting us. You just don’t experience that type of trust, warmness, kindness, and even genuine happiness here in the U.S. Everyone there was so kind, and even though a lot of people say that they have it a lot worse than we do here in the U.S., I feel as if they are so much more abundantly richer than us in many other ways. I absolutely loved their way of life; the respect they have for each other, and their family values. Every time I think back to my time in Beijing, I can’t help but smile and wish I could be back there again. I feel my experience has further opened my eyes and my mind to being even more aware, understanding, and accepting of cultural differences. I truly appreciate and treasure my experience there; the knowledge Jason gave us about the history and way of life and the friendships I have made. The trip helped further shape me as the person I am.
I feel my experience has further opened my eyes and my mind to being even more aware, understanding, and accepting of cultural differences.

- Terri Johnston
GLOBAL STUDENT:

Joyce A. Bridges

I am 69 years old, was born in Detroit, Michigan, and have three adult children. For 32 years, I worked as a Family Independence Specialist for the State of Michigan and have retired. I have an Associate degree in Fashion Design and am currently attending WCCCD to earn an Associate in Business Administration. My desire is to become an entrepreneur in fashion and to design fashionable mastectomy bras.

Throwing caution to the wind, I went to Beijing! As a senior student with degenerative arthritis, I was not sure that I was going to make walking through Tiananmen Square. However, I continued on the journey gazing at the beautiful architectural relics, some dating back to the 1400s. I was amazed at the rich color and beauty of the Imperial Palaces and Tombs of Ming and Qing dynasties. While going through The Temple of Heaven and watching in awe the people playing cards, seeing the Summer Palace, and later going to the Great Wall of China, I realized this experience was responsible for the many creative thoughts going through my mind.

As a Fashion Design and Business student, Beijing, China, offered a shopping experience never to be forgotten. The experience of bartering with retailers to purchase their goods, watching the process of silk being made from the worm into bedding and other beautiful and colorful silk products was so exciting and academically fulfilling to me as fashion design student. Beijing was packed full of numerous educational and cultural experiences.

“The Bridge to Your Educational Experience in Beijing,” was a wonderful experience into how people of another culture strive to make a decent living. It taught me that, being pushy and overbearing is not the necessity in life; it is one’s perseverance. This international experience has contributed to my growth academically (perseverance), professionally (different retail habits in another country), and personally (we all need each other as I made it through Tiananmen Square with the assistance of a gentleman from Beijing).
As a Fashion Design and Business student, Beijing, China offered a shopping experience never to be forgotten.

- Joyce Bridges
I am a student at Wayne County Community College District currently pursuing a Certificate of Photography and an Associate of Arts degree. I have never met a stranger and have a passion for travel, as well as learning about people and their cultures. I am equally as passionate about photography and have traveled to many stunning locations for photo shoots. I enjoy portraits, landscapes, and night photography. I also combine my love for children and photography by volunteering at the Seventh Generation’s annual Christmas Celebration for foster kids, where I photograph the children with Santa.

Throughout my lifetime, I’ve had a fear of heights and flying. I knew at some point I would have to overcome these fears since I’ve always had a deep desire to travel to foreign countries to experience the cultures and to see how others lived. The Study Abroad trip to Beijing, China, was just the opportunity that I needed to conquer my fears. I was taught that there is nothing to fear but fear itself. I knew it was nothing but God who presented me with this chance to face my fear of flying so that I could experience the Chinese culture and its people.

During the flight to China, I thought about how great it would be to experience the culture, see the Great Wall of China, and the infamous Tiananmen Square. Our group had a phenomenal tour guide named Jason who explained Beijing’s culture to us daily. On one outing, he told us about the Chinese government’s one-child policy. Being a mother of three, that really touched my heart and stayed with me. He went on to explain that the policy had been changed a few years before to two children if the first child was a girl.

I’m grateful that the study abroad program allowed me to conquer my fear and fulfill my lifelong dream of traveling to another country to learn its culture and people. It was interesting to learn about the Chinese quota for the number of children per family.
The study abroad trip to Beijing, China was just the opportunity that I needed to conquer my fears.

- Marlene Bailey
I studied Dental Hygiene at WCCCD and graduated in August 2018. After graduation, I worked as a pediatric dental hygienist for one year until the birth of my daughter, Emilia. In my free time, I enjoy reading books and traveling.

In November 2017, I traveled to Copenhagen, Denmark, with the WCCCD Study Abroad Program and found a love for European cities. I can't wait to travel again and visit more beautiful places. I was newly married, halfway through the Dental Hygiene program, and it was my first time traveling outside North America. As the trip neared, I became very nervous. I am a shy person. I knew a few classmates who were also going on the trip, but aside from them, I was traveling with a bunch of strangers to a new country.

Once we were in Copenhagen, we toured many historical sites including castles and churches. Since history is my favorite subject, I was able to connect and bond with other students on the trip who also loved history. On the bus and at dinner, we would discuss our favorite part of the day and things we learned about the Danish culture. This helped me to relax and enjoy myself more.

Another aspect of the trip I was nervous about was the language barrier. I quickly learned that most people in Denmark learn English at a young age. This made it easier to communicate when shopping for souvenirs and ordering food. I also made sure to learn common words and phrases in Danish such as tak (thank you) and farvel (goodbye), which made me more comfortable.

I learned so much about the Danish culture while studying abroad and saw amazing sites including Christiansborg Palace and The Round Tower. In addition to this, I also learned a lot about myself and how to step out of my comfort zone. I learned to communicate when there is a language barrier and how to connect with people when I don’t know them very well. These skills have helped me in both my professional life as a Dental Hygienist and my personal life when traveling to new places.
On the bus and at dinner, we would discuss our favorite part of the day and things we learned about the Danish culture.

- Karisa McNally
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. I enjoy delivering quality dental care to patients who have become like family. Recently in the summer of 2020, I earned my Master degree in Student Affairs from Arkansas State University. Beyond dentistry, my passion extends to my involvement in the American Legion, a U.S. Veteran’s Association.

Many people fall short of saying they relish school considering all the hard work and long days that come along with it. However, I can honestly say that I enjoyed and appreciated the Dental Hygiene program at WCCCD’s Northwest campus.

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. Also, this experience enriched my professional career by supplementing my cultural awareness. We visited many iconic landmarks including the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre Museum, and the Notre-Dame Cathedral. Observing Paris’s unique architecture and civilization supplemented my dental hygiene education and career to come. Lastly, this rare life event afforded me the ability to reflect and share memories for the rest of my life.

When my student career concluded at WCCCD, I had a revelation. My desire for dental hygiene grew to more than just clinical dental hygiene in a private practice setting. Just before finishing my bachelor degree at Siena Heights University, I received an opportunity to teach dental hygiene right here at WCCCD, my alma mater. My transition from undergraduate student to faculty was quick. It was quite the change of pace, but I felt comfortable and right at home. That exciting time was nine years ago and that joy for teaching continues today.

Every year, many of our students participate in WCCCD’s Study Abroad opportunity. 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. Studying abroad expands a student’s worldview, develops foreign language skills, builds an international resume, and increases social interactions. I was lucky enough to be awarded this opportunity as a student, so it is fulfilling to see today’s students also benefiting from this great experience. This endeavor supplements an overall college experience, which ultimately leads to a more successful student.
This endeavor supplements an overall college experience, which ultimately leads to a more successful student.

- Holly Hanna
MUNICH, GERMANY
2017
EDUCATIONAL PARTNER: EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL, MUNICH GROUP
I am a 56-year old African American woman, and I attended Wayne County Community College District in the fall of 2013 studying Foodservice Management because cooking is my passion. As a young lady, I can remember my mother saying to me, “Baby, go to college.” I heard her voice playing in my ear over and over again. Thirty years later, not only did I honor my mother's wish, but I made myself proud as well. The unfortunate thing is my mother passed before I completed my dream.

As time passed, I learned about the work study program and this life changing event put me in a position to travel abroad to Germany in 2016. I would have never been able to experience such a trip like that, if it had not been for the WCCCD’s Study Abroad program. For the first time in my life, I traveled outside the country on one of the biggest planes I had ever seen. Upon our arrival, we were met by a tour guide who took great care of us.

One of the main highlights was hearing about King Ludwig II and visiting the Neuschwanstein Castle. The castle was beautiful. One of the rooms was furnished in gold, one was full of beautiful paintings, and one room had a floor with a dining room table on it that was lowered down empty and rose up full of food. I thought that was neat.
One of the main highlights was hearing about King Ludwig II and visiting the Neuschwanstein Castle. The castle was beautiful...

- Gwenette Robinson
In July of 2003, I had the pleasure of being one of the first pioneers for WCCCD’s Study Aboard. We traveled to West Africa with our destination being Ghana. After getting over the shock of a 17-hour flight, I was excited to touch down in Africa. I did what I saw others doing as they departed the plane by kissing my hands, touching the ground, and saying, “Welcome home.”

Our guide was Sunseekers Tours who had an astounding and educational tour planned for our arrival. Akwaaba! Which is welcome in Ghana, where people pride themselves on their hospitality. Here, we visited the sensational Accra, Kumasi, Cape Coast Castle, W.E.B Dubois grave site, and numerous historical museums.

The most memorable moment is when we arrived at the Cape Coast Castle, one of about forty “slave castles” or large commercial forts built on the Gold Coast of West Africa (now Ghana) by European traders. Inside this Castle is where slaves were kept until shipped away from their homes. I remember walking through the holding cells and looking at images the slaves had carved or painted on the walls. I remember comforting Mary Jones who broke down in tears as she looked upon the “Door of No Return,” where the slaves would be chained and taken through leading them to the waterfront. This marked the last memory slaves had of their homeland before being shipped off across the Atlantic, never to return. There was a very spiritual and powerful force moving through me, one I’ve never felt before.
I was excited to touch down in Africa, and did what I saw others doing as they departed the plane--by kissing my hands and touching the ground and saying, “Welcome home.”

- Fateama Carr-Jacobs
DUBLIN, IRELAND
2016
EDUCATIONAL PARTNER: ARCADIA UNIVERSITY & TRINITY COLLEGE
I am 26-years old and work for the City of Westland as a Heavy Equipment Mechanic. I went on the Study Abroad 2016 trip to Ireland when I was 22-years old and finished my associate degree the same semester I went on the trip.

There isn’t one experience for me that stands out the most but instead, there are two experiences. The first of these experiences was the Cliffs of Moher excursion, and the second was the time spent visiting the pubs throughout Dublin with the close group of friends that formed on the trip. Both of these experiences brought me the same desire to continue traveling throughout the world but for different reasons.

The Cliffs helped me see the amount of awe-inspiring beauty that this world holds and how little of it I’ve actually seen, which has inspired me to find a way to see more of it. There was this moment when we had been walking through the super dense fog for a while and as we got to the top of one of the peaks on the Cliffs, the fog was gone. You could see everything; the water, the Cliffs, and the immense amount of green everywhere. It was absolutely amazing.

The time spent visiting the pubs helped me realize how much fun you can have just people watching and experiencing the way other cultures spend their time. From my point of view, we had an amazing time talking to people from all different backgrounds, having fun with them, dancing, and watching the live music performers. All in all, the study abroad trip brought me a sense of wonder as to what there truly is to experience in this world, and I think I’ll be forever grateful for that.
“...we had an amazing time talking to people from all different backgrounds, just having fun with them, dancing and watching the live music.”

- Pat McNally
What really stuck out to me during the Study Abroad trip to San Juan, Puerto Rico, was the exposure to foreign languages and cultures; the opportunity to learn the language and immerse myself in cultural experiences.

I had the opportunity to study Spanish at the University of Puerto Rico College. We were taught the basics of how to speak and write in Spanish. The funniest thing during my learning experience was trying to analyze each other’s mistakes while we learned the Spanish language. We were mispronouncing the letters of the alphabet and some of the words that were being taught. For example, the instructor asked me in Spanish what I thought Puerto Ricans ate. I said ‘mariposas’ which means butterflies. I had meant to say ‘mariscos’ which means seafood or shellfish. This made the entire class laugh.

I had also learned that the Puerto Ricans were Caribbean people who were self-defined as a mixture of Taínos, Africans, and Spanish. Their first influence in the Puerto Rican culture was the Spanish culture. Taínos were Amerindians who occupied the island before European domination came about. The Study Abroad program has really opened my eyes to wanting to travel and to learn about other cultures. It also taught me that education is not limited and how important it is.

This trip encouraged me to look at things differently through education and to learn about other cultures and places. The Study Abroad program gave me the ability to learn hands-on, and not just through text books. This program not only educates you, but gives you a chance to see things differently and have a hands-on experience.

Thank you once again!
I had also learned that the Puerto Ricans were Caribbean people who were self-defined as a mixture of Tainos, Africans, and Spanish mixed.

- Alexis Holmes
In November of 2011, I was afforded the amazing opportunity to study aboard in the beautiful region of Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico is a visually gorgeous island full of diverse culture, history, breathtaking architectural structures, and some of the most amazing food!

We had an amazing opportunity to attend classes at their local university. We learned how to speak and write grammatically correct, gender appropriate, sentences in Spanish. This experience has definitely helped expand my cultural competency by increasing my understanding of the Puerto Rican culture. I’ve taken Spanish courses in the past, but it didn’t compare to learning the beautiful language from a native in a region where Spanish is their first language! I have attended and currently work for WCCCD, which is a culturally diverse college. I was eager to communicate with my Hispanic co-workers in Spanish after my study abroad experience. They were impressed with my understanding and pronunciation of the Spanish words.

One of the most memorable areas we visited while in Puerto Rico was the El Yunque tropical rain forest. I really don’t consider myself to be an outdoorsy individual or nature enthusiast, but our visit to El Yunque gave me an enlightened perspective on the true, uncontaminated beauty of nature. The exotic plants and flowers were some of the most beautiful I had ever seen. I remember our tour guide identified a flower which is used to make the luxury perfume, Chanel No. 5. Many of ladies were fascinated by this fact.

I can recall gazing at a fairly large waterfall and feeling the mist of the waterfall on my skin. Our tour guide expressed that this particular waterfall was once believed to be the “Fountain of Youth.” Many of my classmates instantly began drinking the water after learning that fact. We were surrounded by a masterpiece that only God could create. I want to thank Wayne County Community College District for allowing and implementing such a great program. Many of us would not have had the opportunity to study abroad and experience the wonders and beauties of other countries without a program such as this. I am thankful for being selected to experience the beautiful island of Puerto Rico.
Puerto Rico is a visually gorgeous island full of diverse culture, history, breathtaking architectural structures, and some of the most amazing food!

- Keiara Younger
In this reflection essay, I like to re-affirm, that WCCCD is a college that encourages and offers students the opportunity to go and study other cultures abroad for a short time. It is amazing to realize what one can learn and experience in staying one week in Singapore.

First and foremost, I must state the permanent effect the 2019 Study Abroad Program has had on me. We visited the Singapore Botanic Gardens, where I was shocked to see an important leaf-plant. The leaf-plant was the least of what I expected to find in a faraway land like Singapore. The leaves are mostly used to wrap food in West Africa, and especially in Nigeria. Although, this leaf is not edible because the texture is harder than most vegetables, the leaf gives a tint of chlorophyll, and a fascinating aroma to food. It would be a breakthrough if this leaf-plant could be cultivated in America, to substitute the use of aluminum foil which research has proven to be the source of so many terminal diseases. I have plans to make proposals for the cultivation and production of the noble plant after my program.

Another amazing place we visited, where I had the beautiful experience of walking through, opportunity to eat, and to shop, was Chinatown. China street market in Singapore is another place that could only be compared to semi-open and open markets in Africa. Some items have price tags; while other items one can bargain prices. However, the street scene food in Chinatown is absolutely amazing and surprisingly cheap. Chinatown is the perfect place to taste the most delicious and authentic Singaporean street food. Electronics, clothing, and jewelry was also priced low compared to pricey things in other parts of the world, especially in America.

It is also worthy to mention my visit to the Supertree Grove Light Show which was simply mesmerizing. I visited this wonderland on the eve of our departure from Singapore and felt like I stepped into some kind of fairy tale arena when I got there. The futuristic looking Marina Bay Super-trees, which looked like mushrooms, lit up in fabulous ways in rhythm with beautiful music. Every detail was perfectly tuned to create an atmosphere that gave a fantastic feeling of wonder to stimulate the mind.

In conclusion, the Study Abroad program to Singapore has opened my inner eyes to a venture, developing a proposal to cultivate that leaf-plant in America, which I can dabble into after my graduation. This would be my contribution to saving lives by introducing the use of this natural leaf to the food industry. In addition to the new life experiences in Singapore, I made long-lasting new friends.
It is amazing to realize what one can learn and experience in one week of stay in Singapore.

- Margaret M. Makinwa
The Wonderful Adventure to Singapore! Oh, how I miss this most magnificent, amazing, beautiful country. I cannot believe I had the opportunity to see and receive so many blessings from this trip. I am so thankful and grateful for WCCCD providing me the opportunity to experience such an amazing adventure that I was anxious to take by myself. I am grateful that I went and faced my fears.

I love how Singapore was so diverse and how they embraced and respected other cultures throughout their country. We visited so many places, and I learned about their history and gained knowledge on this trip. The people and our hotel experience was amazing and they were so generous to us being that we were from a different country.

The food was so amazing, as well as the fresh fruit. I was even surprised that they had different varieties of vegan foods! How amazing that I could eat different types of vegetables and step out of my comfort zone. Singapore taught me that it’s okay to try new things and venture out sometimes.

The different shopping malls were beautiful. The CapitaLand Mall was so large they had many levels and a lot of stores ranging from Prada, Nike, Fendi and many more.

The National Orchid Garden is where I learned about the Singapore Orchid, which made me want to study Botany and learn the history and how to treat plants if they are exposed to disease. After admiring the herbal teas we were drinking on this trip, I became more involved with herbal plants and studied to get my herbalist certificate.

I really enjoyed my trip to Singapore and one day would like to invest in Singapore herbal teas and own some property, as well. Overall, I want to learn more about Singapore since my adventure. I am blessed and grateful for this most amazing experience.
The food was so amazing as well as the fresh fruit...I was even surprised that they had a different variety of vegan food.

- Shantrell Trammell
I was born in Detroit, Michigan and am currently 20 years old. I am finishing my last year of Digital Media Production at Wayne County Community College District. After WCCCD, I’m hoping to enter into the film aspect and transfer to a 4-year university, and minor in business as well. I would like to be a director for TV shows, music videos, and film, along with writing for my career.

When I think back to the week in Singapore, I remember how much I grew in that week as a person. You start to see how the world presents you little gifts to look back on to show you that with time, you have to take it easy on yourself, remind yourself that you are one person, and it’s okay to enjoy things for yourself.

When I tell people about my adventures in Singapore, I always start off by saying how I felt bad for the first two days because I was tired from the long flight. But after everything I’ve seen there, it doesn’t compare to the laughs I’ve shared with my roommates, Cece and Saleh, up until the moment we went our separate ways at the airport. In Singapore when I was getting my henna design, the lady who was doing the design was surprised, though not in a bad way, that we were all friends. I remember the feeling of guilt of not getting to know them prior to the trip, but it was all made up for it later. People like that are hard to find.

Coming home from the trip made me realize something I was right about all along. This state, that I love to call home, is too small for someone like me. I was born to see this big world and learn new things despite what people might think. A wise person once said, “If your dreams don’t scare you, they aren’t big enough.” I learned that with time, growth doesn’t have to come quickly. You can’t push something that’s bound to come. You can’t just trust it. You have to take a risk with it.
When I think back to the week of being in Singapore, I remember how much I’ve grown in that week as a person.

- Jacara Charles
I could not imagine having to wear an electronic monitor. Yet, that is one of the current requirements in Singapore. Due to concerns over the spread of the Coronavirus, COVID-19, Singapore is requiring all returning citizens and visitors to wear electronic monitors upon arrival, along with quarantine. The country has been at the forefront of tracking and tracing the virus, along with managing the virus spread. These measures are in line with how the country manages society.

From the moment that our 2019 Study Abroad group landed at the airport in Singapore, I realized that every aspect of our existence while there was being monitored by the government. As an American, I tend to be weary of government encroaching on what is considered a right to privacy. We challenge the notion of “Big Brother.” To my surprise, I was not bothered by these policies. Instead, I embraced the feeling of safety that was the outcome of these practices. I believe that the basis of society in Singapore is a strict moral code which allows for the people to welcome and embrace government surveillance.

I realized that I never saw any law enforcement while visiting Singapore. Our guide instructed us that the country focuses on the use of closed-circuit television (CCTV) to monitor behavior. Most aspects of life are monitored by this method. CCTV is used in all public spaces, public transit, traffic management, and at the borders. In addition, internet and telephone usage is often monitored.

As I strolled down the street, I saw people gathered in designated smoking areas. Anyone failing to adhere to that law, will receive a fine in the mail. The citizens support and believe that this is the best approach to keep the country safe and orderly. As I recall traveling through one of the most beautiful and exciting cities that I have ever visited, I realized that opulence and wealth were on full display. The modern skyline, punctuated by the manicured streets, helped to make each day a wonderful experience. Singapore’s standard of living is second only to Switzerland in the world. I witnessed the wealth in their public housing, libraries, museums, and the haute-couture shopping districts. My understanding of their culture and their commitment to their moral values, as well as the societal harmony monitored by surveillance, allows for Singapore to thrive.
I believe that the basis of society in Singapore is a strict moral code which allows for the people to welcome and embrace government surveillance.

- Christopher Dyson
BARCELONA, SPAIN
2011
EDUCATIONAL PARTNER: DON QUIXOTE SCHOOL OF SPANISH
GLOBAL STUDENT:

Marla J. Edwards-Wheeler
WCCCD Alumni (now Member of WCCCD Board of Trustees)

By being chosen and accepted to participate in the Study Abroad program was much more than a trip. Traveling abroad is without a doubt one of the best decisions I made for my life. It offered supplementary benefits that have enhanced my life, improved my college experience, and enriched my purpose and thirst for life.

Visiting the most fascinating structure in downtown, the Barcelona Cathedral, and its huge square in the center marking the pathway to the bustling crowd in Gothic Quarter, was breathtaking to say the least and the highlight of my trip. The unfinished exterior sparked hope for my fragile outward shell of a person and awakened the endless possibilities that I had compartmentalized as my ending life story.

As I gazed intently at the magnificent scenery, and people that were just as amazed as I was, I knew this was life changing for me. Reflecting and embarking on the internal journey that loosened the tied-up feelings of a fading destiny, and the sensation that this would be the last big thing I would do, was imperative to make the most of this trip. Fortunately, this was not how it ended for me. I would describe the choice of being part of the Study Abroad program as energetic.

Although the choice to attend this trip called for a balancing act of my college and personal life, the staff, fellow students, and Barcelonans made it worth it. Believe me, it was not always an easy task to manage with unexpected experiences and health challenges.

The international trip offered the opportunity to view cultural discovery, learning through bridged partnerships with distinguished host institutions, and hospitality that surpassed my understanding. The detailed planning for our educational journey began with a shared interest in how to connect our cultures’ learning experiences to a high-impact experience of two or more cultures. The socially interactive participation extensively addressed my desire for advanced academic challenges and created long-term relationships with individuals I met while traveling. Being presented with the different...
global business climates piqued my interest to inquire more, listen intensely on purpose, and watch with enthusiasm and concern economic, social, major political interest, and cultural issues that dominate some of our main agendas facing the world.

The cuisine further educated my palate and introduced fresh perspectives of learning beyond the culture of American traditions of cooking and dining. The rich mix of cultural influences was enhanced in the diversity, various dishes, presentation, and language spoken. The unusual blend of spices created a robust explosion. Offering my limited amount of Spanish, I replied “muchas gracias” as they bestowed additional portions of food. What was presented as traditional food from Barcelona turned out to be much more different than I originally believed. The dish that stood out for me was a Catalan dish served just before the afternoon siesta.

Siesta is a cultural, traditional nap time observed in southern Spain. However, the cultural tradition taught me that we need regenerating as well. They believe in the daily need for rest, errands, and homecare before the evening begins with business manners. Reviewing the scientific data as an educational quest, I discovered siestas are great for mental health, increasing memory health, reducing stress, improving alertness, and cardiovascular functions. These are the opportunities that Wayne County Community College District’s Study Abroad program offers.

GLOBAL STUDENT:

Marla J. Edwards-Wheeler
WCCCD Alumni (now Member of the WCCCD Board of Trustees)
continued
The rich mix of cultural influences was displaced in the diversity, various dishes, presentation and language spoken.

- Trustee Marla J. Edwards-Wheeler
My trip to Switzerland through WCCC’s Study Abroad program was one of the best experiences of my life. I was able to travel somewhere I had never been before and leave the United States for the first time in my life. I made a new lifelong friend who forced me out of my comfort zone and have new experiences that will last a lifetime.

The classes and tours set up by WCCC taught me all about Switzerland. On one of the tours, I faced my fear of heights and climbed to the top of a church bell tower to see a breathtaking view of Geneva. My favorite tour that we went on was in the basement of a parking structure called St. Antoine. While the city was building an underground parking structure, they discovered ancient city walls. Rather than destroying the walls, they were incorporated into the walls of the parking garage.

When interacting with the local Swiss, I discovered a talent for overcoming the language barrier using creative signs and the few shared words we had. Thankfully most of the people I met were proficient enough in English to make up for my lack of French and German!

Embarking on the Study Abroad trip opened my mind to a world outside of home. Traveling abroad with a group of peers whom I’d never met forced me to accept new people, places, and things. I gained a best friend and many fond memories. It was an experience that I never would have been able to have without the WCCC program. I am grateful to have had the opportunity and will cherish the experience for years to come.
Traveling abroad with a group of peers whom I’d never met, forced me to accept new people, places, and things.

- Elizabeth Babcock
My excursion to Switzerland is an experience I will never forget. I want to start by saying that before this experience, I had never been out of the country, nor did I have a passport. I truly thank WCCCD for this overwhelming experience of excitement.

Although there were many memorable memories about Study Abroad, one of the things that stands out to me was the cleanliness of Switzerland. The grounds had absolutely no trash on the street or sidewalks, which tells you the mindset of the people who reside there. There were trash cans everywhere which promoted cleanliness. This resonated with us as tourists to maintain the order of cleanliness that was presented. The hills and mountains were also very breathtaking.

On a more spiritual level, while listening to the history of Switzerland from one of the female historians during lunch, she actually joined the table where my friends and I were sitting. She looked at me, and said out of the blue, “It’s very sad what is going on in America and its prison system towards African American men.” I said “Yes, it is.” We spoke for about an hour after which she felt deemed to tie her beautiful scarf around my braids. She held my arm and said we stand with you in your quest for freedom. That experience really touched me just to know that other countries are aware of the mistreatment of the Black man and woman, especially in America. With all of the protests and uprising that has been happening in the world for the last few months, this experience came back to mind as very eye opening and right on time.

During the tour, I took a picture with a statue of Gandhi statue. However, with all of the protests around the world, I was made aware that his statues were being torn down all through Africa. This is important because we see a statue and someone tells you that person is great, we believe it without gathering facts. We have to do the research for ourselves so that we can educate our children and community. A great way to do this is to travel internationally and study abroad.

Everyone needs to travel. Since Study Abroad, I have been to five different countries and have learned so much history. Thank you WCCCD, Dr. Ivery, Mr. Butty, Julie and the host of others that make it happen so that students can have a head-start at being a passport to the world.
Everyone needs to travel. Since Study Abroad, I have been to 5 different countries and have learned so much history.

- Rasheeda Morgan
WALES, UNITED KINGDOM
2016
EDUCATIONAL PARTNER: UNIVERSITY OF SWANSEA
I traveled to Wales, United Kingdom, with Study Abroad in 2016. This trip taught me so many things, one of which was the "buddy system." Before going overseas with my Study Abroad group, I had never heard of the "buddy system," and so implementing it was something I was not sure about. What really stood out to me was that we always knew when one person was not around, regardless of if the person was just gone for a few minutes.

I believe we became very close as a group because we got to know each other on a personal level due to the "buddy system." I appreciate that I got to form lifelong friendships with the individuals and chaperone from my group. I kept in touch with some of the people I met in Wales, and especially in a time like the COVID-19 pandemic we are facing, it makes me feel that the globe is really small and interconnected.

One of my friends moved from Indonesia to the United Kingdom in 2018, and he was looking for a school to attend and a place to stay. I mentioned that I knew someone in Wales and maybe they could meet. I gave them each other's contact information. As it turns out, they met and were engaged to be married in June, but COVID-19 happened. If I had not kept in contact with my friend in Wales, I would have never been able to link my friend with her and this connection may not have happened.

Something I literally learned while overseas, and get very excited to talk about, is ice skating. I remember going out with the group to a fair that was held very close to the hotel where we lodged. I saw everyone getting skates. I decided to do it too, not because I knew how to skate or wanted to learn, but because I saw the rest of the group doing it.

I got on the ice rink, and it was hard but no one made fun of me. I fell a total of nine times on the first day and was very sore when I got back to the hotel. I did not even think I would be able to walk the next day. However, my next day came with so much energy; I could not help but go back again. I went back to the skating rink three days in a row regardless of how sore I felt. There was not a day that I fell less than five times until I got it right. I still keep in touch with a friend I met on the ice who offered to hold me up while I figured out how to position my legs. Whenever I go skating with friends or family, I tell the story of how I learned to skate and where.

My key take away points from my Study Abroad trip were: people and cultures all over the world are different, but I have to be open-minded enough to learn from them; the buddy system is the way to go regardless of where I travel; persistence is very good and will yield good results, I just need the courage to keep going; keep the contacts you make up to date; and stories that can be told are worth hearing. These are some of the things that made the Study Abroad trip very memorable for me.
...we became very close as a group because we got to know each other on a personal level...I got to form lifelong friendships with the individuals and chaperone from my group.

- Flora Kibong
Deborah Duyck

Karen Jackson

Mary Jones

Donnell Mason

Beverly Paddock

Xuefei Qi

Priscilla Rodgers

DaShonta Simpkins

Judy Smouter

Susan Wiley

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